



CHAPTER 8: Land Use Plan

REGULATIONS

The City of Alexandria has had land use regulations in place since the 1960's. The Plan Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals were established on September 15, 1969. There are seven members that serve on the Plan Commission and five serve on the BZA. The Plan Commission meets the 4th Monday of the month and the BZA as needed.

The zoning and subdivision control ordinances were also passed in 1969. The zoning ordinance has been amended a few times, mostly in the 1980's and the last amendment was in 1996. The subdivision control ordinance has not been amended since it went into effect in 1969.

The only City employee dealing with land use issue is the Building Commissioner whom is a part time employee. The Building Commissioner's responsibilities include the issuance of building, sign and demolition permits and the ensuing inspections as well as the enforcement of violations of both State and local codes.

There is currently no established housing authority for the City. The newly formed Redevelopment Commission along with the office of the Building Commissioner has taken on any and all responsibilities and issues concerning housing for the City.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Looking at the existing land use in Alexandria can tell us about how the community developed and grew over time. It also lets us look at how the City may develop in the future. The planning area incorporates the land within the city limits as Alexandria has no planning jurisdiction outside of those limits.

The City of Alexandria consists of primarily residential land use, commercial land use, institutional land use, some industrial land use and park or open space land use.

Housing

The City of Alexandria does not have a Housing Authority established. It does however utilize the recently formed Redevelopment Commission to carry out any housing related municipal duties in conjunction with the Building Department and the Inspector.

Housing by Type

The City of Alexandria has 2,704 housing units according to the 2000 U.S. Census. The housing units are predominantly single family dwellings. Single-family units makeup 73.1% of the total housing units. Duplexes make up the next highest percentage at 18.0% of the total housing units. There are 108 (3.8%) mobile home units in Alexandria.

Housing Units by Type City of Alexandria 2000 U.S. Census				
Type	Number	Percent of Total		
	City	City	County	State
One Unit, Detached	2,057	72.9	77.6	71.2
One Unit, Attached	5	0.2	2.1	2.9
Two to Four Units	507	18.0	8.1	7.4
Five to Nine Units	97	3.4	2.1	4.6
Ten or More Units	47	1.7	4.3	7.3
Mobile Home/Other	108	3.8	5.8	6.6
Total	2,821	100.0	100.0	100.0
Owner Occupied	1,639	66.1	74.2	65.9
Renter Occupied	842	33.9	25.8	26.4
Total Occupied	2,481	100.0	100.0	92.3
Vacant	223	8.2	6.8	6.4
Seasonal	0	0.0	0.0	1.3
Total	2,704			100.0

Out of the 2,481 occupied units, 1,639, or 66.1% are owner occupied. The home ownership rate is just about equal to the state average of 65.9%, but is lower than the county average of 74.2%.

The total of rental units at 842 or 33.9% is much higher than either the county average at 25.8% or the state average at 26.4%. This high rental rate has been a topic of discussion for the community during this planning process. A few years

ago, Anderson University did a small housing analysis which put the rental rate at nearly 50%.

223 units or 8.2% of the housing stock were reported vacant at the time of the census. This amount is also higher than the county or state rates and has been amplified by the recent downturn in the economy.

The Alexandria Redevelopment Commission in conjunction with the Building Department is aggressively taking on the rental housing issues confronting the City as well as the abandoned properties.

Housing by Age

Alexandria has a comparatively older housing stock. Approximately 66.6% of the homes were constructed before 1960 which makes them almost 50 years old. By comparison, the percent of Madison County houses built before 1960 was 52.6% and only 41.3% for the entire state. More than one third of the housing stock in Alexandria was built before 1940. This may require additional new housing units to be built in the future to replace those that deteriorate due to age. The 1940's and 1950's also show the highest percentages of new housing units constructed at 30.2%.

Year Structure Built City of Alexandria 2000 U.S. Census				
Year Built	Number	Percent of Total		
	City	City	County	State
1999 to 2000(March)	105	3.7	1.5	2.5
1995 to 1998	23	0.8	4.9	7.8
1990 to 1994	31	1.1	4.0	7.0
1980 to 1989	152	5.4	6.0	11.3
1970 to 1979	330	11.7	14.3	16.4
1960 to 1969	301	10.7	16.7	13.6
1940 to 1959	851	30.2	27.2	21.1
1939 or earlier	1,028	36.4	25.4	20.2
Total	2,821	100.0	100.0	100.0

Housing by Value

The 2000 Census reported the median housing value in the City of Alexandria to be \$72,800, much below the state median value of \$94,300, and well below the Madison County average of \$86,200. The table below shows Alexandria's Housing Values in comparison with those of Madison County and The State's. The median value rose from \$34,900 in 1990, nearly 52% increase which was much less than the nearly 75% increase for Indiana during the same time. The median rent in Alexandria was \$442. This is significantly lower than the state's median rent of \$521 and lower than the county at \$490.

An increase in the median value of homes could indicate that the average size of homes is increasing which is the trend nationwide. According to the National Association of Homebuilders, the average square feet of a newly constructed home in the U.S. is 2,324. This is an increase from 2,080 square feet in 1990. If this trend continues, then more land may be devoted to residential land use in the future or development restraints will be needed to increase housing density.

Housing Value City of Alexandria 2000 U.S. Census				
Year Built	Number	Percent of Total		
	City	City	County	State
Less than \$50,000	301	18.6	16.1	11.4
\$50,000 to \$99,999	1,093	67.7	54.4	43.9
\$100,000 to \$149,999	173	10.7	20.4	26.2
\$150,000 to \$199,999	9	0.6	5.8	10.2
\$200,000 to \$299,999	38	2.4	2.6	5.7
\$300,000 to \$499,999	0	0.0	0.6	2.0
\$500,000 to \$999,999	0	0.0	0.1	0.5
\$1,000,000 or more	0	0.0	0.1	0.1
Total	\$72,800	100.0	100.0	100.0

Building Permits

The City of Alexandria issues its own building permits. Unfortunately, building permits records could only be located for the past 3 years. Since 2005, 2 permits have been issued for residential dwellings and 0 permits have been issued for commercial uses.

Residential Use Overview

Several factors including type, size, cost, character, and availability of housing significantly influences the local quality of life in communities. The location of the housing is also a significant factor in the overall quality of a community. Quality housing, of any size or type, is that which is in a well-maintained neighborhood which is accessed by local streets and conveniently located in relation to community activities and facilities, goods and services, and employment.

The City of Alexandria has never had a Housing Needs Assessment performed. One of the objectives is for the City through its Redevelopment Commission and the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority is to develop such a plan that would evaluate the current housing stock and develop programs for home ownership and rehabilitation of the housing stock.

Existing Conditions

The existing housing stock in Alexandria is similar to that which is common in small cities and towns throughout Indiana. The housing stock is dominated by single -family detached homes on smaller lots. However, several buildings in the commercial downtown are used as apartments. There are 2 mobile home parks in Alexandria.

Most of the single-family homes sit on less than one-fourth acre lots which make up the original platted town or “old town” area. These types of homes stretch west, east, south and north from the center of town.



There are a few areas with homes that occupy a ½ acre or more of land. These homes are concentrated in the north and south ends of town. Most of these homes seem to be neighborhoods built after the 1960's. Newer build homes seem to be situated in the northwest and southwest sections of town.



Duplex units are spread throughout the town and there are several apartment complexes. There are also several senior housing units in Alexandria.

Commercial Use Overview

A community's commercial land uses provide employment, goods and services, recreation, tax revenue, and many other amenities and necessities. The features of commercial areas reflect the economic vitality of a community as well as local character. The location and characteristics of commercial areas directly effect local transportation and growth management.

Existing Conditions

There are two major commercial areas in Alexandria. The first area is the downtown district. Historically this has been the heart of commercial activity for the citizens of Alexandria since the 1800's. Currently, the businesses/services in the downtown district consist of government services (Chamber, city offices, post office, fire and police, library, personal services, food services (restaurants/cafes) and stores. Most of the buildings in the downtown district are historic in nature.



The other commercial area is along the State Road 9 corridor. Commercial businesses and retailers are scattered and stretch from the southern city limits to the northern city limit. The majority of retailers are concentrated on the north side from Lincoln Ave. to State Road 28. The commercial businesses along this SR 9 corridor are typical of the newer types of 'highway' designated businesses found in most cities and towns across the country; fast food restaurants, gas stations/convenience stores, video rentals shops, food stores, drug stores, banks, etc.



Institutional Use Overview

Institutional land uses include those which are generally public, or semi-public such as churches, schools, and government buildings. Institutional land uses are a necessary element of a community and their locations can either contribute to, or detract from, the overall quality of the area.

Existing Conditions

Institutional uses in Alexandria include municipal (City Hall, Courts, Police, Fire, utilities, etc.), the Alexandria-Monroe Library, several churches, both public and private schools, cemetery and both State and Federal offices.

Industrial Use Overview

Industrial land uses in a community provide employment and contribute positively to the local tax base. These uses however do have the potential to promote transportation conflicts, pollution, and the reduction of aesthetic quality. Industrial land uses are commonly in conflict with other community uses as they can negatively affect residential and commercial quality. The traffic from adjacent commercial and/or residential uses often imposes on industrial vitality.



Existing Conditions

Alexandria has an industrial area on the west and southwest sides of the city. Most of the industries in these areas have long been closed down and either demolished or are sitting vacant.

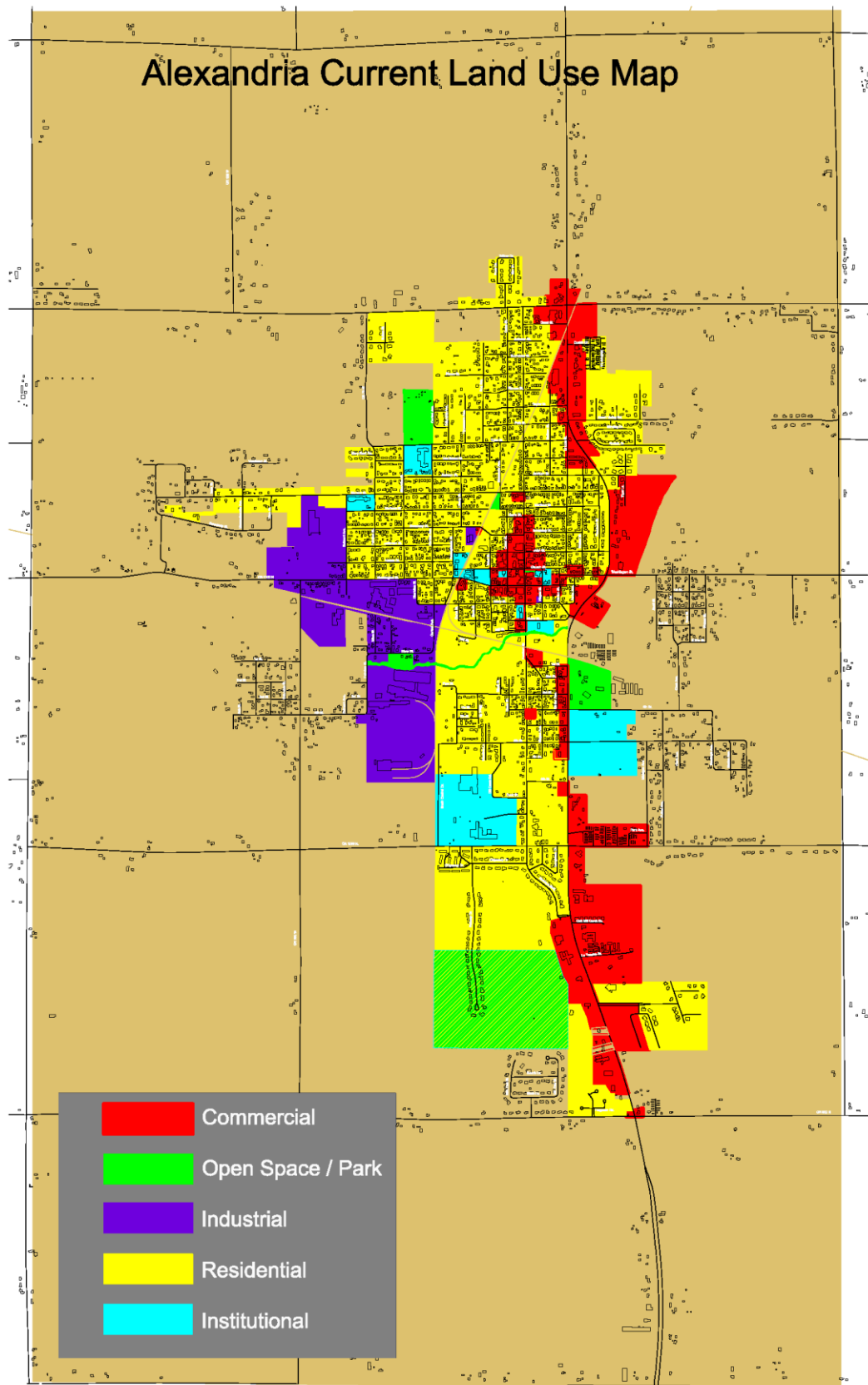
Agricultural/Open Space Use Overview

Agricultural land uses are necessary globally for the production of food products. On the local level agriculture is a source of employment, community character, and economic vitality. In a broader sense, agriculture is a way of life for many families. In many areas, agricultural land is considered to be simply undeveloped land.

Open Space uses are often set asides for park and recreational activities and general green space. These amenities provide a community a certain quality of life level. Parks and open spaces can provide not only recreational opportunities, but also educational, spiritual and health related functions.

Existing Conditions

There are no major agricultural areas within the city limits although the community is surrounded by agricultural lands. Alexandria has four municipal parks. There are several areas along both the Pipe and Mud creeks which remain wooded and void of development. The Yule Golf Course on the very southern edge of the city provides a large open space expanse. There are also several areas containing ball fields.



FUTURE LAND USE

The future land use is the culmination of the physical reality of land use planning which is linked to the goals and objectives. The information in this chapter provides a summary of the future land use plan for the City of Alexandria and how it is based on these goals and objectives for the community.

The future land use plan (**end of chapter**) shows areas where general growth is to take place. The future land use plan map included this report are intended to be general in nature; land use boundaries are not specific. This plan is intended as a flexible and general guideline; **it is not intended as a zoning map**. Please note that the City of Alexandria does not have a 2-mile fringe planning area and does not control areas which are outside the city boundaries. The City can only make suggestions to the Madison County Plan Commission, which has planning control over those areas, as to what manner they would like to see the areas developed. It was decided to go ahead and look at new development outside of the town limits as part of this study.

Future land use is shown in the categories described below.

- Residential
- Commercial
- Institutional/Public
- Industrial
- Open Space/Recreation

Madison County Future Land Use

Since most of the land within the current city limits of Alexandria has been developed, the Steering Committee decided to look outside of the municipal limits and determine future land uses surrounding Alexandria.

Since the Madison County Planning Commission regulates the areas surrounding the City, it was important to look at what future land use designations were set by the most recent county comprehensive plan. The Madison County Comprehensive Plan was last updated in 2000.

The Madison County Comprehensive Plan states the following for the areas surrounding Alexandria in Monroe Township:

This area has received 15.6% of the new development since 1988 (Source: County Planning Department). Development in this area has been influenced by sprawl along State Roads 9 and 28. Fringe development surrounding Orestes and Alexandria has been either adjacent to these communities or the highway corridors. The natural aesthetics of the Pipe Creek Corridor has also attracted residential development. Development in this area has been slower than areas

further south for the following reasons: their distance from Interstate 69 and Indianapolis; the lack of utilities with the ability to expand quickly beyond their service boundaries; and the large working agricultural areas within the area.

The following physical planning issues are noted:

Constraints:

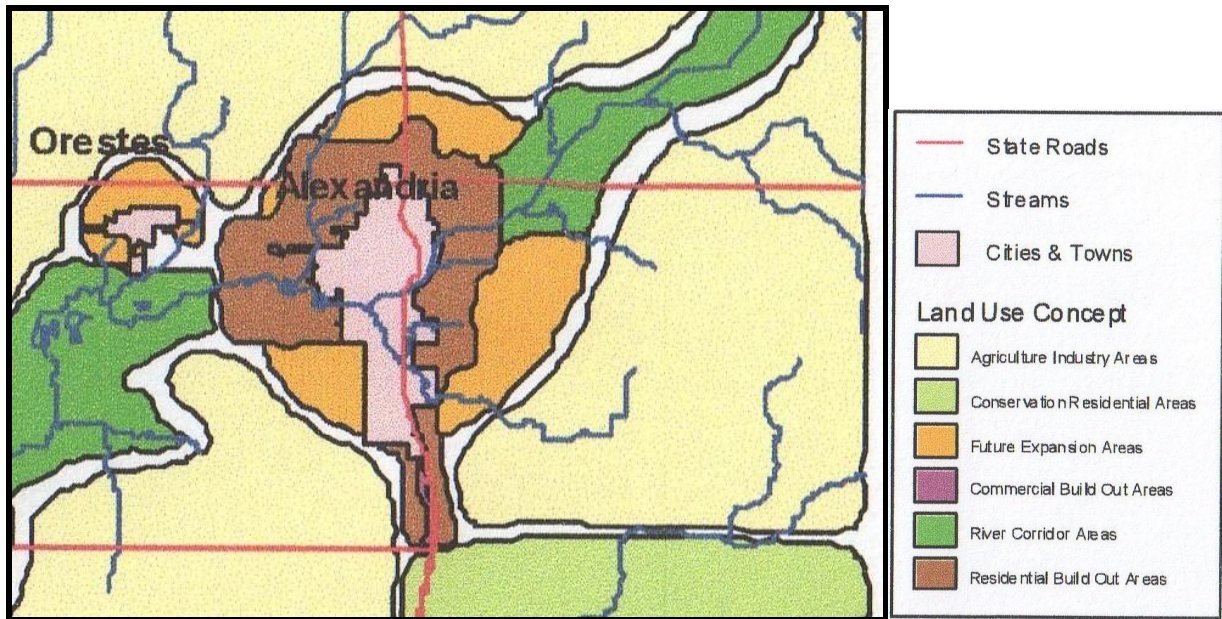
- Limiting factors for development include septic constraints, soils, floodplains, waterways, slopes, drainage and flooding, wildlife, woodland and wetland resources.*
- The majority of local roads in the area are not designed to accommodate large volumes of traffic; thus, any new development should be encouraged to make road improvements.*
- Access cuts along both state and local roadways threaten their viability to carry traffic in the future as development intensifies, specifically those heading west on State Road 28 from Alexandria.*
- Negative environmental impacts from development pressures along Pipe and Mud Creeks have occurred.*
- Flooding has occurred regularly during heavy rain events in the community of Alexandria.*

Opportunities:

- Large areas in both townships are still characterized by agricultural use and remain very viable for productive farming.*
- In-fill development potential exists in the communities of Alexandria and Orestes as well as along the adjacent highways near these urban areas where suburban development has occurred.*
- Communities in this township have compact development forms, and directing development to their urban fringes should be encouraged.*
- State Road 28 should become a commerce corridor within the county at its urban node connections.*
- Orestes has developed a sewer system partnership with Alexandria which opens up opportunities for both communities for growth.*
- Conservation design subdivisions are possible adjacent to waterways provided the floodplain areas are conserved.*

The Madison County Comprehensive Plan has two overlay areas designated for the Alexandria area. The first is east of the city and is designated for residential uses. The second lies between Alexandria and Orestes and is to encourage the development of light industrial uses. It also states that land use development inside Alexandria should be high to medium residential with mixed commercial uses and developed to infill only.

The following map shows the future land use concept for the areas around Alexandria. It designates future build out areas for both residential and total expansion for all land uses.



These conditions and findings were taken into account when discussions concerning the future land uses surrounding Alexandria were made.

Residential

Residential areas are shown as being a density of one to three dwelling units per acre and as more than three dwelling units per acre. The areas for the lower density uses are located in areas which are more rural in nature. This land use category includes residential dwelling units suitable for a lower density environment and generally encompasses single family and two-family units. It also includes accessory buildings for garages and other outbuildings.

Any new residential land use has been limited to infill areas within the city and to areas east and southeast outside of Alexandria.

Commercial

The primary commercial areas are located in areas where the highest traffic volumes are expected along major corridors. Commercial land use includes all business, retail, and wholesale commercial activity. It also includes accessory buildings and areas devoted to parking and storage. The goal of the Plan is to support commercial business to help provide employment opportunities and strengthen the tax base of the community.

Most original downtown commercial areas are limited in space and buildings to accommodate new commercial establishments. Alexandria's downtown area has vacant lots as well as vacant buildings that can be utilized for further downtown development. As part of the Action Plan, the City will be developing a detailed plan for the downtown corridor within the next year. This plan should provide detailed information on the further development of the land and buildings in the downtown area.

There are two other areas of note for current commercial use as well as future developments. One area is on the north side of Alexandria along SR 28. Currently there are a few commercial establishments along this corridor. The area was identified in the web survey as an area to be developed as commercial. SR 28 is also defined in the Madison County Comprehensive Plan as an economic development corridor. The proposed future industrial land use is located to the north of this corridor. This factor combined with the fact that it lies adjacent to the high traffic SR 9 highway and commercial corridor makes it a prime area for future commercial growth.



The other commercial area is located along SR 9. This is currently the major commercial corridor in Alexandria. Future commercial uses should continue along this corridor as infill developments utilizing vacant commercial lots. Both of these areas would be prime for future commercial uses.

Industrial

Industrial land uses are located in areas that are available to transportation arteries. Alexandria currently does not have an industrial park, but instead has an area that has been historically used for industrial purposes. This area lies to the west and southwest of the City along both of the railroads that crisscross the City. There is not good access to either SR 9 or SR 28 from this industrial area without traveling through the city. This combined with the fact that the current industrial areas are either still occupied with older abandoned structures or are possible brownfield sites makes future industrial land use adjacent to these areas not a very good option.

When deciding future land areas for industrial uses, it made sense to use areas along the existing railroad lines and the major highways. Two areas designated for industrial land use closely follow the east/west rail line running both west to the Red Gold facility in Orestes and the other running along the rail line southeast from the City.



The other major area designated for industrial use lies northeast of Alexandria. This particular area has several factors conducive for industrial development. It has a rail line running on its western border, a highway (SR 28) running along the southern border which connects the area to a major interstate highway (I-69) and the city already has a water main running one mile east along SR 28. This potential industrial area already contains the Poet biofuel plant as well as an INDOT maintenance facility.

Institutional

The Plan is intended to encourage the development of adequate community facilities and programs to fulfill the social and service needs of Alexandria. This type of land use is comprised of schools, churches, and other public-related and governmental facilities.

There is no area on the Future Land Use map that is designated for expansion of institutional land uses outside of the current city limits.

Open Space/Recreation

The Future Land Use map shows several areas outside of the current city limits to be developed or preserved as open space/recreational land uses. Most of these areas lie along either the Mud or Pipe Creeks. The areas designated for open space preservation are consistent with the Madison County Comprehensive Plan preservation areas. The open space preservation areas typically run adjacent to the Mud and Pipe Creeks.

Agricultural

This category includes agricultural and farmland areas. There are a large number of existing farm operations just outside of the city limits. The areas surrounding the City are blessed with abundant farmland. The Madison County Comprehensive Plan has the northern portion of the county designated as preserving the agricultural areas that currently exist. In the Future Land Use map, the areas to the west of SR 9 and north of SR 28 are designated to remain agricultural in use.

LAND USE POLICY

Through input from the Steering Committee, Public Meetings and the Citizen Survey we can begin to paint a picture of what the future land use would be for the City of Alexandria. This information, along with information from the Madison County Comprehensive Plan, is the culmination of the physical reality of land use planning which is linked to these goals and objectives:

Goal:

To manage the growth and development of Alexandria in a way that contributes positively to the community. To encourage the orderly, responsible development of land in order to promote the community goals, and to determine and direct land use patterns in the most positive way for the community as a whole, in a manner consistent with its long term interests.

Objectives:

- Ensure adequate and suitable land and the development of residences, businesses, industry, parks, and open spaces.
- Designate specific land use districts in the community for residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, institutional, and recreational uses.
- Educate and inform the community on the land use laws and policies, as well as, the reason for them.
- Review and update the current Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Control Ordinance, including administrative and regulatory procedures.
- Limit the amount of growth in the community preventing sprawl and unmanaged growth patterns.
- Continue communication with the Madison County Planning Department on all land use issues outside the city's planning jurisdiction.
- Investigate the possibility of annexing adjacent areas into its corporate limits.
- Encourage the rehabilitation of existing housing stock.
- Encourage homeownership and affordable housing.
- Develop program for demolition of unsafe buildings.

