

## **APPENDIX J2-IOWA COUNTY FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN**

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This plan is prepared as required by Chapter 91.10, Wisconsin Statutes, Subchapter II Farmland Preservation Planning. The adoption of this plan and incorporation into the Iowa County Comprehensive Plan shall be construed as compliance with said statute.

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## CHAPTER 1: PURPOSE AND PROCESS

### *Purpose and Relationship to Past Planning*

This document is a comprehensive revision and update of the Iowa County Farmland Preservation Plan originally created and adopted November 12, 1980. The original plan was created in order to be consistent with the Farmland Preservation Program and corresponding statutes, which provide tax credits to qualified agricultural lands. Land use decisions since have been primarily consistent with the 1980 plan as agriculture continues to be the primary cultural and economic driver in Iowa County. The enactment of the Working Lands Initiative in 2009 effectively rewrote the state Farmland Preservation Program and mandated all counties to revise their current Farmland Preservation Plans and enforcing ordinances for recertification.

#### **What is the Wisconsin Working Lands Initiative?**

The Wisconsin Working Lands Initiative was passed as part of the State's 2009—2011 biennial budget bill. The Wisconsin Working Lands Initiative is primarily documented through a rewrite of Chapter 91 of Wisconsin State Statutes. Main components of the Initiative include:

- Modernization of land use planning and zoning program for farmland preservation
- Requirement that all counties update their farmland preservation plans
- Establishment of a competitive Agricultural Enterprise Area (AEA) program to designate areas with greatest opportunity for and commitment to farmland preservation
- Increased State income tax credit opportunities for farmers in areas with farmland preservation zoning or AEA's
- Development of a Purchase of Agricultural Easement (PACE) program, which provided matching grants for conservation easement purchases but is not currently funded

This Farmland Preservation Plan focuses on Iowa County's land use planning and zoning approach to farmland preservation. This plan identifies "farmland preservation areas" and also accommodates compatible growth in planned locations, forms, and densities. It responds to emerging trends, activities, policy discussions, and opportunities as well.

This Farmland Preservation Plan is an integral part of the Iowa County's Comprehensive Plan. In response to the Wisconsin Smart Growth law enacted in 2000, Iowa County embarked upon a comprehensive planning process in 2001 in partnership with 13 towns, 7 villages and 2 cities. The result was each jurisdiction adopting a comprehensive plan, all of which were encompassed within a county comprehensive plan adopted in 2005.

The Iowa County Comprehensive Plan includes an "Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Element" element; a future land use map that identifies planned "Agricultural and Other Open Space Areas," and policies for limited residential development within such areas.

This planning process has also revealed that providing incentives could promote agricultural preservation and agriculture, in general. Incentives could be in the form of planned farmland preservation areas eligible for tax incentives, as well as encouraging agricultural-related



infrastructure through an uncumbersome regulatory framework.

### ***Planning Process Summary***

Iowa County took a proactive role in reviewing the provisions and requirements of the Working Lands Initiative. After enacted as part of 2009 Wisconsin Act 28, the Iowa County Planning and Zoning Committee began studying the new law in earnest by holding twice monthly meetings with town boards. Each town board took information back to local public meetings and, by the fall of 2010, formal public information meetings began and continued into early 2011.

The public participation efforts mirrored the success of the county's comprehensive planning process:

- All meetings were open to the public and adequately noticed.
- Information was made available in both hardcopy and electronic format.
- As much information as possible was posted to the Iowa County website.
- Public comment and input was directly sought through questionnaires and public informational meetings.
- All unsolicited public comments or input were accepted.
- Staff of the Planning and Development Office made themselves available for both personal and local jurisdiction meetings.
- Staff of the Planning and Development Office responded to as many correspondences in writing as possible.
- Staff of the Planning and Development Office made themselves available to provide presentations upon request to any stakeholder group, such as Realtors, the Iowa County Farm Bureau, the Iowa County Chapter of the Towns Association, accountants, attorneys, civic groups, etc.

All county decisions on this plan revision and related maps were made only after there had been a sincere effort at gathering input from local jurisdictions and the public.

The success of this Farmland Preservation Plan is linked to the county's ability to implement related zoning regulations and pursue other initiatives, in cooperation with local governments; farmers and their organizations; farm-related businesses; economic development organizations; and other agricultural stakeholders and landowners. Therefore, collaboration in the development of this plan was vital. The continued cooperation of the towns with the county is a vital component to the success of preserving farmland.

## CHAPTER 2: PLAN ORGANIZATION

This plan is organized to first provide some historical context of the continued importance of agriculture to Iowa County. Regional influences will be discussed as well as ongoing efforts to educate the public on agriculture's impact to the county. This impact largely drives the goals and policies, both established and proposed, that are the basis for land use decisions in the county.

### *The Importance of Agriculture*

Agriculture continues to be a driving force behind the economic and social well-being of Iowa County, as it has since the county was founded in 1829. Agriculture and farming is a cornerstone to Iowa County's sense of identity. Whether having grown up on a farm or not, the average Iowa County resident takes comfort in the sense of place, prosperity and rural character created by a farming culture.

Results of a countywide public opinion survey revealed that "small town atmosphere" ranked first and "agriculture" ranked fifth out of fourteen important reasons for living in Iowa County. In addition, farmland was rated as either an essential or very important natural or cultural resource by 73% of the respondents.



Therefore, the question of whether to preserve farmland in Iowa County isn't so much a question of should we, but rather of how. The primary purpose of this plan will be to propose policies and actions that strive to preserve and promote agricultural land uses, including supporting infrastructure and enterprises so that agriculture will continue its importance for Iowa County.

### *History of Agriculture*

The early history of Iowa County is inextricably wound together with another industry...lead mining. French fur traders had been in the area in the 1700's, but made no permanent settlements. Lead had been mined by the Winnebago Tribe of Native Americans and most of the early settlers were attracted to the area by rumors of rich lead deposits. Communities sprang up at Mineral Point, Linden, Highland, and Dodgeville. By 1850, half of the national lead output originated from the lead region which included Iowa, Lafayette, and Grant Counties as well as parts of northern Illinois.

As a result of depressed lead prices and the mineral survey in the early 1830's, the federal government loosened restrictions on farming and agriculture began to develop. The first recorded attempt at farming was in 1829 when 40 acres of land in the Town of Linden were plowed for cultivation. Agriculture, as well as mining, was aided by the introduction of the railroad into the region in 1855. The railroad made exporting agricultural products to larger population centers possible and made shipment of zinc ores south to plants in Illinois feasible. By this time, zinc had replaced lead as the dominant mining activity in the area. Zinc remained a major economic factor in the area from 1860 to 1920, although sporadic revivals of activity occurred into the 1970's. As mining declined, so did population. Today's population of approximately 23,687 is around 1,000 fewer than at the peak in 1870.

As mining declined, agriculture increased in importance. Early agriculture was devoted primarily to the production of subsistence crops and wheat for market. Wheat was grown year after year until yields declined to a point where profits were marginal, primarily due to insect infestation, decreasing soil fertility and soil erosion. The type of farming was changed to livestock and dairying at about 1880 and, by 1900, livestock production had become more important than grain. According to the 2007 US Agricultural Census, the market value of livestock products sold was three times that of crops in Iowa County.

### ***Regional Influences***

Iowa County is located between the cities of Madison, WI and Dubuque, IA. Both are regional growth centers and heavily influence the development pressures in Iowa County. The county benefits from excellent transportation infrastructure, most notably US Highways 18 and 18-151 which make commuting to Madison and Dubuque attractive for those who want to live in a rural atmosphere, yet take advantage of an urban working environment. This growing trend has created significant pressure to maintain focus on the need for effective land use planning and regulations in order to minimize land use conflicts that often arise when “city” meets “country”.

Iowa County is also blessed with many recreational opportunities, including being home to Governor Dodge State Park, Tower Hill State Park, Blue Mounds State Park and the Blackhawk Lake Recreational Area. There are also over 3,200 acres of state-managed natural areas that offer hiking, hunting and wildlife viewing opportunities. The majestic Wisconsin River is the county’s northern border and is a fishing, canoeing, boating and camping destination.



Iowa County has long been a favorite of trout anglers, with its miles and miles of world class trout streams. Because of improved farm practices and enrollment in programs such as the Farmland Preservation Program, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program and the Conservation Reserve Program, water quality conditions in Iowa County have seen an overall improvement in the last 50 years. In some cases, native Brook Trout populations are returning. In addition, groups such as the Harry and Laura Nohr Chapter of Trout Unlimited and governmental agencies have worked together on habitat projects to improve these streams.

Without continued dedication to long-term farmland preservation, soil conservation and careful planning, these influences may result in direct conversion of farmland, and increased difficulty in conducting normal farming activities if nearby lands develop. On the other side of the coin, local and regional populations and visitors create sizable markets for locally-grown products.

## **Economic Impact of Agriculture**

About 2,765 jobs, or 18 percent, in Iowa County are agricultural-related. Dairy alone accounts for 1,359 jobs in the county.

There are over 1,800 farms in Iowa County that contribute to \$107.5 million, or about 9 percent, of the county's total income. This includes wages, salaries, benefits and profits of those who own and work in agricultural-related businesses. In addition, another \$0.44 of income is generated for every dollar of agricultural income. Agriculture in Iowa County also generates \$332.2 million, or 15 percent, of the county's total business sales. For every dollar of agricultural business sales, another \$0.26 of other business sales is generated. Another \$10 million of taxes is generated by agricultural sales, income, property and other taxes.

As of 2011, about 75 percent, or 364,970 acres, of Iowa County was owned and managed by farmers, thus making the farmer Iowa County's most significant steward of the land. However, as population shifts from cities and villages into the rural area, land use challenges increase. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Iowa County has a population of 23,687 of which 43.8% of its citizens live in the unincorporated, rural areas of the county. Between 2000 and 2010, the rural population of the county grew by about 9.7% while the incorporated area actually had a slight decline in population.

The county will continue to protect and promote its agricultural resources and infrastructure, including direct-marketing sales and local processing of agricultural products. There are 79 farms in the county that sell directly to consumers through roadside stands, farmers' markets, auction, pick-your-own operations, and community supported agriculture. In total, direct-marketing sales add \$755,000 into the local economy. In addition, there are eight plants in Iowa County that process dairy products. An effort is also underway to create a vegetable processing facility in the county.

## ***Advocacy and Education***

A large part of preserving agriculture in the county involves education. Effort is made on an ongoing basis to promote the importance of agriculture in Iowa County for aesthetics, culture, recreation and its positive economic impacts. When Iowa County embarked upon the creation of its current comprehensive plan, a survey was completed by roughly 15% of the population. Of the 2,787 responses, 73% responded that it was essential or very important to protect farmland as a natural and cultural resource. Protecting a sense of rural character was essential or very important to 63% of the respondents as well. These two priorities helped to frame the goals of the comprehensive plan and remain a focus in the county's land use policies.

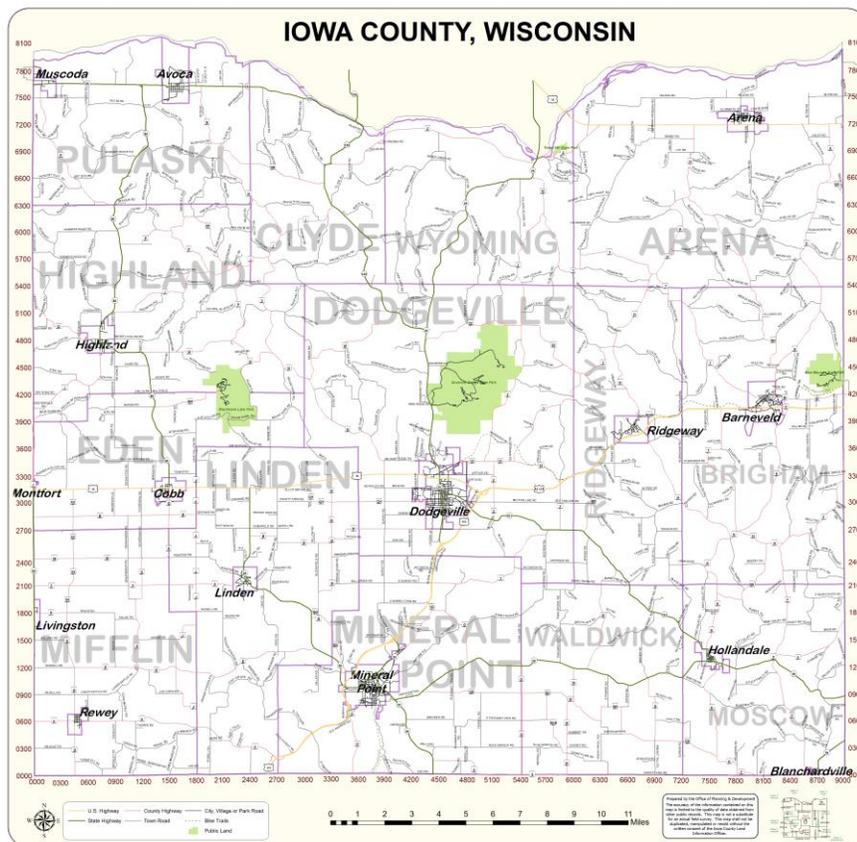
Educational efforts are made by several county offices, most notably the UW Extension, Land Conservation Department and the Office of Planning & Development, to raise awareness of the myriad of impacts agriculture makes in the county. The potential for land use conflicts is an ongoing educational focus, especially as more non-farmers move to the rural area of the county.

## CHAPTER 3: FARMLAND PRESERVATION GOALS

### *Overview of Iowa County’s Farmland Preservation Program*

Iowa County first adopted county zoning in 1969, at which time 13 of its 14 towns adopted the county ordinance. This initial zoning ordinance focused on directing nonagricultural development where it would have minimal impact on farming. In 1978, Iowa County created a certified farmland preservation zoning district (A-1 Agricultural) in response to the then newly enacted state Farmland Preservation Program. By 1980 all fourteen towns had adopted the county’s zoning ordinance thus making Iowa County one of the first and only counties with countywide zoning in place.

In the years since, Iowa County has enjoyed a collaborative and positive working relationship with its towns. Iowa County recognized early on that a key to the successful implementation of a countywide zoning program is to involve the towns as much as possible in the decision-making. Therefore, the rezoning process has been favored over conditional use permits, primarily due to the statutory authority any town under county zoning may exercise to block the county from rezoning against the town’s wishes. This authority does not extend to decisions on conditional use permits.



### Land Use Planning and Zoning

This Farmland Preservation Plan focuses particularly on the land use planning and zoning aspects of farmland preservation. These are the primary and most effective tools the county has to implement this plan. Iowa County has enjoyed a collaborative working relationship with its fourteen towns, all of which again adopted a comprehensive revision of the county zoning ordinance in 2005 at the culmination of the comprehensive planning process.



The past thirty five years of administering a countywide farmland preservation zoning ordinance has resulted in a public acceptance for preserving the most productive farmland in the county. Limited non-agricultural development has been allowed following a process of rezoning smaller lots of less productive land where the continued agricultural use of surrounding land would not be jeopardized. This plan will support this rezoning process, but also provide other uses to be considered by conditional use permit without need to rezone. This plan will also describe how, in some areas, productive agricultural lands will be preserved by requiring conservation zoning overlay districts to enforce locally adopted rural residential densities.

### ***Farmland Preservation Goals***

Like many areas of Wisconsin, Iowa County continues to struggle with the challenges of accommodating...and sometimes attracting...growth while minimizing the conversion of its most valuable agricultural land. Farmland was rated as essential, very important or important by 93% of the respondents to a 2003 countywide comprehensive planning survey and this sentiment was reaffirmed during this planning process. Other responses that indicate the importance of farmland include:

- 92% responded that productive agricultural land should be used for agricultural use versus residential, commercial or any other use
- 48% responded that rural residential lots should be 5 acres or less in area
- 92% responded that agricultural related business are either essential, very important or important
- 58% responded that they prefer a dense, cluster design versus traditional subdivision design

The following goals are a combination of some identified during the comprehensive planning process and now reaffirmed, as well as some newly identified during this planning process:

- Routinely remind residents of the importance of their agricultural resources and the need for continued protection.
- Preserve farmland, the family farm and rural character.
- Maintain proper separation distances between urban and rural land uses to avoid conflicts.
- Utilize state and federal programs to preserve, maintain, and protect agricultural resources.
- Develop strategies to encourage young people to become involved in farming.
- Maintain the farming infrastructure in order to maintain a viable farming environment.

- Encourage a variety of farm types based upon their viability and proximity to necessary infrastructure.
- Develop ways to provide for a farmer's retirement needs while supporting rural housing development that minimizes the conversion of productive agricultural lands.
- Identify and encourage the development of agricultural-related enterprises and supporting infrastructure.
- Allow the development of renewable energy resources that utilize agricultural products or help to meet energy demands.
- Encourage and support access to broadband connectivity to enhance communications and agricultural-related economic development.
- Protect soils that are highly erodible and on steep slopes through encouragement of soil conservation practices, such as grass waterways, contour strips, etc.
- Encourage high-density residential development where public water and sewer connection is available.
- Direct low-density rural residential development away from the more productive soils and in a manner that does not impair the continued farming of adjacent property.
- Support existing and promote new facilities that process and/or distribute agricultural products.

## CHAPTER 4: LAND USE PLAN FOR FARMLAND PRESERVATION

### *Overview*

This chapter describes the land use planning approach developed by Iowa County in close collaboration with its 14 towns, 13 villages, 2 cities and the general public. The policies and maps in this chapter will guide land use decision-making in coordination with the policies stated within the Iowa County Comprehensive Plan.

This chapter and its included maps do not identify, in detail, the specific types of future land uses that are allowed or encouraged in different parts of the county. For example, they do not show areas appropriate for residential versus commercial development, or provide any detail within cities and villages. Instead, within the unincorporated areas, this level of planning detail is included in the Iowa County Comprehensive Plan. Within incorporated areas and their proposed growth areas, this detail is available within city and village comprehensive plans.



### *Farmland Preservation Plan Map and Categories*

The Iowa County Farmland Preservation Map, which is Map 4 in this plan, presents recommended future land uses for Iowa County. The “future” can generally be understood as a 10-year planning period, given that both this plan and the Iowa County Comprehensive Plan are required by state law to be reviewed at least once every ten years after initial adoption. However, this plan may be considered for revision at any time if so desired by the county, local communities and public.

For purposes of managing growth and preserving land resources, all land in Iowa County has been delineated into one of the following four “base” future preservation or development categories:

- Farmland Preservation Area
- Developed/Infill Area
- Urban Transition Area
- City or Village Non-Farmland Preservation Area

The assignment of land into one of the above categories is based on mapping criteria presented later in this chapter under each category description. Each of these four future preservation or development categories is described in the sections that follow, along with mapping criteria and policies related to each category. The policies are particularly focused on approaches for preserving and enhancing agriculture.

## ***Farmland Preservation Area***

### Rationale

The Farmland Preservation Area is mapped primarily to accommodate agricultural and agricultural-related uses with a minimum foresight of 10 years into the future. This area includes land that is currently actively being farmed and land that has farming potential due to possessing productive soils, favorable slopes and sufficient proximity to agricultural infrastructure. This area also includes active or potential forestry, open or natural spaces, and areas of special resource, such as floodplains, wetlands, shorelands and rock outcroppings. Family businesses, home occupations and other agricultural-related uses will be considered in this area according to the provisions of implementing zoning districts.

The purpose of the Farmland Preservation Area is to:

- Preserve productive agricultural lands, whether for cash crops or pasturing.
- Preserve the quality of life and rural character of Iowa County.
- Preserve and promote agricultural-related and compatible uses.
- Minimize uses that may jeopardize existing agricultural uses and farmsteads.
- Provide consistency and fairness in available land uses based on land qualities and characteristics, regardless of land ownership.
- Maintain eligibility for participation in farmland preservation incentive programs, such as tax credits, Agricultural Enterprise Areas, and Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements as outlined in Wisconsin's Working Lands Initiative law.

### Mapping Criteria of Farmland Preservation Area

The Farmland Preservation Area maps contained within this plan represent favorable soils, slopes and proximity to agricultural infrastructure as reviewed and proposed by local communities. Iowa County compiled these "local reviews" into a countywide perspective that excluded areas where significant nonagricultural development exists or is proposed to occur within the next 10 years.

Future Land Use maps from city and village comprehensive plans were incorporated into the mapped Farmland Preservation Area without change, as required by Section 59.69(3)(b) of Wisconsin Statutes. Although geographic features within these excluded areas may be similar to those in areas that are mapped as Farmland Preservation Areas, this is not to be misconstrued as an inconsistency. Rather, it reflects the intention of those villages and cities to promote nonagricultural development through its statutory official mapping authority which Iowa County must incorporate into its Comprehensive Plan without change. The farmland preservation plan maps supersede the county comprehensive plan maps when inconsistencies are present regarding nonagricultural development.

Other factors that contributed to where the Farmland Preservation Area is shown on Maps 4a through 4p include the following:

- Areas with concentrations of prime farmland, lands currently being farmed, agricultural infrastructure, and uses that are compatible with agriculture such as mineral extraction sites.
- Areas with concentrations of forest management and open spaces that provide valuable buffers to farmland from incompatible uses.

- Unincorporated Lands that are planned and zoned for farmland preservation.
- Lands outside of the planned Urban Transition Area and Developed/Infill Area, as described in the associated sections below.

### General Policies, Programs, and Actions for Farmland Preservation Area

1. **Preferred Zoning District:** Utilize the A-1 Agriculture zoning district as the preferred primary farmland preservation zoning district to implement Farmland Preservation Area policies. Additional farmland preservation zoning districts include the AC-1 Agricultural Conservancy Overlay, AB-1 Agriculture Business, and C-1 Conservancy (for open space uses).
2. **Preexisting Residences to Remain:** Allow legally established residences to remain within the A-1 zoning district when historically zoned in that manner, except where new land divisions are proposed. Define “preexisting farm residence” with the maximum flexibility allowed in statutes to minimize the number of these residences that will become non-conforming uses.
3. **Agricultural-Related Businesses:** Encourage agricultural-related businesses that support the continued or potential farming of land through permitted principal uses and conditional uses in the A-1, AB-1 and AR-1 districts.
4. **General Rezoning Criteria:** Whenever land is proposed for rezoning from the A-1 district to a zoning district that is not a certified farmland preservation zoning district, the following criteria are to be met:
  - a. The land must be better suited for a use not allowed in the A-1 zoning district.
  - b. The rezoning must be consistent with the applicable town and county comprehensive plans.
  - c. The rezoning must be substantially consistent with this plan.
  - d. The rezoning must not substantially impair or limit current or future agricultural use of surrounding parcels of land that are zoned for or legally restricted to agricultural use.
5. **Conversion of Prime Farmland:** Minimize the conversion of prime farmland, as shown on Map 4o of this plan (generally Class I-III soils), for nonagricultural development. Any proposed conversion of prime farmland will be scrutinized against potential alternatives where the decision shall assure the continued viability of existing and surrounding agricultural uses.
6. **Limitation on Subdivision Plats:** The division of four or more lots of five acres or less constitutes a Subdivision under the provisions of the Iowa County Subdivision and Land Division Ordinance. Subdivision plats are not permitted within the Farmland Preservation Area unless the lots only allow for the development of non-prime farmland, are described so as to not adversely impact or diminish agricultural use of surrounding lands and are eligible to be rezoned to a zoning district that is not a certified farmland preservation zoning district.
7. **Support for Complementary Town Policies and Initiatives:** Where associated policies within the adopted town comprehensive plan are stricter than county policies for lands within a designated Farmland Preservation Area, support the town in its actions on rezoning requests, so that the stricter policy based on the town’s comprehensive plan may be applied. In addition, support town development of creative farmland preservation approaches, such as purchase of conservation easement (PACE) and transfer of development rights (TDR), where consistent with the policies of this Farmland Preservation Plan.
8. **Potential Agricultural Enterprise Areas (AEAs):** Support landowner/town applications to DATCP to establish new Agricultural Enterprise Areas that meet the following criteria:
  - a. The AEA is located within portions of the Farmland Preservation Area particularly suited for long-term agricultural enterprise development.

- b. The AEA is consistent with DATCP criteria for such designation.
  - c. The AEA is clearly consistent with this plan.
  - d. There is sufficient interest among area farmers and town governments.
9. **Land Conservation:** Collaborate where possible with the Iowa County Land Conservation Department to assist farmers in the Farmland Preservation Area to meet land conservation and nutrient management requirements. Consider additional land use policies and regulations that promote and facilitate the conservation of fertile farmland and other agricultural natural resources.
10. **Environmental Corridors:** Environmental corridors include environmentally sensitive and developmentally-challenged lands, such as mapped floodplains, shoreland areas and areas of slope. Although these areas may not be conducive to intensive agricultural use, they do act as important buffers between productive farmland and nonagricultural uses, in addition to providing vital habitat for flora and fauna.

### Rezoning and Density Policies for Residential Development in Farmland Preservation Area

1. **New Residences:** Allow new residences in the A-1 zoning district without rezoning only if they are farm residences and on parcels or lots of land at least 40 acres in size. Any division of land in the A-1 zoning district for any purpose that will create a lot or parcel of land less than 40 acres will require rezoning to another district. If the intended use is to remain open space and/or agricultural, then rezoning may be considered to a farmland preservation zoning district that permits lots less than the 40 acres required in the A-1 district. By doing so, this will preserve the land for agricultural uses while restricting from development.
2. **AR-1 as Preferred Rezoning District:** Utilize the County's AR-1 Agricultural Residence zoning district as the preferred zoning district for rezoning for new housing in the Farmland Preservation Area on parcels or lots less than 40 acres. Consider a different zoning district, such as the R-1 Single Family Residence district, where the applicant can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the associated town and the county that such different zoning district meets the Farmland Preservation Area purpose and policies and responds to a unique circumstance not generally applicable to other properties in the area. The AC-1 Agricultural Conservancy overlay zoning district or C-1 Conservancy zoning district will be required where compliance with rural residential densities is necessary as described in the county and town comprehensive plans. For example: if a 3-acre residential lot is proposed where there is a 40-acre rural residential density, 37 acres will require overlay zoning to preserve for agricultural uses.
3. **Definitions:** As used in this Farmland Preservation Plan, the terms listed below shall have the definitions as follows:
  - a. **Contiguous:** Lots or parcels shall be considered contiguous if they share a common boundary for a distance of at least 50 feet. Parcels in common ownership that are directly across from a navigable river, stream, or creek, shall be considered contiguous.
  - b. **Common Ownership:** Any combination of contiguous tax parcels owned by one uniquely named entity as identified by deed. Contiguous property described by separate deeds, even if under the ownership of the same uniquely named entity, shall not be considered Common Ownership unless combined under a single deed.
  - c. **Cluster:** A contiguous grouping of three or more allowable lots for new residential development.
  - d. **Residential Site:** Either a lot approved for residential development not zoned A-1, or the immediate area where residential development is proposed on land zoned A-1.
4. **Residential Development — 40 or more acres in Common Ownership:** Subject to county and town siting approval and compliance with all associated County Comprehensive/Farmland Preservation Plan

and ordinance requirements, the owner of contiguous land of 40 acres or greater within the Farmland Preservation Area is allowed one single family residence per 40 acres of Common Ownership. A second farm residence may be allowed on 40 or more contiguous acres in the Farmland Preservation area, served by a shared driveway and within 300 feet of the existing farm cluster of buildings.

All existing houses within the Common Ownership are counted against this density, county-wide.

5. **Residential Development — <40 acres in Common Ownership:** Subject to county and town rezoning approval and compliance with all associated County Comprehensive/Farmland Preservation Plan and ordinance requirements, the owner of lands in Common Ownership less than 40 acres within the Farmland Preservation Area may have a total of one single family residence, subject to the following criteria:
  - a. The Common Ownership, and all parcels within it, shall be a valid parcel(s) created legally prior to October 17, 1978.
  - b. The Common Ownership, and all parcels within it, if created after October 17, 1978 shall require rezoning to a non-farmland preservation zoning district provided doing so is consistent with the provisions of any comprehensive plan having jurisdiction over the affected property.
  - c. The landowner has the potential to develop a maximum of one single family residence for all parcels that make up the Contiguous Common Ownership combined, including any existing residence.

#### Siting Policies for Residential Development in Farmland Preservation Area

The county will apply the following policies for siting new residential development, whether involving a zoning change or not, in the Farmland Preservation Area.

1. **Impact on Agricultural Operations:** The proposed residential site will not adversely affect agricultural operations in surrounding areas or be situated such that future inhabitants of a residence at that site might be adversely affected by agricultural operations in surrounding areas. In considering whether this policy is achieved, the following factors shall be evaluated:
  - a. The proposed residential site is located in a manner as to minimize the amount of agricultural land converted to nonagricultural use, including compliance with statutory requirements related to prime farmland.
  - b. Access to the proposed residential site shall utilize an existing driveway or, if there is to be a new driveway, it shall be designed to minimally impact the ability to farm adjacent property. Example: run driveway along a line fence or tree line versus bisecting a cropped field
2. **Unsuitability for Agricultural Use:** The proposed residential site is not well suited for agricultural use by virtue of wooded areas, topography, shape of parcel, soil characteristics, or similar factors. In considering whether this policy is achieved, the following factors shall be evaluated:
  - a. Whether the area of the site is enrolled in a land preservation program (e.g., CRP, CREP, farmland preservation tax credit, etc.).
  - b. The site is not of a size or shape to be efficiently worked for farming.
  - c. The site would not create isolated small pockets of uncultivable land in an area otherwise farmed.
3. **Suitability for Residential Use:** The proposed residential site is particularly well suited for residential use, with the following factors to be evaluated:
  - a. The site has soils that are able to support a private on-site waste treatment (septic) system, other than a holding tank.
  - b. Proposed development has adequate access to existing public roads or, the developer shall provide such a road built to town road standards or such other suitable access approved by the town and county, at the developer's expense.

- c. Proposed access points shall meet minimum spacing requirements as established by county and town ordinances, as applicable.

## ***Developed/Infill Area***

### Purpose and Description

Areas mapped as Developed/Infill Area include areas of existing non-agricultural development within unincorporated areas and internal and adjacent undeveloped parcels that are planned and often already zoned for development. Designation of an area as a Developed/Infill Area does not guarantee that that area will develop further or is even buildable. There may be challenges to building, including soil limitations and other environmental constraints. Lands mapped within the Developed/Infill Area should not be zoned in a certified farmland preservation zoning district, thus disqualifying these lands from eligibility of farmland preservation tax credits. The rationale for this is that the owners of these lands are generally not collecting tax credits and/or have shorter-term opportunities to realize non-farm returns from their land via development, and that limited State resources should be committed to other areas where there is more uniform commitment to long-term farmland preservation.



### Mapping Process and Criteria for Developed/Infill Area

In contrast to the Urban Transition Area described below, the Developed/Infill Area category does not include large areas that are currently undeveloped but expected to develop in the next 10 years. Instead, the Developed/Infill Area was mapped based on the following criteria:

- Undeveloped parcels that are specifically planned for a non-agricultural, developed future land use per future land use maps in the Iowa County Comprehensive Plan and/or individual town comprehensive plans, and/or zoned for development. These “infill” areas are smaller than individual Urban Transition Areas (usually 40 contiguous acres or less), are not generally planned to be served by public sewer, and are usually surrounded on at least two sides by existing development.
- Currently developed parcels that are specifically planned for a non-agricultural, developed future land use per future land use maps in the Iowa County Comprehensive Plan and/or individual town comprehensive plans.
- Other groupings of sub-40 acre developed lots that encompass a total area of 40 or more acres, regardless of how they were designated on future land use maps or zoning maps. Smaller groupings and clusters were generally mapped within the Farmland Preservation Area, unless meeting the previous criterion for mapping in the Developed/Infill Area.
- Parks and other recreational spaces integrated within largely residential areas.
- Densely platted or subdivided lands, such as along certain waterfront areas.
- Golf courses, campgrounds, and other intensively developed areas, even if zoned in one of the county’s agricultural and open space zoning districts.
- Large tracts of publicly owned land that is ineligible for farmland preservation tax credits.

## Policies, Programs, and Actions for Developed/Infill Area

1. Rely on the future land use maps in the Iowa County Comprehensive Plan and town comprehensive plans, associated detailed land use policies, and zoning regulations to determine the most appropriate use and timing for further development within the Developed/Infill Area.
2. Where land is not already zoned for development prior to adoption of this Plan, utilize the GAO-1 General Agriculture overlay zoning district as the preferred zoning district to implement Developed/Infill Area policies where the underlying lands are not yet developed. This will encourage the interim use of undeveloped portions of the Urban Transition Area for farming and other open spaces, until the land is ripe for planned development and rezoned for development.
3. Discourage “pre-zoning” of lands for development within the Developed/Infill Area in advance of development proposals, except where development-based zoning had already been provided prior to adoption of this Plan and/or over already-developed lots. Require the submittal and detailed understanding of specific development proposals before supporting the rezoning of further Developed/Infill Area lands to the appropriate development-based zoning district.
4. Encourage towns to continually evaluate larger undeveloped areas designated as Developed/Infill Area on their Farmland Preservation Maps, as some may be more suitable for farmland preservation given current use patterns and the softness of the residential development market.
5. In addition to the above policies, use policies associated with the detailed future land use designation for the property within the Iowa County Comprehensive Plan, including environmental corridor policies where the property overlaps with a mapped environmental corridor.

### **What is “pre-zoning?”**

The zoning of undeveloped land for development, in advance of a specific private development proposal, the need for such development, the capabilities of local governments to provide services to the area, or some combination.

## ***Urban Transition Area***

### Purpose and Description

Areas mapped as Urban Transition Area are unincorporated lands that have been identified in the Iowa County Comprehensive Plan and local comprehensive plans for non-agricultural development. This may also include areas under extraterritorial zoning jurisdiction of a city or village. Such non-agricultural development includes residential subdivisions, unincorporated hamlets, commercial/retail centers, and industrial uses. Additionally, lands mapped in the Urban Transition Area are anticipated for such development within the next 10 years, based either on explicit direction included in associated local comprehensive plans or on county consultant analysis of the future land use recommendations and community growth projections in those plans. Designation of lands in an Urban Transition Area does not guarantee that that area will develop or is even buildable; there may be challenges to building, including soil limitations and other environmental constraints.

In general, the purpose of the Urban Transition Area is to:

- Coordinate growth and development planning between towns and incorporated municipalities.
- Design and locate housing in rural areas in a manner that minimizes adverse impacts on agriculture and maintains the rural character in Iowa County.
- Encourage higher-density residential development, particularly in areas where public utilities and other public infrastructure exist or will be available.

- Encourage nonagricultural-related businesses and industries to locate in areas where public utilities and other public infrastructure exist or will be available.
- Designate lands intended for non-agricultural development within the next 15 years in something other than a Farmland Preservation Area, as required under the State's Working Lands law. The significance of this requirement is that lands designated as Urban Transition Area within this plan may not be zoned in a certified farmland preservation zoning district. Therefore, the owners of such lands may not collect farmland preservation tax credits. The rationale for this is that such owners presumably have shorter-term opportunities to realize non-farm returns from their land via development, and that limited state resources should be committed to other areas where there is more uniform commitment to long-term farmland preservation.

### Mapping Process and Criteria for Urban Transition Area

A variety of factors went into the mapping of individual Urban Transition Areas, based on requirements and guidance supplied by the Wisconsin Working Lands law. The Urban Transition Area includes lands planned for growth within the next 10 years, often to be provided public water and sewer service. To determine the location and extent of each individual Urban Transition Area, the county:

- Reviewed all adopted town, city, and village comprehensive plans within Iowa County. The analysis focused in particular on future land use maps and policies, including planned city and village growth areas outside of current city and village limits.
- Analyzed future land use demand projections per adopted city, village, and town comprehensive plans. Under Wisconsin's comprehensive planning law, local comprehensive plans are required to include land use demand projections for a 20-year planning period, with such projections broken down into 5-year increments. This generally allowed for quick access to 10 year land use demand projections.
- Analyzed available undeveloped but developable land (i.e., vacant, non-environmental corridor land) within existing city and village boundaries to determine how much of projected 10 year future land use demand included in the respective city or village plan could be accommodated within the current city and village limits. The primary conclusion was that many cities and villages within Iowa County can technically accommodate their own 10 year projected land use demand inside their current municipal boundaries. Many others will require only a fraction of their comprehensive plan's planned development areas outside of current city or village limits to accommodate 10 year demand.

Resulting from this analysis, Maps 4a through 4n identify certain lands as Urban Transition Area based on further guidance within local comprehensive plans; environmental and topographic conditions; transportation access; consistency/redundancy in future land use recommendations between city, village and town plans over the same geographic area; current non-agricultural zoning; and the local knowledge and professional experience of the county.

### Policies, Programs, and Actions for Urban Transition Areas

1. Rely on the future land use maps in the Iowa County Comprehensive Plan and local comprehensive plans, associated detailed land use policies, zoning regulations, and intergovernmental agreements to determine the most appropriate use and timing for further development within each distinct Urban Transition Area.
2. Limit new development in the Urban Transition Area in accordance with policies applicable to the Farmland Preservation Area, until such time when the county and affected local government(s) agree that particular mapped area is appropriate for more intensive development and the intended range of roads, other infrastructure, and any planned public services are available to each area.

3. Strongly discourage the “pre-zoning” of lands for development within the Urban Transition Area in advance of development proposals, except where development-based zoning had already been provided. Instead require the submittal and detailed understanding of specific development proposals before supporting the rezoning of Urban Transition Area lands to the appropriate development-based zoning district.
4. Require all permitted rural development to be designed and laid out in a manner to not impede the orderly future development in the Urban Transition Area with more intensive future development, generally with public sanitary sewer services.
5. In parts of the Urban Transition Area that are near city/village and town limits, encourage intergovernmental boundary agreements or cooperative boundary plans to further determine the type, timing, jurisdiction, services, and other aspects of future development.
6. In addition the above policies, use policies associated with the detailed future land use designation for the property within the Iowa County Comprehensive Plan including environmental corridor policies where the property overlaps with a mapped environmental corridor.

## ***City or Village Area***

### **Purpose, Description, and Mapping Criteria**

The City or Village Area category is mapped over the current land area within the corporate limits of cities and villages in the county, including areas within extraterritorial zoning jurisdictions. These areas are not subject to general county zoning regulations and are not intended for long-term farmland preservation. Instead, cities and villages are logical locations for more compact and intensive housing and economic development and redevelopment at higher densities. They are also current and potential locations for bio-based industrial production facilities and centers of local food consumption, which can help the local agricultural economy. Their thoughtful development and success is critical to preserving farmland in other parts of the county.

The purpose of the City or Village Area is to:

- Accommodate new development requiring a full range of urban utilities and services.
- Serve as compact communities accommodating an efficient use of land and buildings, thereby minimizing the amount of converted agricultural land needed for non-farm development.
- Facilitate development patterns that recognize a clear distinction between “city” and “country.”
- Respect the rights of cities and villages under State law to plan and zone lands within their boundaries.

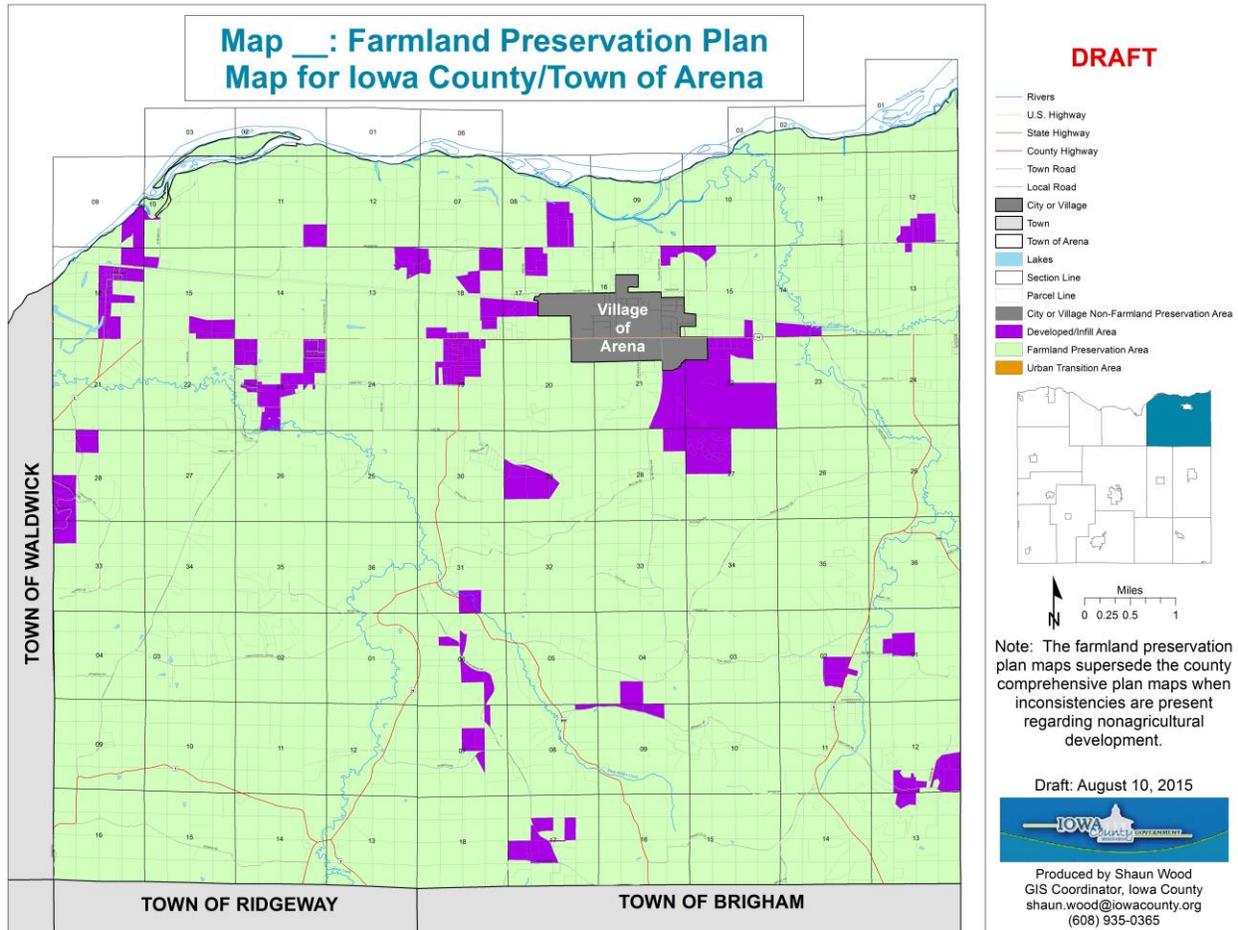
### **Policies, Programs, and Actions for City or Village Area**

1. Rely on city and village comprehensive plans and ordinances to guide the types of future development (e.g., residential, commercial, industrial, mixed use), associated zoning, and design standards within each City or Village Area.
2. Work with local communities, real estate interests, economic development interests, and others to advance a land use pattern that directs more intensive development—including larger subdivisions, commercial/retail districts, and industrial/business parks—into cities and villages and other limited locations in the towns, where a full range of urban services can be provided and conflicts between urban and rural/agricultural land uses can be minimized.
4. Encourage cities and villages to grow compactly and support redevelopment and infill within their current corporate boundaries before expanding outward, as a means to minimize conversion of farmland elsewhere to accommodate development. The county will work with cities and villages to require all new

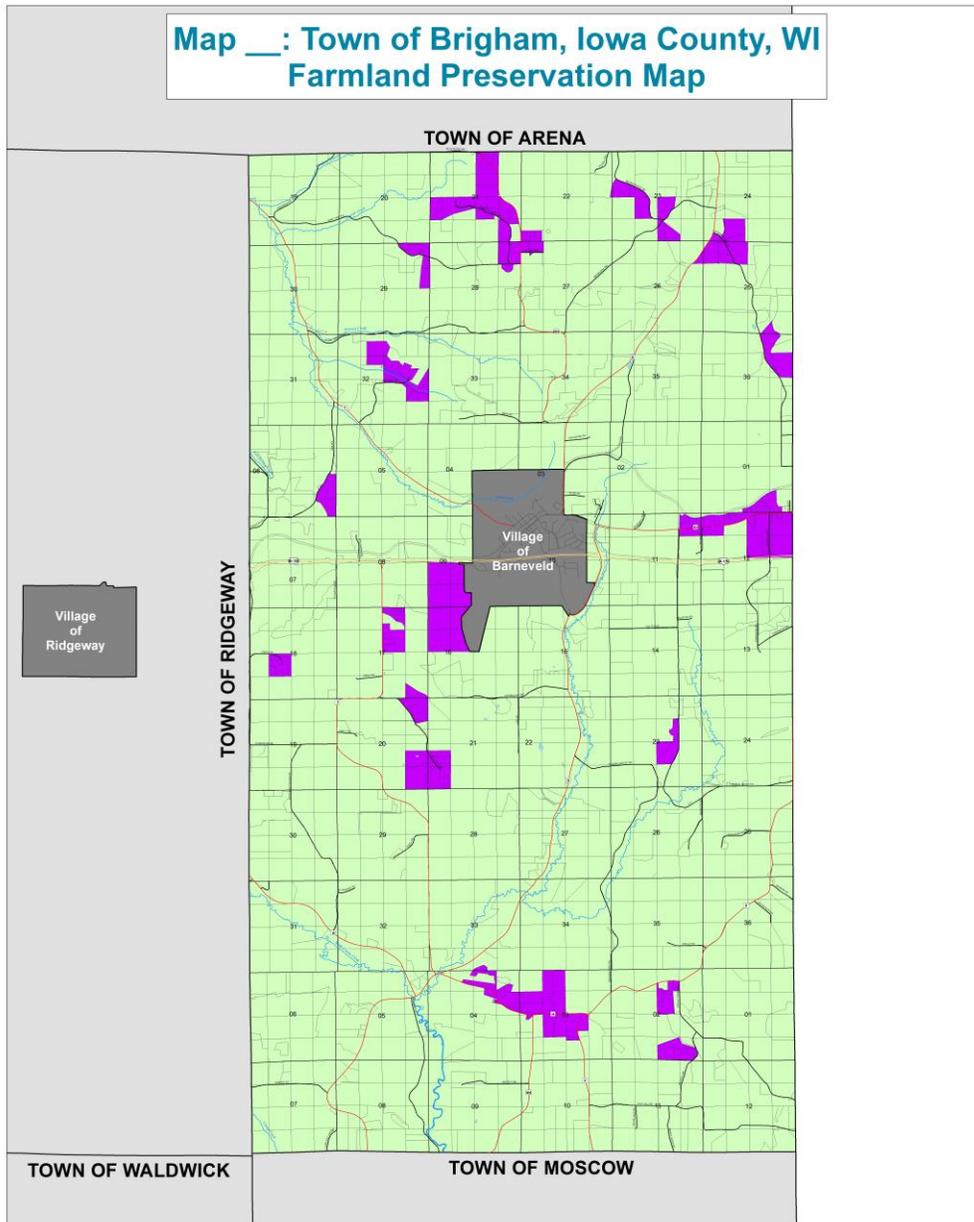
development within cities and villages to connect to public sanitary sewer and water systems as an effective tool to facilitate compact, sequential urban development. Tools to accomplish redevelopment and infill include tax incremental financing and other incentive programs.

5. Encourage cities and villages to carefully consider the location of productive agricultural lands and the policies within this Farmland Preservation Plan during processes to update and refine their individual comprehensive plans and before making decisions on the expansion of sewer, water, and other urban services to their planned growth areas.
6. Communicate with cities and villages regarding their opportunities to be a partner in farmland preservation in Iowa County while at the same time advancing local economic development.
7. Strive towards community characteristics that draw people to cities and villages, including quality jobs, safety, strong local character and identity, vibrant downtowns, parks and other community gathering places where social life comes together, and a special sense of place.
8. Integrate and connect housing, employment centers, and shopping areas so that cities and villages contain places to live, work, shop in proximity.
9. Facilitate development within different sections of each City or Village Area only after the intended range of roads, other infrastructure, and any planned public services are available to that section. Encourage the interim use of undeveloped portions of the City or Village Area for farming, until the land is ripe for planned development.
10. Facilitate agricultural-related industry, such as food and other bio-based product manufacturing, as a component of city and village industrial parks to support both the economic health of these communities and nearby agricultural areas.
11. Support farming-related retail development and direct marketing opportunities, such as farmers markets, that enhance local markets for farm products grown in the area and to enhance community sustainability.
12. Promote vital, distinctive, and varied neighborhoods and a diverse range of housing choices at different densities and for different life stages and income levels.

Map 4a: Town of Arena Farmland Preservation Plan Map

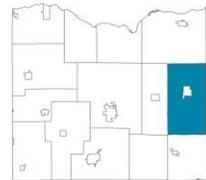


### Map 4b: Town of Brigham Farmland Preservation Plan Map



**DRAFT**

- Rivers
- U.S. Highway
- State Highway
- County Highway
- Town Highway
- Local Road
- City or Village
- Town
- Town of Brigham
- Lakes
- Section Line
- City or Village Non-Farmland Preservation Area
- Developed/Infill Area
- Farmland Preservation Area
- Urban Transition Area
- Parcel Line



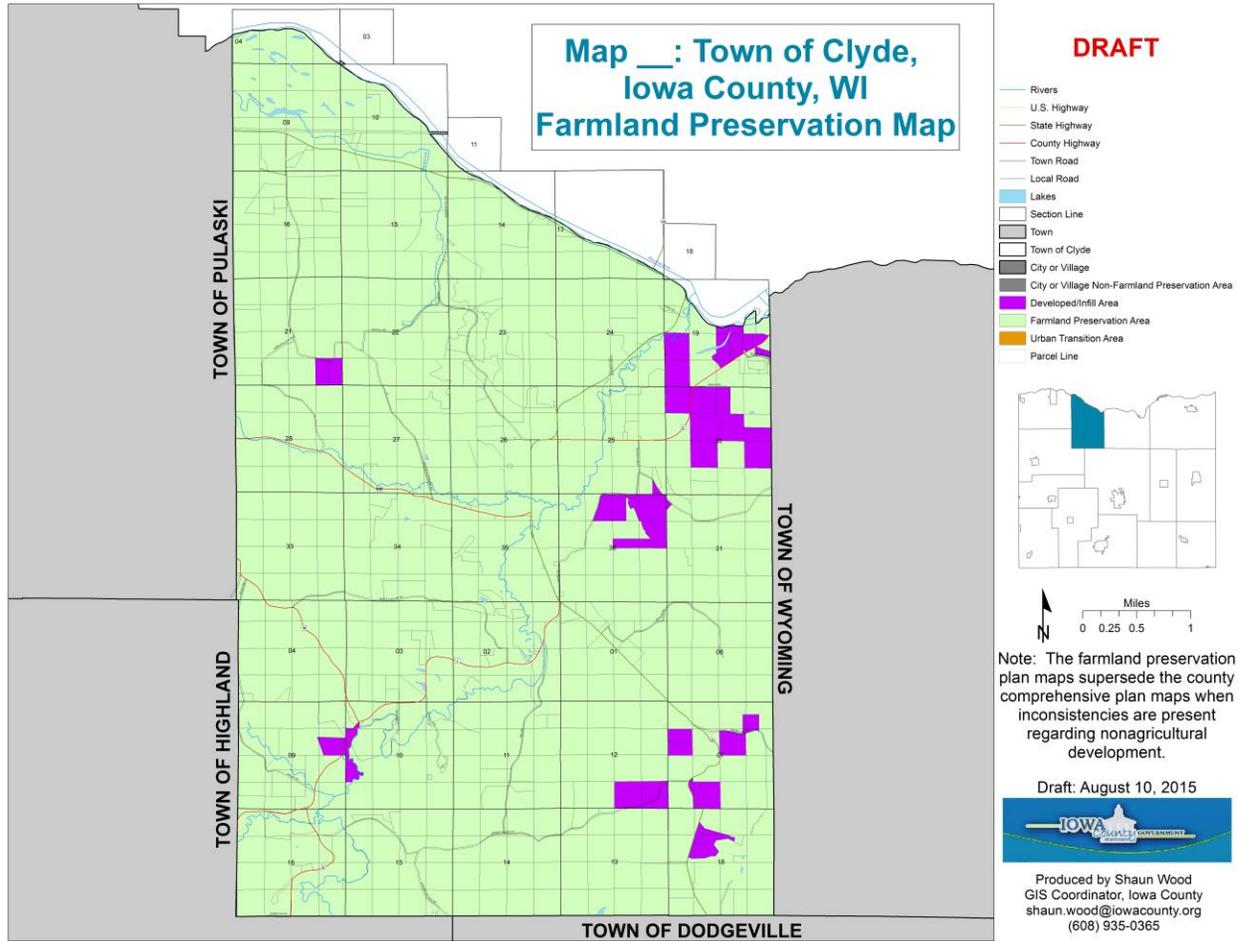
Note: The farmland preservation plan maps supersede the county comprehensive plan maps when inconsistencies are present regarding nonagricultural development.

Draft: August 10, 2015

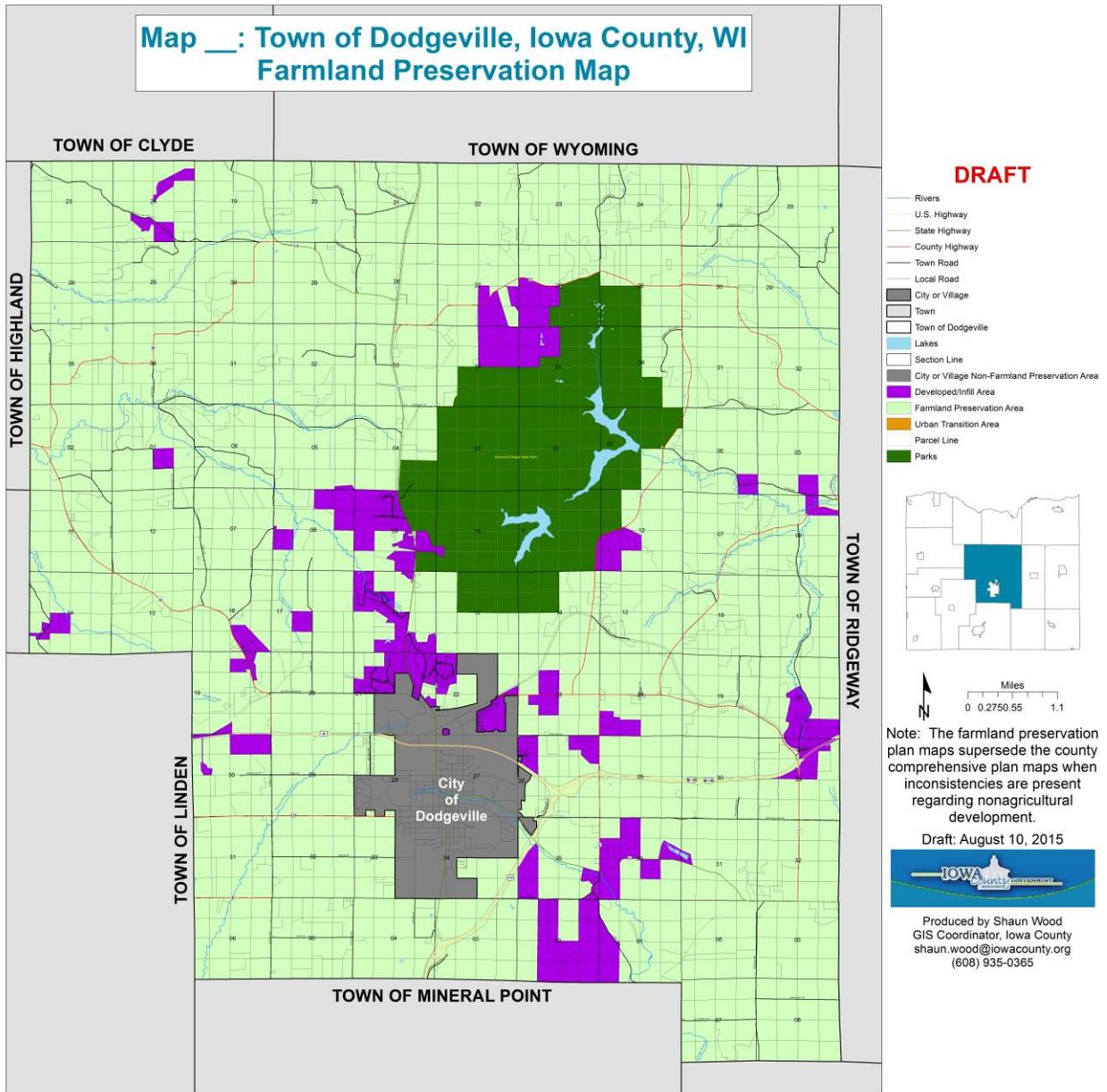


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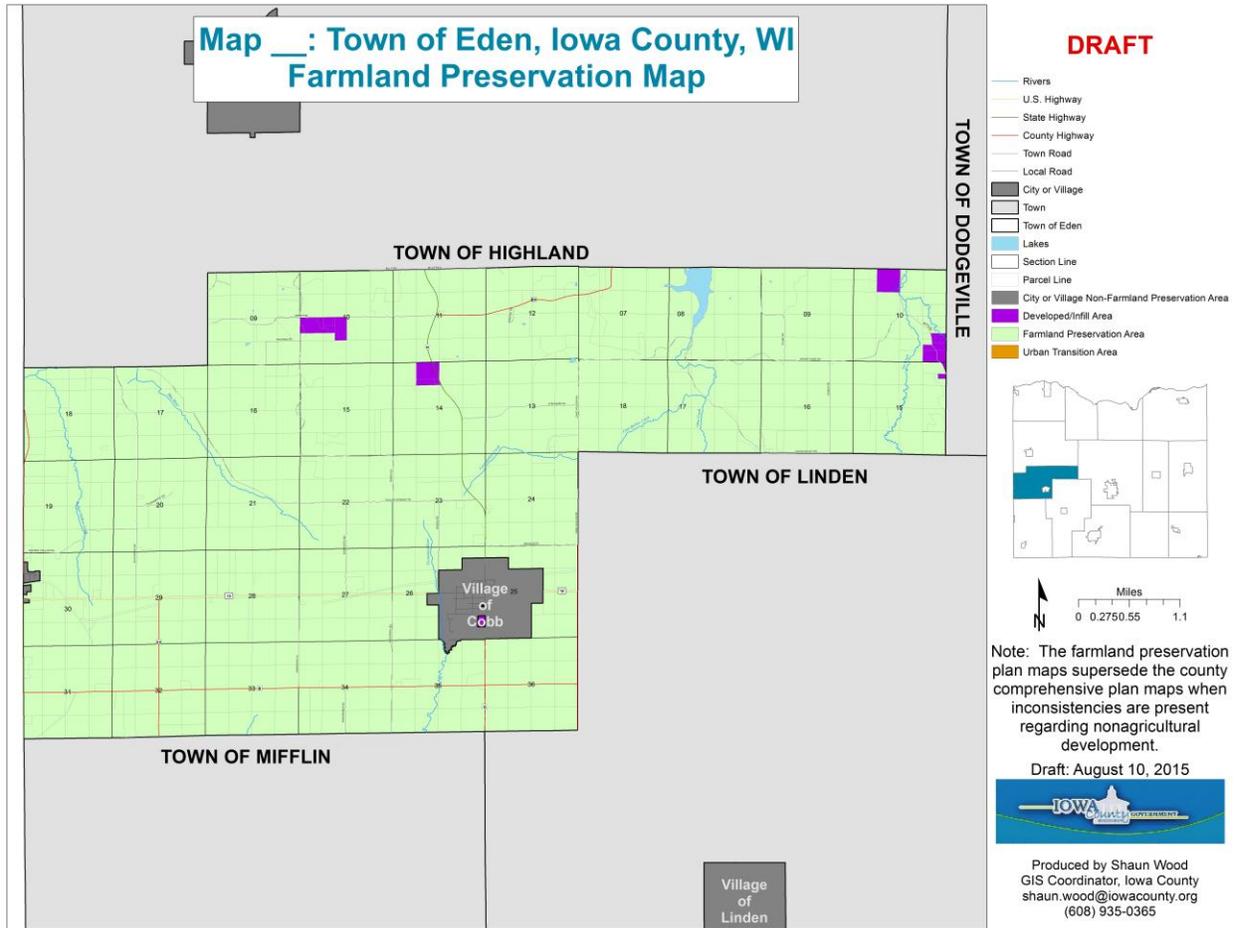
### Map 4c: Town of Clyde Farmland Preservation Plan Map



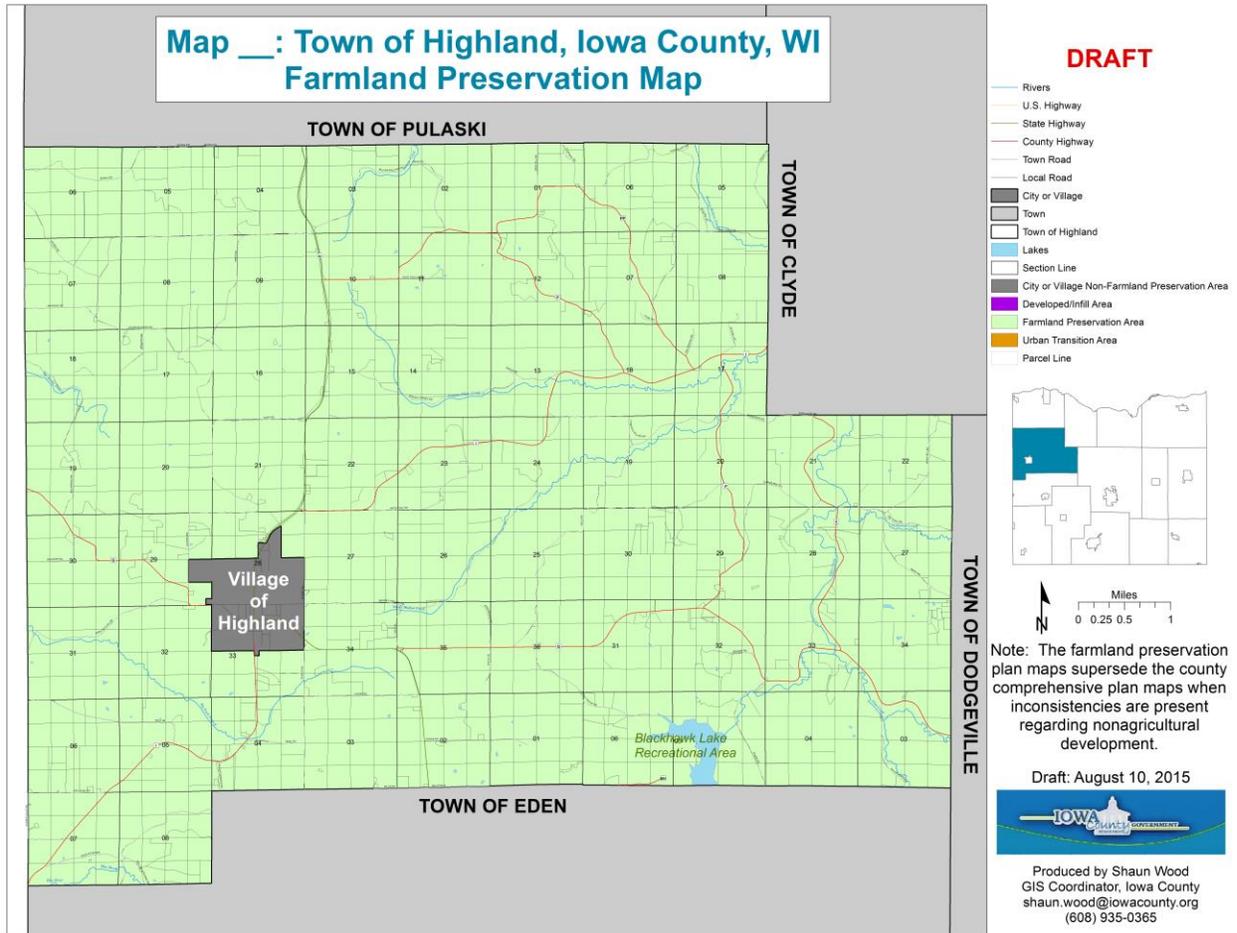
### Map 4d: Town of Dodgeville Farmland Preservation Plan Map



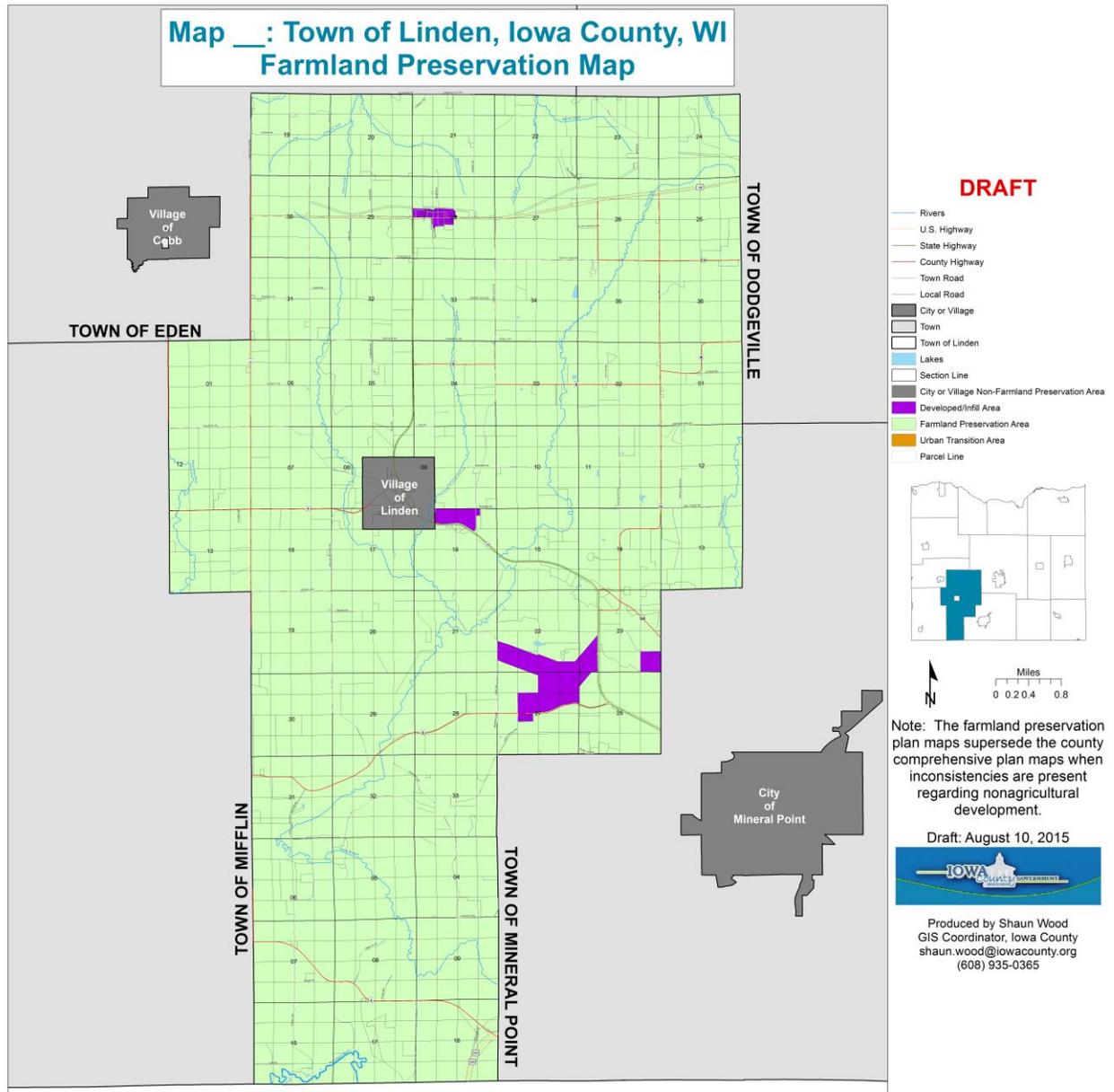
### Map 4e: Town of Eden Farmland Preservation Plan Map



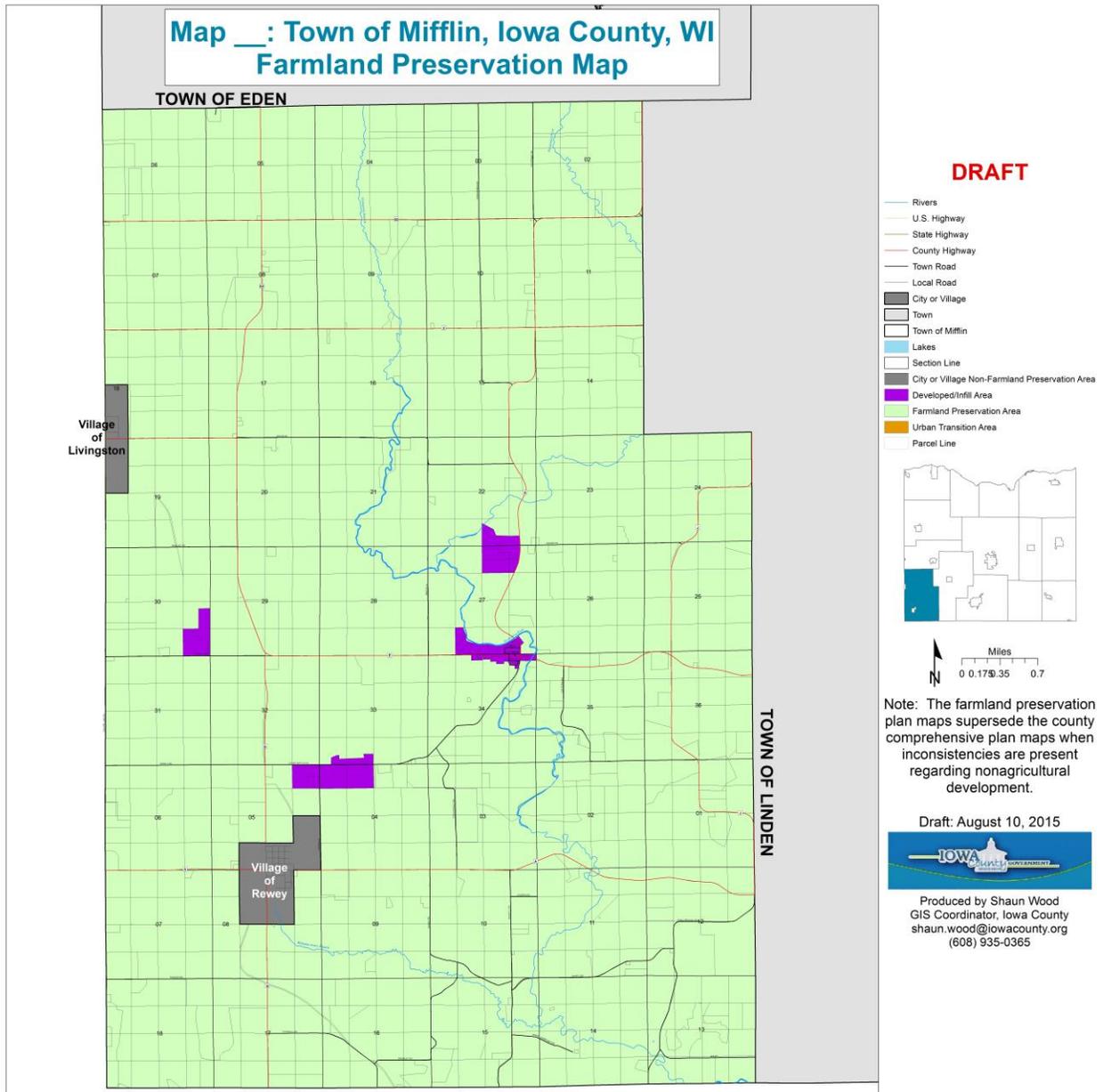
### Map 4f: Town of Highland Farmland Preservation Plan Map



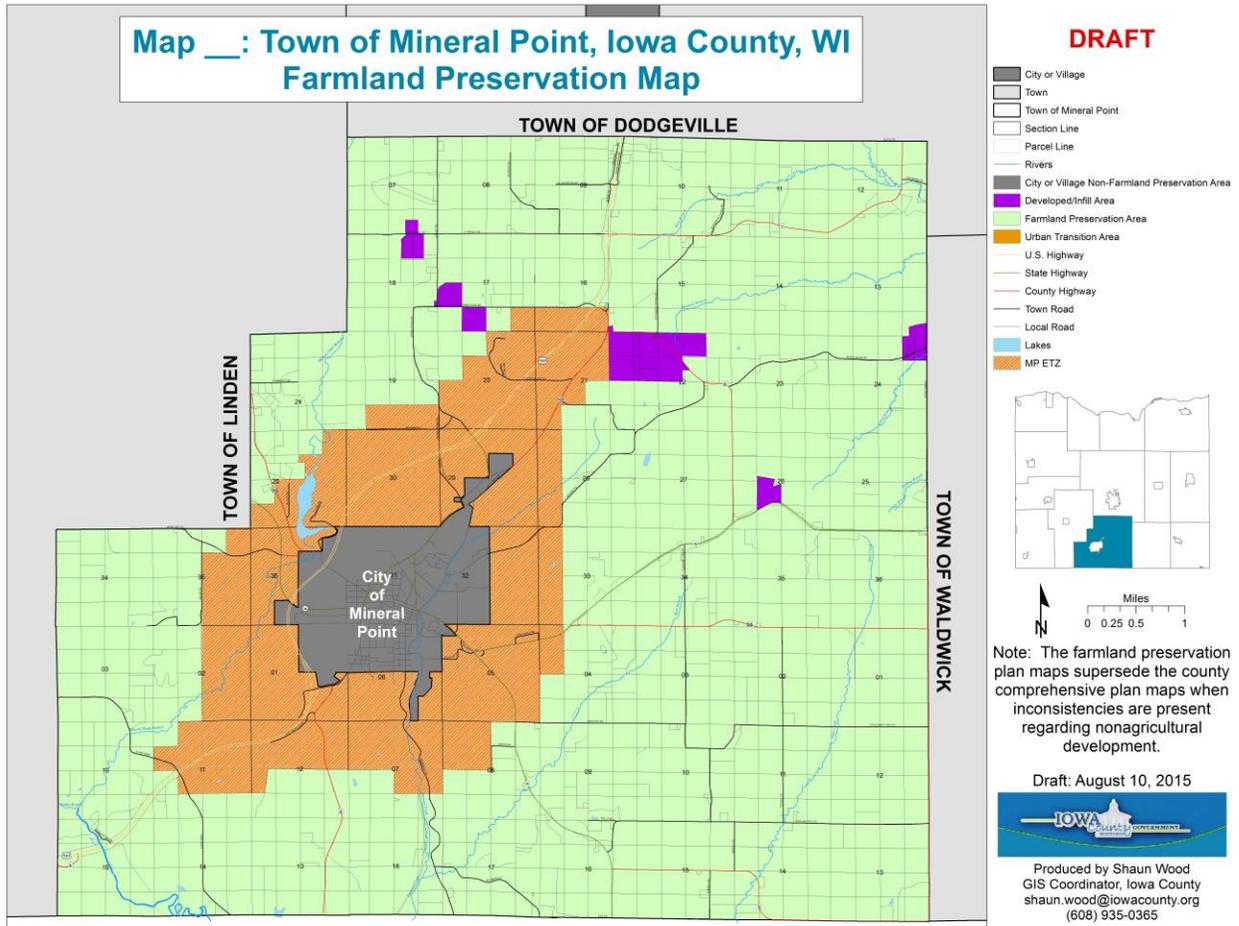
### Map 4g: Town of Linden Farmland Preservation Plan Map



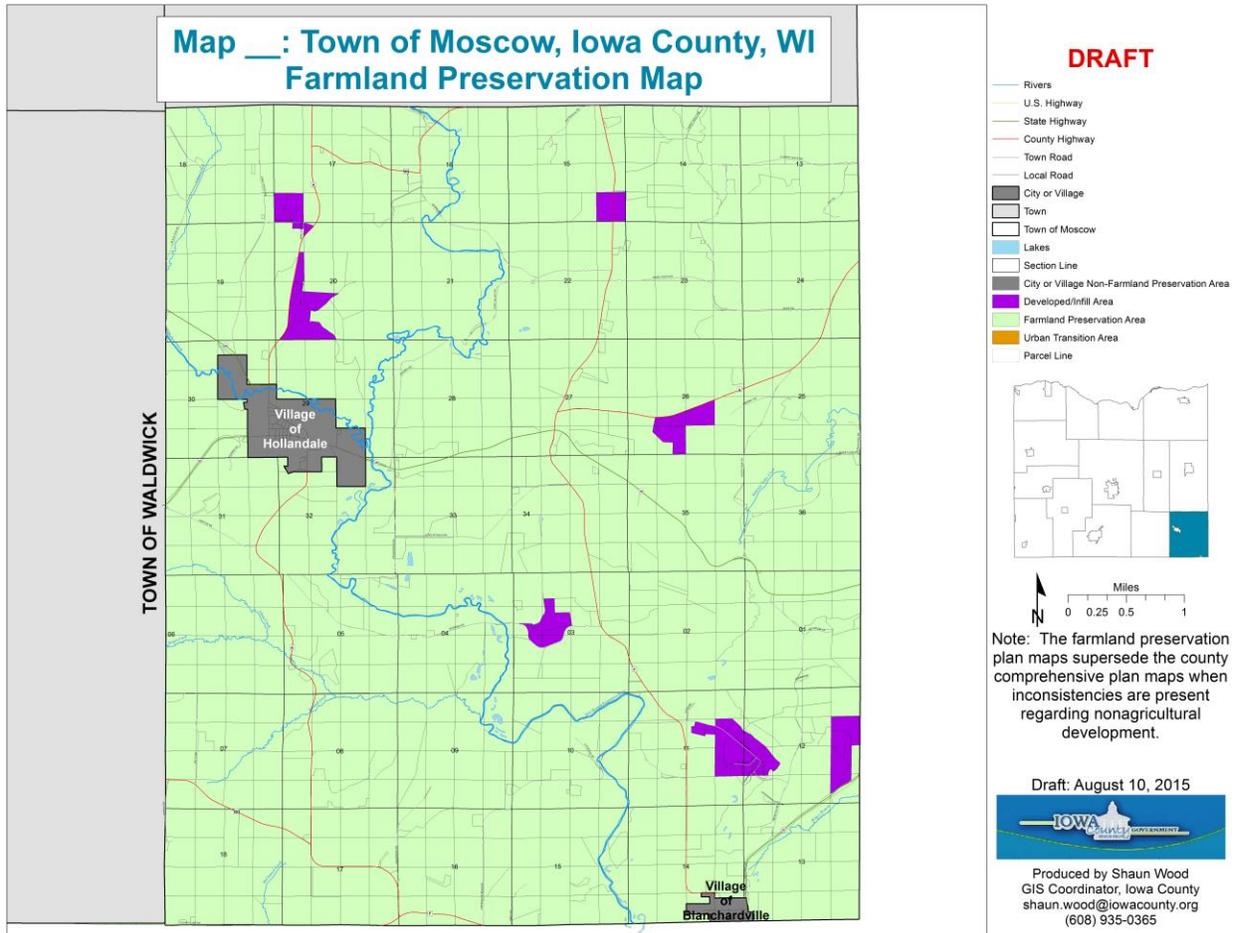
### Map 4h: Town of Mifflin Farmland Preservation Plan Map



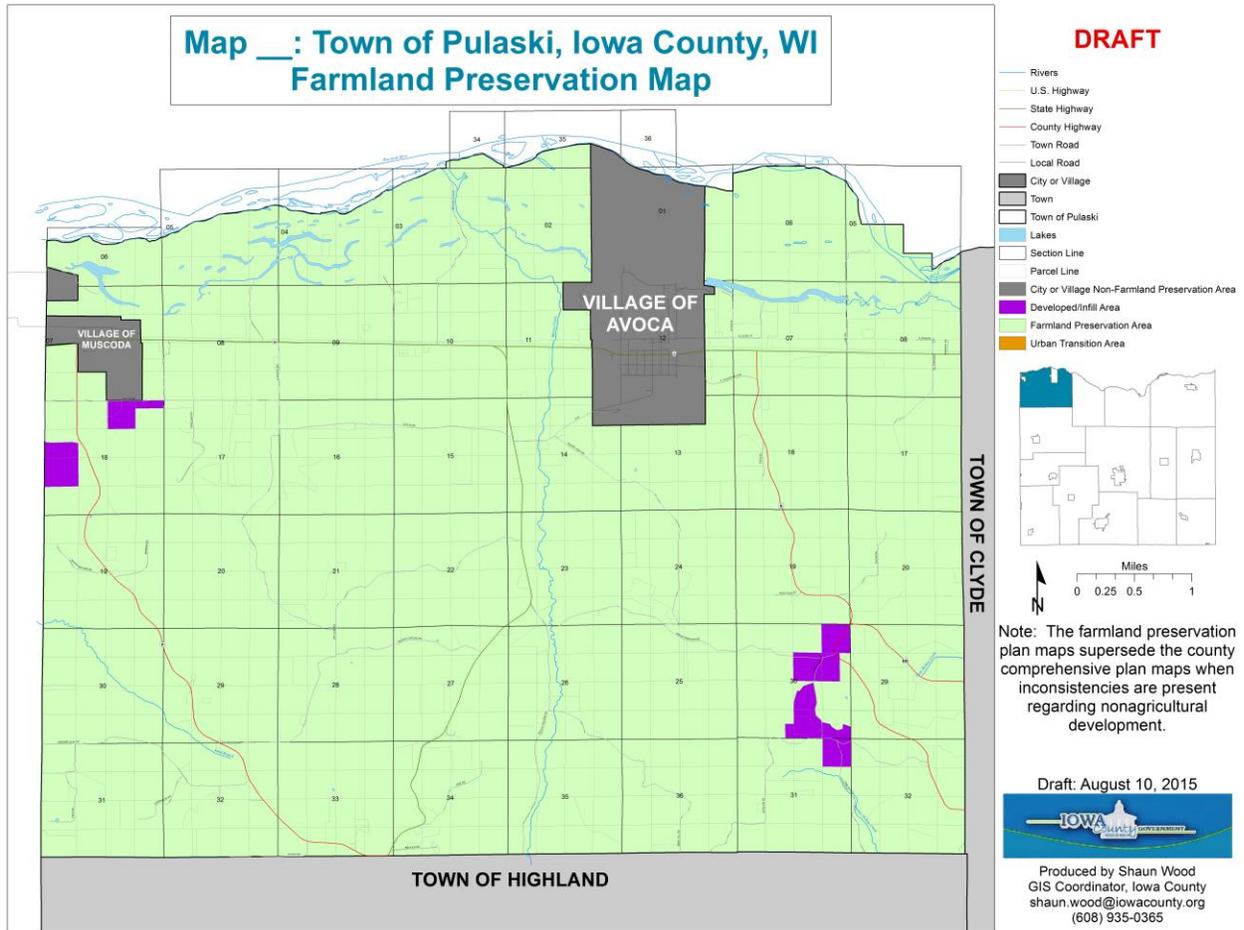
### Map 4i: Town of Mineral Point Farmland Preservation Plan Map



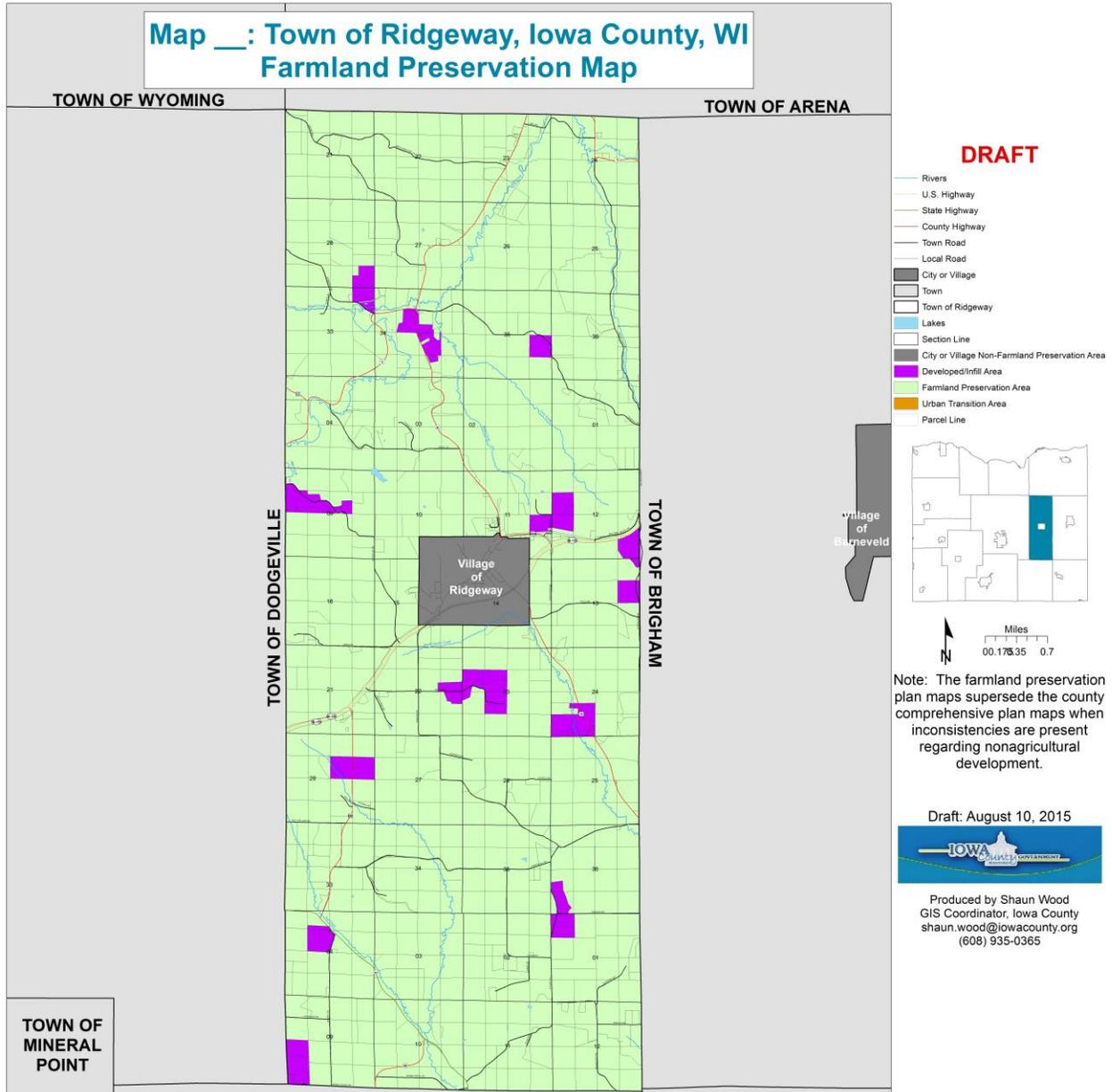
### Map 4j: Town of Moscow Farmland Preservation Plan Map



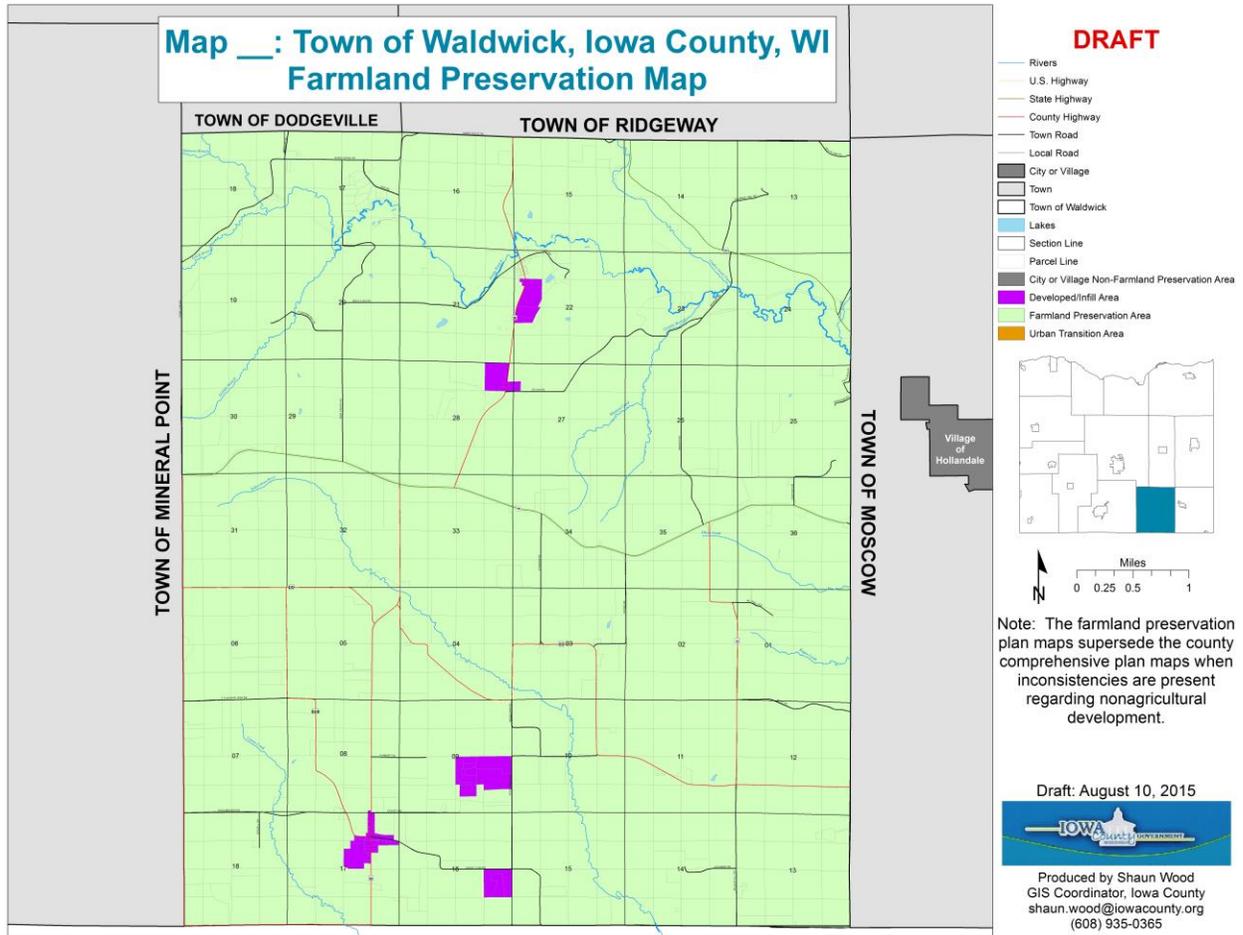
### Map 4k: Town of Pulaski Farmland Preservation Plan Map



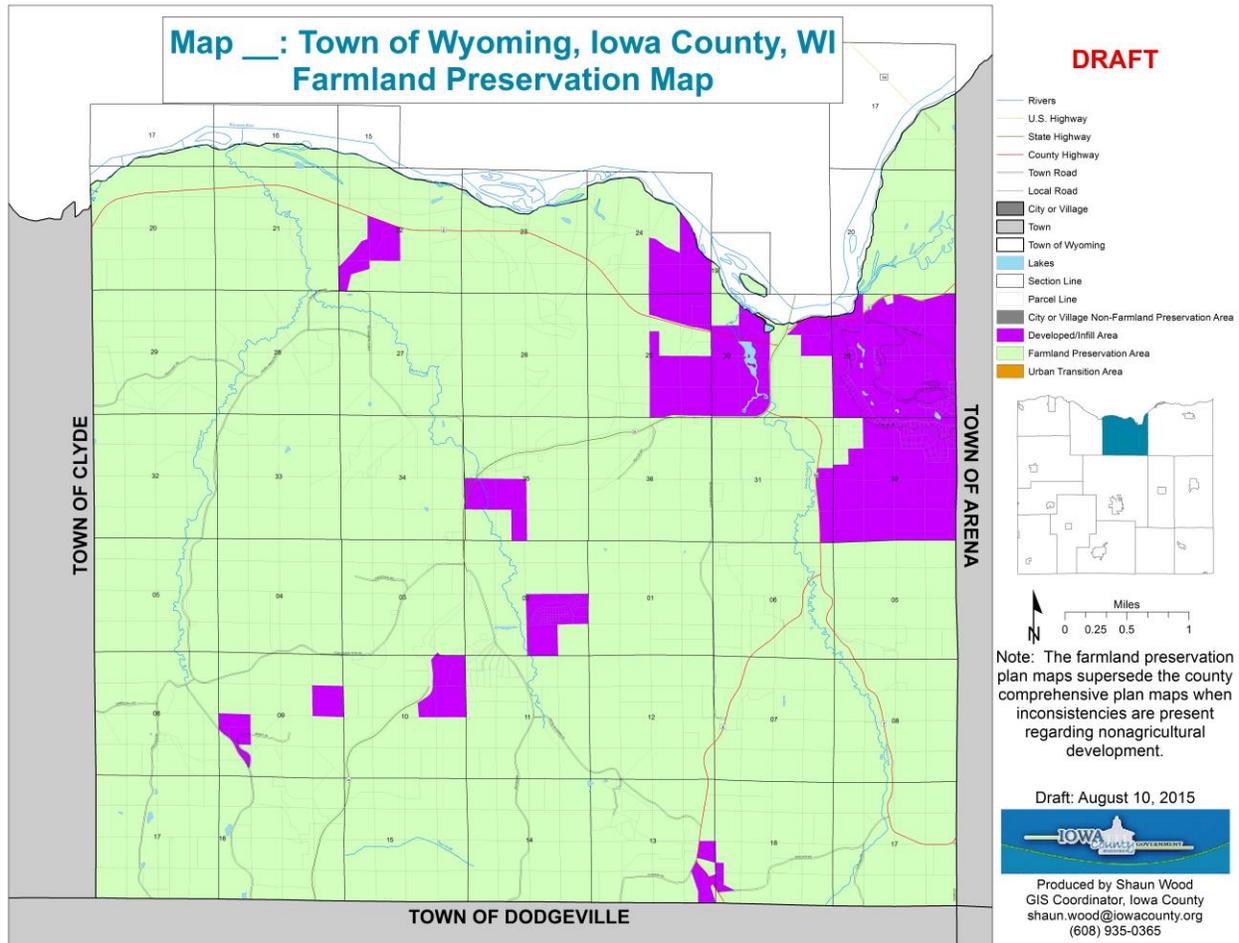
### Map 4l: Town of Ridgeway Farmland Preservation Plan Map



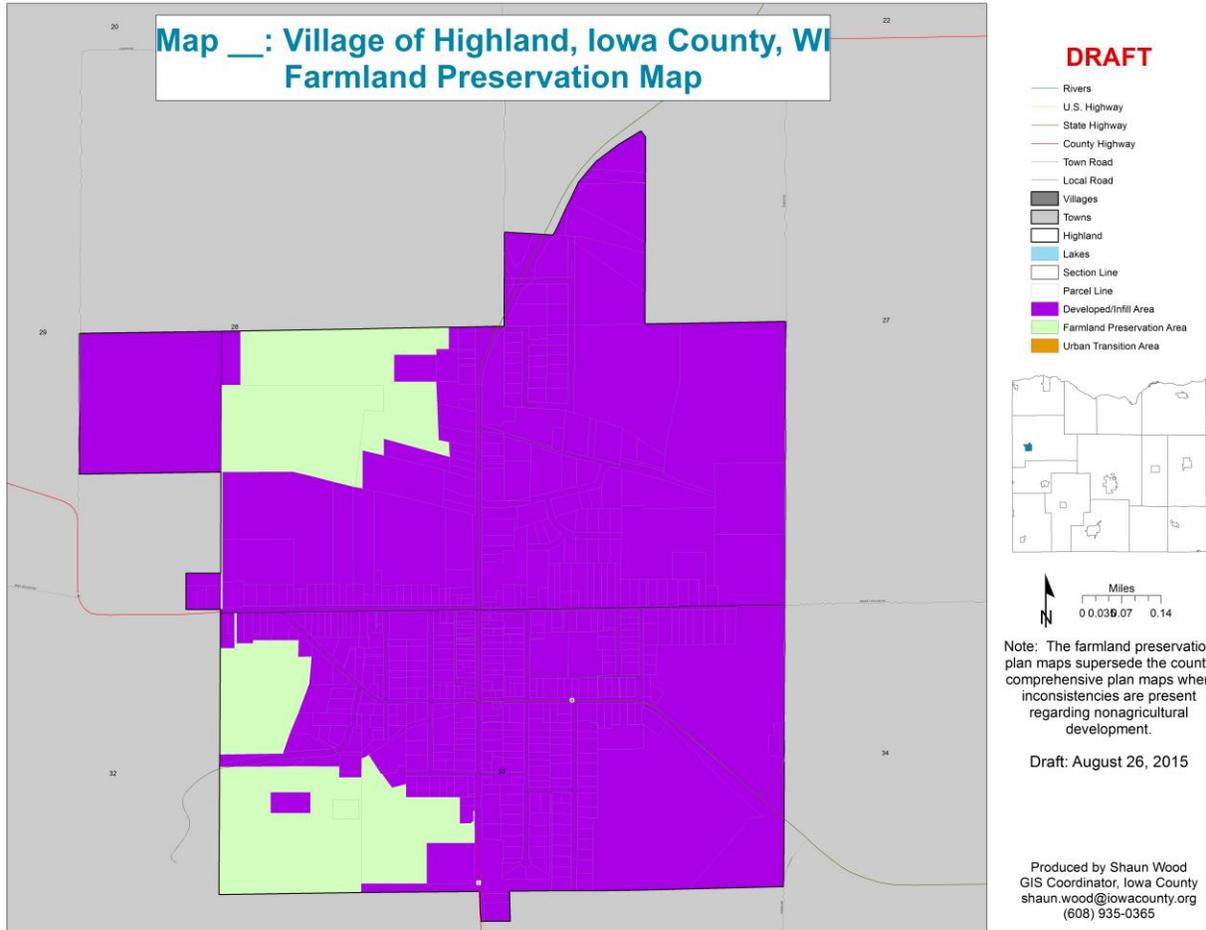
### Map 4m: Town of Waldwick Farmland Preservation Plan Map



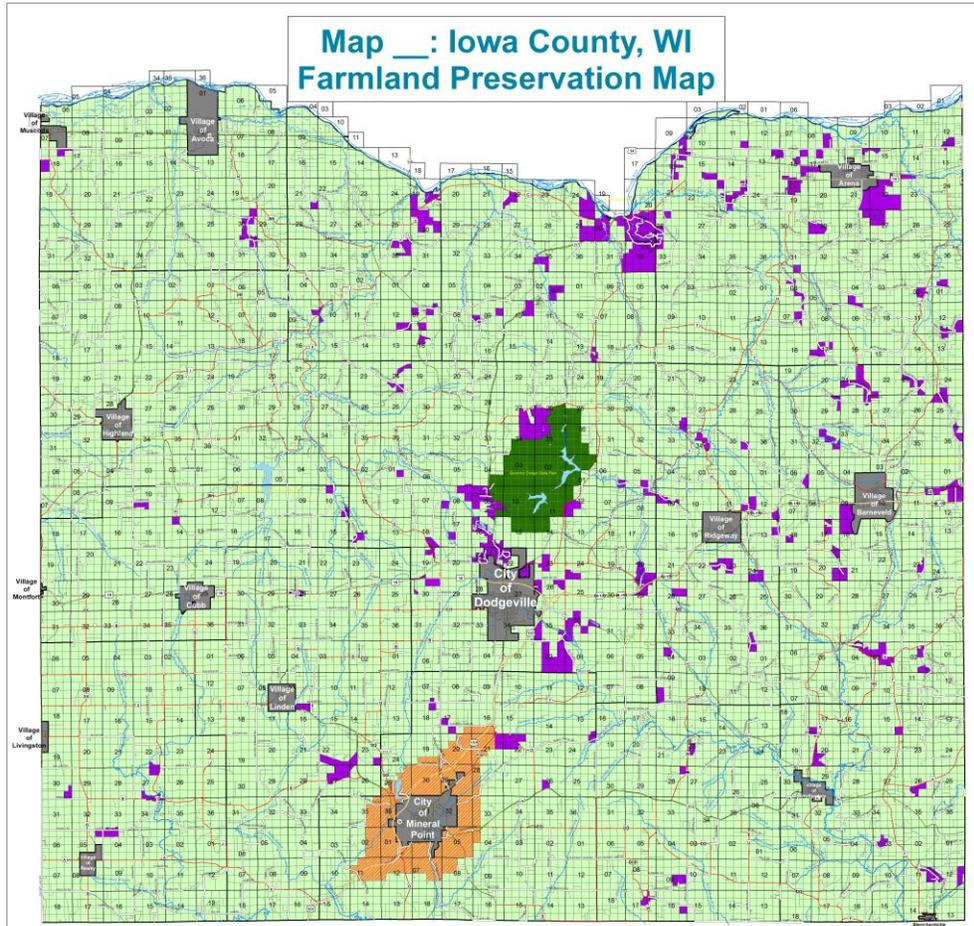
### Map 4n: Town of Wyoming Farmland Preservation Plan Map



Map 4o: Village of Highland Farmland Preservation Plan Map

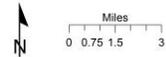
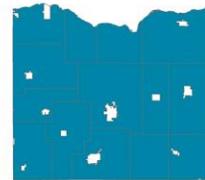


Map 4p: Iowa County Farmland Preservation Plan Map



**DRAFT**

- Rivers
- U.S. Highway
- State Highway
- County Highway
- Town Road
- Local Road
- ▭ Town
- ▭ City or Village
- ▭ City or Village Non-Farmland Preservation Area
- ▭ Developed/Infill Area
- ▭ Farmland Preservation Area
- ▭ Urban Transition Area
- ▭ MP ETZ
- ▭ Parcel Line
- ▭ Parks

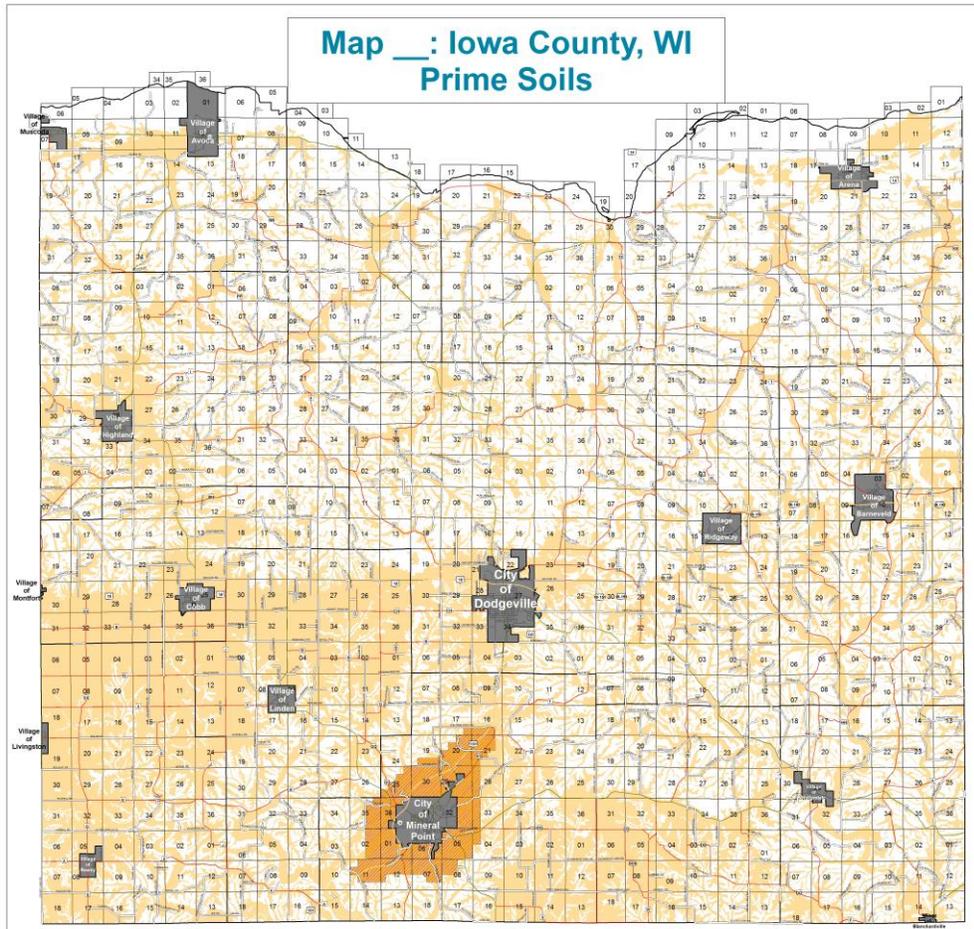


Note: The farmland preservation plan maps supersede the county comprehensive plan maps when inconsistencies are present regarding nonagricultural development.

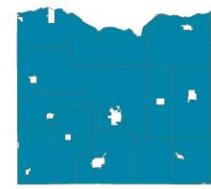
Draft: August 26, 2015

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### Map 4o: Prime Farmland Map



DRAFT



Draft: May 6, 2015

## CHAPTER 5: IMPLEMENTATION

Not all of the recommendations of this plan will be immediately implemented. Specific follow-up actions will be required for the plan to become reality. This final chapter is intended to provide Iowa County with a roadmap for these implementation actions, focused in particular on zoning ordinance amendments that will be required. This chapter also provides the required procedural steps for evaluation, amendments, and update to this plan, to assure that it remains current and responsive to county trends, needs, and policy desires.

The county's comprehensive plan is a collection of adopted documents, this Farmland Preservation Plan being one of them. Further, the planning requirements of Chapter 91 of Wisconsin Statutes are fulfilled not only by this Farmland Preservation Plan, but also by information contained in other components of the county comprehensive plan. Specifically, the Iowa County Comprehensive Plan document includes certain required supporting information about the nature of agriculture in Iowa County, as well as implementation recommendations related to agriculture, economic development, and other topics addressed in this Farmland Preservation Plan and required by statute.

### ***Suggested Actions for Plan Implementation***

As first identified in Chapter 1, Iowa County's overall farmland preservation program consists of three interrelated components—Economics, Incentives, and Land Use Planning and Zoning. All three are critical to ensuring the protection and continuation of the county's agricultural landscape, character, and economy. This plan has focused in particular on the Land Use Planning and Zoning component. The implementation discussion that follows therefore emphasizes implementing land use recommendations, particularly through subsequent ordinance amendments.

### **Implementation of Land Use Initiatives—Immediate Zoning Ordinance Considerations**

The focus of this Plan has been to establish policies for future land use decision-making related to farmland preservation. These policies will be used as one basis to make decisions on future requests for actions like rezoning lands for development, directing intensive development to areas with urban services, and interacting with local units of government on land use issues.

Under Chapter 91 of Wisconsin Statutes, the County is required to amend its zoning ordinance to implement the recommendations in this Farmland Preservation Plan. Such ordinance amendments must be certified by DATCP. Iowa County has a long tradition of working very closely with all fourteen towns, primarily because all have adopted county zoning. As a result, close coordination with both DATCP and the towns is essential.

Zoning ordinance amendments that will follow the finalization of this Farmland Preservation Plan include the following:

- Update the A-1 Agriculture district: The A-1 district is and will continue to be the most commonly mapped zoning district in Iowa County. A-1 is the primary zoning district to implement the policies associated with the designated Farmland Preservation Area. In light of the policies within this Plan and the requirements and allowances under Chapter 91, the county intends to update the A-1 zoning district rules within the county zoning ordinance.
- Update the AB-1 Agricultural Business district: The AB-1 district will be considered a farmland preservation zoning district utilized for agricultural related land uses within the mapped Farmland Preservation Area, regardless of whether the affected property is eligible for farmland preservation tax credits.
- Update the C-1 Conservancy district: The C-1 district will be considered a farmland preservation zoning district utilized for nonstructural agricultural related land uses within the mapped Farmland Preservation Area.

- Create the GAO-1 General Agriculture overlay zoning district: Areas designated as Developed/Infill and Urban Transition Areas on the Farmland Preservation Plan maps may not be zoned with a farmland preservation zoning district under the Working Lands law. As such, the county intends to utilize this overlay zoning district to be applied to those Developed/Infill and Urban Transition Areas that are not already zoned for development. This overlay zoning district will allow some agricultural land uses.
- Maintain flexibility for older farm residences in A-1 district: The county intends to allow within the A-1 district the continuation of residences legally established prior to adoption of this Plan. However, under the Working Lands law where not defined as a “farm residence,” these uses will then become “prior nonconforming uses,” whereas previously they were considered conforming uses in the A-1 district. To maintain the ability of owners of these residences to pursue reasonable modifications, expansions, and replacement of such residences without rezoning or variance, the county will pursue a flexible definition of a “farm residence” for preexisting residences within the limits permitted by statute and consider adjustments to the non-conforming use standards in the county zoning ordinance. The county will also work with towns to rezone A-1 zoned lands developed with non-farm residences to more appropriate zoning districts, where practical.
- Pursue necessary zoning map amendments: While major countywide changes to the zoning map will not be required to implement this Plan, some changes will certainly be necessary.

### Implementation of Land Use Initiatives—Other Considerations

Beyond the short-term zoning ordinance amendments that will be implemented, the county will consider the following additional land use initiatives related to farmland preservation:

- Review the Iowa County Subdivision and Land Division Ordinance for consistency with the Iowa County Comprehensive Plan, including consideration of a right-to-farm notice requirements for plats and/or certified survey maps, and require the identification and protection of natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas.
- Ongoing education and communication with county and local officials, key private partners, and the general citizenry about this plan and implementing ordinance amendments.
- Recognize the impact of planned state and federal highway improvements on development patterns by focusing farmland preservation planning efforts along those highway corridors.
- Attempt to influence changes to Chapter 91 of Wisconsin Statutes and pending Wisconsin Administrative Rules related to farmland preservation planning and zoning in a way that helps the county implement its program and reduces unnecessary negative impacts on private land owners, through the Wisconsin County Code Administrators organization and otherwise.

## ***Plan Adoption, Evaluation, Amendments, and Update***

### Plan Adoption

A first step in implementing the Iowa County Farmland Preservation Plan is making sure that it is adopted in a manner which supports its future use for more detailed decision making. The county included all necessary process steps and substantive elements for this plan to be adopted as a farmland preservation plan under Chapter 91 of Wisconsin Statutes, and as another detailed component of the Iowa County Comprehensive Plan under Section 66.1001. With concurrent amendments to the Iowa County Comprehensive Plan document, it and this Farmland Preservation Plan are predominantly consistent.

Following certification by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) and a recommendation from the Iowa County Planning and Zoning Committee, the Iowa County Board adopted this Farmland Preservation Plan on *(to be filled in)*. The County simultaneously incorporated this plan into the Iowa County Comprehensive Plan as an appendix to ensure consistency among all

comprehensive plan elements. Following these adoptions, the new Farmland Preservation Plan and the Iowa County Comprehensive Plan amendment were distributed to a variety of overlapping and adjacent units of government.

### Plan Monitoring

The county commits to regularly assessing the relevancy and adequacy of the provisions of this plan against the current agricultural, development and economic trends. The assessment process will include input from the local towns, villages and cities to ensure greater consistency with local policies and plans. This plan is intended to be a “living document” in that it is intended to maintain relevancy through time.

### Plan Amendments

Building on the “living document” theme, amendments to this plan may be deemed appropriate in order to maintain relevancy with emerging trends and related policies. It is not intended to amend this plan for case-by-case development proposals or other reasons of limited countywide import.

The process to amend this Plan is guided by procedures under both Section 66.1001(4) and Chapter 91 of Wisconsin Statutes. This requires the same formal process to amend this Plan as was used for its initial adoption. Specifically, the county intends to use the following procedure to amend, add to, or update this Plan:

1. Either the County Board or Planning and Zoning Committee initiates the proposed plan amendment. This may occur as a result of regular Planning and Zoning Committee evaluation of the plan, or at the request of a local government, property owner, or the public. In its evaluation of the proposed plan amendment, the committee and county staff will evaluate whether the proposed amendment meets the vision and goals of this plan, and whether it meets state requirements to maintain this plan as a certified farmland preservation plan. This may require contact with DATCP staff during this step or later steps of the process.
2. The County Board adopts a resolution outlining the procedures that will be undertaken to ensure public participation during the plan amendment process, per Section 66.1001(4)a of Wisconsin Statutes. This may be completed on a one-time basis to cover all potential plan amendments between the time this plan was initially adopted and the time it must be updated under Wisconsin Statutes (see “Update” guidance below).
3. The County Planning and Zoning Committee prepares or directs the preparation of the specific text or map amendment to the Farmland Preservation Plan. If such an amendment affects a particular town, the committee intends to share the requested language or map change with that town during this and subsequent steps.
4. County staff forward materials required under Section 91.20 of Wisconsin Statutes to DATCP to facilitate certification of the plan amendment. These materials include a copy of the adopted ordinance and plan amendment; summaries of key changes from the previously-certified plan, the process used to amend the plan, and the relationship of the plan amendment to the county’s comprehensive plan; and a statement certifying that the plan amendment complies with Section 91.18 of Wisconsin Statutes.
5. The County Planning and Zoning Committee holds one or more public meetings on the proposed comprehensive plan amendment. Following the public meeting(s), the Planning and Zoning Committee makes a recommendation by resolution to the County Board by majority vote of the entire committee, per Section 66.1001(4)b of Wisconsin Statutes.
6. County staff directs the publishing of a Class 1 notice associated with the proposed plan amendment, with such notice published at least 30 days before a County Planning and Zoning Committee public hearing and containing information required under Section 66.1001(4)d of Wisconsin Statutes.

7. The committee holds the formal public hearing on an ordinance that would incorporate the proposed plan amendment into the County's Farmland Preservation Plan (and, by extension, the Iowa County Comprehensive Plan as a whole).
8. Following the public hearing and DATCP certification, the County Board approves (or denies) the ordinance adopting the proposed plan amendment. Adoption must be by a majority vote of all members. The County Board may require changes from the Planning and Zoning Committee recommended version of the proposed plan amendment.
9. County staff send a copy of the adopted ordinance and Plan amendment to all adjacent and surrounding government jurisdictions, DATCP, nonmetallic mine operators, any person who has registered a marketable nonmetallic mineral deposit with the local government, and any other property owner or leaseholder who has requested notification in writing as required under Sections 66.1001(4)b and c of Wisconsin Statutes.

### Plan Update

The Wisconsin comprehensive planning law (Section 66.1001 Wisconsin Statutes) requires that the county's comprehensive plan be updated at least once every 10 years. Further, the State's farmland preservation law (Chapter 91 Wisconsin Statutes) specifies that DATCP may certify a farmland preservation plan for a period that does not exceed 10 years.

## APPENDIX A: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION RESULTS

### *Public Meetings*

#### Pre-Planning Meetings

The enactment of the Wisconsin Working Lands Initiative in 2009 was the catalyst for numerous local meetings that became the foundation for the county's Farmland Preservation Plan revision effort. The Iowa County Planning & Zoning Committee held several public meetings to discuss the potential impacts of the Initiative as its interpretation developed. This effort reached over 200 citizens and local officials.

In April of 2010, county staff held public listening sessions in three areas of the county for the purpose of providing an overview of the Working Lands Initiative and farmland preservation.

County staff met with individual town plan commissions and boards to provide information about the Initiative and to discuss the impending farmland preservation planning process. These meetings were held with all fourteen towns during 2011.

#### July 25, 2012

The Iowa County Planning & Zoning Committee held a public meeting to discuss a review process of the current Farmland Preservation Plan. The Committee decided to request each local jurisdiction in the county to review the current plan and provide a list of potential revisions with rationale. The Committee also discussed how present considerations for revisions to the Iowa County Zoning Ordinance relating to uses in the farmland preservation district need be within the context of the plan revisions. County staff worked on a format and began drafting portions of the Farmland Preservation Plan.

#### January 23, 2013

The Iowa County Planning & Zoning Committee held a public meeting to review the draft ATCP 49 Working Lands Initiative Administrative Rule. The purpose of the review was to assure the county's planning process would be consistent with the proposed rule provisions. At this time, the committee decided to slow the planning process down in order to allow for the draft rule to be finalized. There was concern not to expend time, energy and resources until such time that the state rule was enacted, thus providing clear direction. In the meantime, the committee decided to request of each town input on how to define farmland preservation areas within their jurisdiction. County staff provided maps and guidance to towns through the first few months of 2013 on this effort.

#### 2014

County staff focused on drafting revisions to the plan which were considered by the Iowa County Planning and Zoning Committee during seven public meetings, from April through December. Also in December, maps were distributed to all towns with the request to mark Farmland Preservation Areas by February of 2015. It is anticipated that each town will hold at least one public meeting to accomplish this task.

### *Town/Public Meetings*

- To be completed.

***Public Hearing***

- To be completed.

***Other Outreach Efforts***

- To be completed.

## APPENDIX B: EXISTING CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

This Appendix contains relevant details about the existing conditions and trends in Iowa County, including population, demographic and housing trends, and agricultural changes. This document also includes background information pertaining to municipal expansion, natural resources, utilities and community facilities, transportation, and economic development in Iowa County. This Appendix provides the relevant background information to provide a basis for understanding the trends currently influencing development and preservation in Iowa County as well as how they may affect the county in the future. It also meets requirements of Chapter 91 of Wisconsin Statutes.

### *Population and Demographic Trends*

#### Population Trends

Figure B-1 compares Iowa County's population trends from 1970 to 2010 with abutting counties and the state. As indicated below, Iowa County has experienced steady population growth since 1970—more than 22 percent in 40 years. The county grew by 4.2 percent between 2000 and 2010, which is a bit below average of the surrounding counties.

Figure B-1: County and State Historic Populations

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	Population Change	
						2000-2010	1970-2010
Iowa County	19,306	19,802	20,150	22,730	23,687	4.2%	22.7%
Crawford County	15,252	16,556	15,940	17,243	16,644	3.5%	9.1%
Dane County	290,272	323,545	367,085	426,526	488,073	14.4%	68.1%
Grant County	48,398	51,736	49,246	49,597	51,208	3.2%	5.8%
Green County	26,714	30,012	30,339	33,647	36,842	9.5%	37.9%
Lafayette County	17,456	17,412	16,076	16,137	16,836	4.3%	-3.6%
Richland County	17,079	17,476	17,521	17,924	18,021	0.5%	5.5%
Sauk County	39,057	43,469	49,975	55,225	61,976	12.2%	58.7%
State of Wisconsin	4,417,821	4,705,642	4,891,769	5,363,675	5,686,986	6.0%	28.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure B-2 compares the populations of Iowa County townships from 2000 to 2010. Most townships experienced population decreases since 2000. The towns experiencing increases in population are in the eastern part of the county, closest to the metropolitan Madison area and along the US 18-151 corridor.

Figure B-2: Town Population Trends

	2000	2010	2000- 2010
Town of Arena	1,444	1,456	0.8%
Town of Brigham	908	1,034	13.9%
Town of Clyde	322	306	-5.0%
Town of Dodgeville	1,407	1,708	21.4%
Town of Eden	397	355	-10.6%
Town of Highland	797	750	-5.9%
Town of Linden	873	847	-3.0%
Town of Mifflin	617	585	-5.2%
Town of Mineral Point	867	1,033	19.1%
Town of Moscow	594	576	-3.0%
Town of Pulaski	381	400	5.0%
Town of Ridgeway	581	568	-2.2%
Town of Waldwick	500	473	-5.4%
Town of Wyoming	364	302	-17.0%

### Demographic Trends

Figure B-3 compares 2010 age and gender distribution data for Iowa County to neighboring counties and Wisconsin. Age distribution is an important factor when considering the future demands for housing, schools, parks, and recreational facilities and the provision of social services. Iowa County's statistics are comparable to the others listed, with the exception of Dane County and the State of Wisconsin.

**Figure B-3: Age and Gender Distribution**

	Median Age	Under 18 (%)	65 and over (%)	Female (%)
Iowa County	41.1	23.7%	16.1%	50.0%
Crawford County	44.7	21.1%	20.1%	48.5%
Dane County	34.4	21.2%	11.5%	50.4%
Grant County	36.4	20.7%	16.3%	48.0%
Green County	41.1	23.3%	16.4%	50.4%
Lafayette County	40.4	24.7%	16.4%	49.0%
Richland County	43	22.5%	19.3%	49.8%
Sauk County	40	23.2%	16.4%	50.3%
Wisconsin	38.5	22.8%	14.8%	50.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2010)

As indicated by Figure B-4, the educational attainment levels for Iowa County are only surpassed by Sauk and Dane counties. Iowa County's proximity to the City of Madison along major highway corridors contributes to Iowa County being a residency option for commuters who work in the Dane County professional and technical job market.

**Figure B-4: Educational Attainment**

	High School Graduates		Bachelor's Degree or Higher	
Iowa County	92.4			21.4
Crawford County	89.9			15.7
Dane County	94.7			45.8
Grant County	89.7			19.4
Green County	90.9			19.1
Lafayette County	89.6			16.7
Richland County	87.7			14.6
Sauk County	94.6			32.6
State of Wisconsin	90.2			26.4

Source: American Community Survey Table DP02 5-year estimates 2008-12

## Housing Trends

Figure B-5 compares the county's housing characteristics with surrounding counties and the State. A housing unit is considered owner-occupied if the owner or co-owner lives in the unit, regardless of whether the unit is mortgaged or owned without a mortgage. A housing unit is vacant if no one is living in it at the time when it is counted. In terms of age of housing stock, Iowa County is comparable to the state numbers with Sauk having substantially newer housing stock.

**Figure B-5: Housing Characteristics**

	Total Housing Units	Vacant (%)	Owner Occupied (%)	Housing Built since 2000 (%)	Housing Built before 1970 (%)
Iowa County	10,717	10.3%	77.1%	14.0%	49.0%
Crawford County	8,840	22.6%	75.6%	11.4%	48.3%
Dane County	216,027	5.6%	60.1%	18.8%	37.1%
Grant County	21,568	10.2%	73.4%	9.9%	53.4%
Green County	15,857	8.4%	76.7%	14.2%	50.3%
Lafayette County	7,218	8.6%	79.2%	7.9%	63.4%
Richland County	8,856	16.5%	74.8%	11.1%	53.5%
Sauk County	33,969	5.7%	71.2%	29.1%	26.4%
Wisconsin	2,620,401	12.7%	68.6%	12.6%	48.5%

Source: American Community Survey (2008-12 5-year estimates)

## ***Agriculture***

### Economic Contribution of Agriculture

Agriculture has long been, and will continue to be, a primary driving economic force in Iowa County. According to the 2012 Census of Agriculture, there were 1,588 farms in Iowa County (down from 1,813 in 2007) and a total of 350,813 acres of farmland. The 2012 average farm size is 221 acres, which grew slightly from 201 from 2007. The 2012 market value of agricultural products sold was \$195,336,000 up from \$157,947,000 in 2007.

According to the 2011 Iowa County Agriculture: Value and Impact Report prepared by the UW-Extension, agriculture provides 2,765 (about 18% of the county's workforce) jobs in the county, accounts for \$332 million in business sales in the county, contributes \$106 million to county income, and pays \$10 million in taxes. Agricultural jobs are diverse and include farm owners, on-farm employees, veterinarians, crop and livestock consultants, feed and fuel suppliers, food processors, farm machinery manufacturers and dealers, barn builders, and agricultural lenders.

### Agricultural Production and Specialties

Milk production is the largest agricultural commodity in Iowa County, contributing \$81 million to the county's economy. Grain production follows at \$30.9 million, cattle/calves at \$30.2 million, vegetables at \$5 million and poultry/eggs at \$3.1 million. The latter is expected to increase as a growing trend is the construction of large poultry operations, especially in the northwest part of the county.

### Agricultural Resources

As of 2012, Iowa County had over 198,000 acres of cropped farmland, accounting for 60 percent of total land area of the county.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service categorizes soil into eight classes based on their capability to produce common cultivated crops and pasture plants without deteriorating over a long period of time. The county defines prime farmland as Class I, Class II and Class III soils, which constitute about 44% of the total acres in the county. Of prime soils, Class I, II and III comprise 2.7%, 45.9% and 51.4% respectively.

### Agricultural Trends

Since the early 1990s, an increasing percentage of total cropland has been utilized for corn and soybeans. As indicated in Figure B-6, although the total acres in cropland has decreased by 14.5% from 1997 to 2012, the percentage of cropland planted in corn and beans has increased during the same time period. The acreage devoted to corn for grain increased by about 4.9 percent since 1997 while acreage devoted to soybeans increased by about 79.4%. These figures may not accurately represent current conditions as the fluctuating commodity prices cause a shift in some operations from dairy to corn production.

**Figure B-6: Iowa County Changes in Crops Harvested**

	1997	2002	2007	2012	% Change 1997-2012	% Change 2007-2012
Total cropland (acres)	231,855	216,882	201,818	198,162	-14.5%	-1.8%
Harvested cropland (acres)	161,291	152,826	151,919	166,663	3.3%	9.7%
Corn for grain (acres)	56,295	51,915	56,937	59,049	4.9%	3.7%
Corn for silage or green chop (acres)	14,834	11,882	11,383	19,910	34.2%	74.9%
Soybeans for beans (acres)	15,461	25,170	24,336	27,737	79.4%	14.0%

Source: USDA Agricultural Census

As indicated in Figure B-7, the number of farms in Iowa County grew from 1997 to 2007, then decreased by about 12.4% between 2007 and 2012. However, the number of farms increased by about 13.9% during the entire time period of 1997 to 2012.

The amount of farmland in the county is declining, down nearly 4% percent since 1997. This corresponds with a growing trend toward smaller farms throughout the county—the average farm having dropped from 263 acres in 1997, to 121 acres in 2012.

**Figure B-7: Farmland Trends**

	1997	2002	2007	2012	% Change 1997- 2012	% Change 2007- 2012
Total Farms	1,394	1,686	1,813	1,588	13.9%	-12.4%
Farmland (acres)	366,709	367,373	364,970	350,813	-4.3%	-3.9%
Average Farm Size (acres)	263	218	201	221	-16.0%	-10.0%

Source: USDA Agricultural Census

Figure B-8 compares the changes in size of Iowa County farms from 1997 to 2012. As depicted, the greatest increase from 1997 to 2012 was for farms between 10-49 acres with the greatest decrease for farms between 180-499 acres. Smaller farms (i.e. between 1 and 49 acres) is increasing in the county. One to nine acre farms decreased by 26% between 1997 and 2012 and the number of ten to 49 acre farms decreased by 11.2%. The number of larger farms has declined since the late nineties; however, very large farms (i.e., 1000+ acres.) increased by 22% between 1997 and 2012.

**Figure B-8: Changes in Number of Farms by Size of Farm**

	1997	2002	2007	2012	% Change 1997-2012	% Change 2007-2012
1-9 acres	38	42	50	37	-2.6%	-26.0%
10-49 acres	158	347	419	372	135.4%	-11.2%
50-179 acres	468	614	719	589	25.9%	-18.1%
180-499 acres	568	516	463	432	-23.9%	-6.7%
500-999 acres	129	125	121	108	-16.3%	-10.7%
1,000+ acres	33	42	41	50	51.5%	22.0%

Source: USDA Agricultural Census

### Agricultural Infrastructure

Agriculture relies on a number of supporting businesses, such as storage facilities, supply companies, distribution businesses, implement dealers, feed/seed operations, processing facilities, veterinary services, aggregate and lime companies, agricultural supplies, field services, agricultural building construction, etc. Collectively, these businesses create a support network that is key to the vitality of agriculture in the county. Therefore, it is critical to support their maintenance and expansion.

The following is merely a partial list of agricultural-support businesses in Iowa County:

- Blain's Farm & Fleet (C. Dodgeville)
- Ederer Hardware (C. Dodgeville)
- Midwest Grain Roasters, Inc. (T. Dodgeville)
- Ritchie Implement Inc. (V. Barneveld & V. Cobb)
- Sloan Implement (T. Eden)
- Ziegler Ag Equipment (T. Dodgeville)
- Hennessey Implement (C. Dodgeville)
- R Equipment (T. Mineral Point)
- Farmers Implement Store (C. Mineral Point)
- Frontier FS Cooperative (T. Eden)
- Ross Soil Service (C. Mineral Point)
- Premier Cooperative (C. Mineral Point)
- Vita Plus (C. Dodgeville)
- Quality Liquid Feeds (T. Dodgeville)
- Mill Creek Cheese (T. Arena)
- Uplands Cheese (T. Dodgeville)
- Glacier Point Cheese LLC (V. Linden)
- McCarville Dairy Supplies (C. Mineral Point)
- Wright's Feed Services, Inc. (V. Barneveld)
- The Andersons, Inc. (T. Arena)
- Dodgeville Agri Services (C. Dodgeville)
- New Farm Products, Inc. (T. Mineral Point)
- Crist Fencing, LLC (C. Dodgeville)
- Sieg, LLC/Crop Production Services (T. Mineral Point)
- Murn Tire & Tool (T. Dodgeville)

- Mueller Implement (T. Dodgeville)
- Badgerland Agri-Systems (C. Dodgeville)
- Country View Veterinary Clinic (C. Mineral Point)
- Dodge Point Mobile Pet Vet (T. Dodgeville)
- Dodgeville Large Animal Veterinary Service (T. Dodgeville)
- Dodgeville Veterinary Service (T. Dodgeville)
- Military Ridge Veterinary Service (T. Dodgeville)
- Ivey Construction, Inc. (C. Mineral Point)
- Rule Construction, Ltd. (T. Dodgeville)
- Bard Materials (C. Dodgeville)
- Midwest Roofing & Construction (T. Dodgeville)
- Morton Buildings, Inc. (T. Dodgeville)

Overall, the agricultural infrastructure in Iowa County is strong. Grain drying and storage, veterinary, implement and crop production services have grown in the past 15 years, a trend that is anticipated to continue. The trend during times of strong commodity prices is the sale of productive cropland to larger operators. When these sales include buildings, it is not uncommon for the operators to sell the buildings with a minimal amount of land, as their interest is primarily in the productive cropland. This trend will likely continue, provided commodity prices remain strong, and will support the agricultural infrastructure.

No significant changes are anticipated to agricultural processing, supply or distribution. The current trends of consolidating cropland and expanding drying/storage facilities will likely continue. Distribution will continue to be primarily by truck, however, the upgrading of the Wisconsin and Southern Railroad line that runs across the north of the county along the Wisconsin River may accommodate additional rail distribution.

### Market Value of Farm Products

Figure B-10 depicts changes in the market value of farm products sold in Iowa County and the amount of government subsidies paid to farmers in the county from 1997 to 2012. The market value of farm products sold in Iowa County increased by 76.1% from 1997 to 2012. Government payments to farmers increased by 54.7% percent from 1997-2012, whereas the average payment per farm increased by 1.6% during this period.

Figure B-10: Changes in Market Value and Government Payments

	1997	2002	2007	2012	% Change 1997- 2012	% Change 2007- 2012
Market value of farm products sold	\$110,905,000	\$116,420,000	\$157,947,000	\$195,336,000	76.1%	23.7%
Average per farm	\$79,559	\$69,051	\$87,119	\$123,008	54.6%	41.2%
Government Payments	\$4,572,000	\$7,304,000	\$6,966,000	\$7,074,000	54.7%	1.6%
Average per farm	\$4,651	\$6,492	\$4,775	\$5,990	28.8%	25.4%

Source: USDA Agricultural Census

Figure B-11 depicts the total number of agricultural land sales in Iowa County compared to neighboring counties and the State from 2010 to 2013, including the number of sales and acres converted to non-

agricultural uses. As indicated below, Iowa County ranked near the bottom in sales for continued agricultural use and in the middle for sales of land converted to other uses.

Figure B-11: Agricultural Land Sales

	Land Continuing in Agricultural Uses			Land Converted to Other Uses		
	Agricultural Transactions	Acres Sold	Ranking by Acres Sold	Agricultural Transactions	Acres Sold	Ranking by Acres Sold
<b>2013</b>						
Iowa County	32	1,956	7	5	143	4
Crawford County	28	1,934	8	-	-	
Dane County	35	2,651	4	7	734	1
Grant County	57	5,225	1	-	-	
Green County	44	3,599	2	3	180	2
Lafayette County	30	2,413	5	-	-	
Richland County	55	2,686	3	6	83	5
Sauk County	34	2,194	6	6	160	3
Wisconsin	1,817	116,979		98	4,419	
<b>2012</b>						
Iowa County	49	3,428	4	4	183	2
Crawford County	19	1,343	8	1	23	7
Dane County	38	2,392	5	9	1,092	1
Grant County	60	5,749	2	1	37	5
Green County	63	5,788	1	1	30	6
Lafayette County	58	5,081	3	-	-	
Richland County	34	2,022	6	2	47	4
Sauk County	34	1,897	7	3	122	3
Wisconsin	2,194	144,971		88	4,277	
<b>2011</b>						
Iowa County	28	2,236	6	2	51	4
Crawford County	23	1,430	7	4	196	2
Dane County	45	3,539	4	4	212	1
Grant County	65	7,153	1	1	76	3
Green County	43	4,870	2	-	-	
Lafayette County	40	4,864	3	-	-	
Richland County	35	2,364	5	2	39	5
Sauk County	18	892	8	6	212	1
Wisconsin	1,784	129,108		103	3,764	
Source: National Agricultural Statistics Service						

### Land Use Issues Related to Agriculture

Although classified as an urban county due to commuting patterns by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, Iowa County residents and visitors more readily identify the county with having a rural character and appearance. Its proximity to the populated centers of Madison and Dubuque, IA make Iowa County attractive for nonagricultural development, primarily rural residences. Although the county and partnering towns have a strong history of land use planning, there is still the risk of conflicts created when nonagricultural development occurs in areas of predominant agricultural uses.

The notion of a rural lifestyle is engendered by an association with the pleasant character of the landscape rather than potentially offensive noises, odors, and operations, which are a reality in agricultural areas. Increasing competition for available land tends to intensify the agricultural practices at a particular site thereby increasing the potential for conflict with non-rural residents. The continuing trend of larger and heavier agricultural equipment significantly impacts the maintenance of a rural road network. Rural residential development also adds to the traffic on this same road network, thus increasing the demand for high quality roads and the potential for car-equipment accidents.

Certainly education and communication at all levels is fundamental to the resolution of conflicts over land use. There is also a need to separate incompatible land uses while recognizing the efficiencies, which can be achieved through the integration of many of these land uses. This may be achieved, for example, through physical separation or a simple vegetative buffer designed to screen one land use from another. Land use zoning can also be used. Such practical strategies require landowners with potentially conflicting land uses to acknowledge their impact and then design their operations to account for this impact. A community approach utilizing physical solutions, planning strategies, and a long-term vision for the land will enable multiple lands uses to exist.

### ***Municipal Expansion***

Cities and villages have historically been where more dense development has taken place in Iowa County. Proximity to Madison places greater expansion pressure on the cities and villages in the eastern half of the county. However, the adoption of comprehensive plans in the mid-2000s has encouraged the potential impacts on agriculture to be part of the land use decision process. Iowa County full intends to continue working with cities and villages to strike a reasonable balance between growth and agricultural preservation.

### ***Natural Resources***

Iowa County had significant and varied natural resources, from productive soils to clear streams and majestic rock outcroppings. Popular recreational activities include camping, biking, hiking, fishing, hunting, boating, birding, cross country skiing, snowmobiling and a plethora of outdoor sports.

### Water Resources

Water resources are highly valued in Iowa County with the majority of surface water being creeks and streams. Many of these streams are Class I trout fisheries and are characterized by spring-fed tributaries that provide excellent conditions for natural reproduction and carry over. The high number of spring-fed streams is a unique quality of the Driftless Area and in general this unglaciated region should be recognized as a special resource. Nutrient laden runoff are a threat to these resources, thus there is great effort in promoting conservation farming practices and participation in programs that can significantly protect from runoff.

There are no natural lakes in Iowa County but there are several reservoirs, including the Twin Valley Lake and Cox Hollow Lake in Governor Dodge State Park, Blackhawk Lake, Ludden Lake, and Birch Lake. The Wisconsin River, which is the north boundary of the county, includes miles of backwaters and sloughs rich with wildlife and recreational opportunities.

### 1 Percent Annual Chance Flood (100-year flood)

100-year floodplain areas are those areas which are subject to inundation by the 1 percent annual chance flood, meaning that there is a one percent chance that this event will happen in any given year. These areas are restricted from many types of development and, as a result, often act as wildlife corridors and natural buffers between land uses.

### Wetlands

There are about 16,500 acres of wetland in Iowa County, which constitutes only 3.4% of the county land area. Wetlands serve a variety of functions, including playing a role in stormwater management and flood control, filtering pollutants, recharging groundwater, providing a habitat for many wildlife species and plants, and offering open space and passive recreational opportunities. The steep topography of much of Iowa County results in most natural wetlands being closely linked to the region's rivers and streams and includes all marshes and swamps and areas excluded from cultivation or other use because they are intermittently wet.

### Forests

Iowa County has significant forest coverage, with the heaviest concentration in the northern half of the county. Although there is active management of forests through selective harvesting, the primary value of the wooded land is for wildlife habitat and recreation.

### Parks and Other Public Lands

There are no county owned parks in Iowa County, but there are three state parks (Governor Dodge, Tower Hill, and Blue Mounds) that are all or partially in Iowa County. These three parks have a combined area of over 6,500 acres and provide recreational opportunities, such as camping, hiking, fishing and more.

There are also 7 recognized state natural areas that total about 3,500 acres within Iowa County that provide additional opportunities for hiking, hunting, and fishing.

Located in west central Iowa County is the Blackhawk Lake Recreation Area, which is owned by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and operated by Iowa County under easement. The Cobb-Highland Recreation Commission oversees the operations of the recreation area. This Commission consists of ten board members, five each from the Villages of Cobb and Highland. Blackhawk Lake Recreation Area is not part of the Wisconsin State Park System, and therefore, does not receive any funding from state or county tax dollars. The Blackhawk Lake Recreation Area consists of over 2,050 total acres. The lake is 220 acres, the recreation area about 330 acres and the designated wildlife areas about 1,500 acres.

Another notable publically owned area is the county-owned property at the Bloomfield Healthcare facility, about 3 miles west of the City of Dodgeville. Iowa County owns about 640 acres around the facility, much of which is open to the public for hunting and hiking. There is also a 4 ½ acre pond that is popular for fishing and as a picnic spot.

The county also owns about 7 acres along State Road 130 where it operates a public boat ramp for access to the Wisconsin River.

### ***Economy***

Iowa County's economy is strongly tied to agriculture, but is also driven by other industry sectors. Agriculture/forestry/fishing/hunting/mining as an industry ranks fourth in the county behind retail trade, educational/health/social services, and manufacturing in terms of where Iowa County citizens are employed. A 2005 survey shows the following employer statistics:

- One business has over 1000 employees.
- Eleven businesses have between 100-249 employees.

- Sixteen businesses have between 50-99 employees.
- Fifty five businesses have between 20-49 employees.

As identified in a community opinion survey conducted as part of the county's 2005 comprehensive planning process, residents listed rural beauty/character, farming/agriculture and small town atmosphere as the top 3 county wide strengths. However, the same survey listed new residential development and business/industry attraction and support as the two top countywide opportunities. At the surface, these may be opposing strategies where realization of the opportunities may threaten the strengths. Therefore, it is important to be conscious of impacts on agriculture and rural character when devising economic development goals.

Although Iowa County does not participate in an economic development corporation, it continues to invest in contract for services that facilitate, promote and ensure community and economic stability in order to secure opportunities for economic and business development and increase local employment in Iowa County.

## ***Utilities, Community Facilities, and Services***

### **Community Facilities**

Iowa County's government offices primarily operate out of two buildings in the City of Dodgeville, the courthouse and the Health and Human Resources Building. Other county buildings include the Iowa County Sheriff Office, Bloomfield Healthcare, and Transportation Department. The latter operates several garages and shops around the county.

### **Telecommunications and Utilities**

Verizon and MHTC provide telephone services to the county. Alliant Energy is the primary electric utility in Iowa County. County records show there to be at least thirteen telecommunication towers within the county, located as follows:

- Three in the Town of Brigham
- Two in the City of Dodgeville
- Two in the Town of Dodgeville
- Two in the Town of Eden
- Two in the Town of Highland
- One in the Town of Linden
- One in the Town of Mineral Point

Access to high-speed internet services is primarily available within the cities and villages of Iowa County. Unreliable access within the rural portions of the county, due to a lack of infrastructure investment, persists as a significant hindrance to economic development and quality of life. Many of the rural areas only have an option for satellite service and some areas have only dial-up service via telephone lines. Internet service providers include:

- Verizon Communications
- Frontier Communications
- Charter Communications
- Mt. Horeb Telephone Company
- US Cellular

- HughesNet
- Blue Sky Satellite Internet
- AT&T

### Public Safety

The Iowa County Sheriff's Department serves as the primary law enforcement in the county. Local fire and rescue departments provide fire and emergency medical services. There are 14 fire districts and 12 EMS districts in Iowa County.

### Water Supply

There are 12 public water-supply systems in Iowa County that serve the following communities: City of Dodgeville, City of Mineral Point, Town of Dodgeville, Town of Linden, Village of Arena, Village of Avoca, Village of Barneveld, Village of Blanchardville, Village of Cobb, Village of Highland, Village of Hollandale, Village of Linden, Village of Livingston, Village of Montfort, Village of Muscoda, Village of Rewey and the Village of Ridgeway. Most residents in towns obtain their water supply from private wells, although there are a few residents of cities and villages who are served by private wells where access to the public water supply is not readily available.

In 2012, Iowa County commissioned a countywide groundwater study that included the following findings:

- The hydrostratigraphy of the county includes 4 aquifers and 2 aquitards.
- About 1.5 million gallons of groundwater are pumped daily from municipal wells.
- Roughly 97% of the approximately 10.67 million gallons of water used daily in the county is groundwater.
- 64% of the total daily water use is for agricultural irrigation, 15% for livestock, 11% for domestic use, 4% for public facilities (schools, parks, hospitals, water-supply pipe losses), 3% for commercial use, and 2% for industrial facilities.
- Due to the permeable nature of the soils, relatively high rates of recharge, and large areas with shallow depth to bedrock, groundwater everywhere in Iowa County is very susceptible to contamination from the ground surface.

Fortunately, there appears to be a sufficient quantity of groundwater to meet current and conceivable future demands, based on groundwater use and recharge estimates.

### Wastewater

Public sanitary sewer service is available in the fifteen incorporated municipalities in Iowa County. Wastewater in the fourteen towns, and in very limited areas of some municipalities, is handled by private onsite wastewater treatment systems (POWTS), or what is commonly referred to as septic systems.

There are currently six types of septic system designs authorized for use today: conventional (underground), mound, pressure distribution, at-grade, holding tank, and sand filter/aerobic treatment systems. The majority of septic systems in Iowa County are conventional systems, at-grade, and mound systems. Iowa County only allows holding tanks as system of last resort as a replacement. Holding tanks are prohibited in the county for all new construction.

The State of Wisconsin regulates the siting, design, installation, and inspection of most private on-site sewage treatment systems in the State. In 2000, the State adopted a revised private sewage system code that allows conventional on-site systems and alternative systems, such as those that employ biological or chemical

treatment. In some cases, alternative waste treatment systems can be used in areas where conventional systems are not feasible due to unsuitable soil conditions.

There are around 5,500 private septic systems in Iowa County.

### Waste Management

Solid waste disposal is the responsibility of each local community, as Iowa County does not operate such a facility. There are no solid waste landfills located within the county. Local jurisdictions either provide a drop-off site for its citizens or provide curbside services, the latter being predominantly within villages and cities. The following companies are contracted by local jurisdictions for waste management:

- Faherty, Inc. of Platteville, WI
- Waste Management of Keiler, WI
- Town & Country Sanitation, Inc. of Boscobel, WI

## ***Transportation***

### Highways

Iowa County is able to connect to major metropolitan areas, such as Chicago, Minneapolis and Milwaukee, thanks to US Highways 18/151, 18 and 14. The rest of the county's road network includes State Roads 23, 39, 78, 80, 130, 133, and 191. County Road and Town Road miles total about 367 and 674, respectively.

### Railroads

The Wisconsin & Southern Railroad operates the only active railroad line in Iowa County. It generally runs along the Wisconsin River, along the very north of the county, and provides an important transportation service to agriculture and industry. It does not operate passenger service.

The Wisconsin River Rail Transit Commission, which consists of representation from Crawford, Dane, Grant, Iowa, Richland and Sauk counties, has been granted the responsibility of protecting and preserving rail corridors throughout southern Wisconsin.

### Air Transportation

The Iowa County Airport provides full and self-service fueling and maintains two runways (5,000 and 3,600 feet) capable for pleasure and commercial aircraft. It also houses a privately operated full-maintenance facility and hangars for lease. The airport has a full-time manager and provides public restrooms, a lounge, courtesy car, and weather station.

In addition to the county-owned airport, Iowa County contributes to the operation and maintenance of the Tri County Regional Airport, along with Richland and Sauk counties. The Tri County Airport is located in Lone Rock, Wisconsin, which is just across the Wisconsin River to the north of Iowa County.

### Public Transportation

There are very few public transit options in Iowa County. At present, there is a County Taxi Service available on a part-time basis operated out of the Iowa County Department of Social Services. The State of Wisconsin also operates a vanpool service with several access sites in Iowa County. Lamers Buses provides service from Green Bay to Dubuque, IA with a stop in the City of Dodgeville.