

Land Use Code Definitions, Kenosha County 2023

A Multijurisdictional Comprehensive Plan For Kenosha County: 2035. This layer represents the Land Use Element of the Plan. (Chapter IX). Adopted April 20, 2010

The descriptions of the attributes are:

Farmland Protection

Areas designated for farmland protection occupy 37,129 acres, or about 21 percent of the County, on the 2035

land use plan map. This category allows for all agricultural uses and consists primarily of parcels at least 35 acres

or greater in size that contain soils suitable for agricultural production. The plan encourages continuation of

agricultural activity in these areas, including dairy farming, row crops, and niche agriculture, such as orchards and

organic farming.

General Agricultural and Open Land

General agricultural and open land uses occupy 8,621 acres, or about 5 percent of the County, on the 2035 land

use plan map. The general agricultural and open land use category would allow all agricultural uses, as well as

residential development with an average density of one home for each 10.0 to 34.9 acres of land. The plan

encourages continuation of agricultural related activity in this area, including dairy farming, row crops, equestrian

farms, agricultural related warehousing and food processing, plant nurseries, and niche agriculture such as

orchards, organic farming, and hobby farms. Open lands may include pasturelands and fallow fields.

Rural-Density Residential

The rural-density residential use category occupies 5,653 acres, or about 3 percent of the County, on the 2035

land use plan map. This category includes single-family homes at lot sizes or densities equating to five acres to

9.9 acres per dwelling unit. Rural-density residential land is mostly rural in character. The use of conservation

subdivision design or lot-averaging techniques is encouraged to help preserve rural character in areas where rural density

residential development is allowed

Agricultural and Rural-Density Residential

This category is intended to accommodate two land use categories that combine agricultural uses, rural residential

uses, forest, and wetlands in the adopted Town of Randall comprehensive plan. Wetlands and woodlands located

in the areas so designated in the Town of Randall plan are typically shown as environmental corridor, isolated

natural resource area, other conservancy lands to be preserved, or wetlands on the County land use plan map.

This category also includes areas intended to be developed in accordance with the Agricultural Equestrian Cluster

Single-Family District (AE-1) zoning district regulations in the Kenosha County zoning ordinance. The intent of

this category is to preserve agricultural uses and, if residential development is permitted in such areas, that only

single-family homes at lot sizes or densities equating to five acres or greater per dwelling unit be allowed,

preferably utilizing conservation design concepts. This category encompasses about 2,914 acres, or about 2

percent of the County, on the 2035 land use plan map.

Suburban-Density Residential

Suburban-density residential uses occupy 11,115 acres, or about 6 percent of the County, on the 2035 land use

plan map. This category includes single-family homes at lot sizes or densities equating to 40,000 square feet to

4.9 acres per dwelling unit. Suburban-density residential land is neither truly urban nor rural in character.

Development at this density generally precludes the provision of centralized sanitary sewer service, public water

supply service, and other urban amenities if allowed in or near urban service areas and may compromise the rural

character of the County if allowed in rural areas. The use of conservation subdivision design or lot-averaging

techniques can also be utilized to help preserve country or rural character in areas where suburban-density

residential development is allowed.

Medium-Density Residential

The medium-density residential use category occupies 24,373 acres, or about 14 percent of the County, on the

2035 land use plan map. Medium-density residential uses are envisioned to occur in a variety of residential

neighborhoods, located within the urban service areas of the County, providing a full complement of basic

neighborhood amenities including a school, park, and shopping area. The average density of medium-density

residential areas should be one home per 6,000 to 39,999 square feet of area, predominantly allowing for single

family and two-family homes. This category also includes areas of existing development and small undeveloped

lots at this density outside urban service areas. New areas outside urban service areas should not be developed at

this density; however, small existing vacant lots may be developed if they meet the requirements of Town and

County ordinances.

High-Density Residential

High-density residential uses occupy 1,864 acres, or about 1 percent of the County, on the 2035 land use plan

map. High-density residential uses are envisioned to occur in a variety of residential neighborhoods, located

within the urban service areas of the County, providing a full complement of basic neighborhood amenities

including a school, park, and shopping area. The average density in this category would be less than 6,000 square

feet per dwelling unit, allowing for single- and two-family homes and multi-family buildings.

Mixed-Use

The mixed-use category occupies 4,742 acres, or about 3 percent of the County, on the 2035 land use plan map,

and would include a mix of residential and compatible commercial and/or institutional uses.

Parcels designated

for mixed use should be developed in accordance with a development or redevelopment plan approved by the

local government concerned and, in town areas, by Kenosha County. Development in this category would

typically be subject to planned unit development (PUD), traditional neighborhood development (TND), transitoriented

development (TOD), or mixed use related regulations in the applicable zoning ordinance. Mixed-use

areas generally include traditional downtown business districts, infill development sites, and areas adjacent to

arterial streets, highways, and transit stops (bus or rail) within urban service areas of the County.

Commercial

Commercial uses occupy 4,397 acres, or about 3 percent of the County, on the 2035 land use plan map. This

category includes retail stores; services, such as drycleaners, barber or beautician shops, banks, and restaurants;

and offices and professional services of doctors, dentists, architects, engineers, attorneys, computer programmers,

graphic artists, insurance agents, financial planners, and other similar recognized professions and consultation

services. This category may also include downtown business districts, neighborhood and community shopping

centers, highway and regional shopping areas, financial institutions, and medical facilities.

Office/Professional Services

The office/professional services category occupies 581 acres, or less than 1 percent of the County, on the 2035

land use plan map. This category includes a variety of business uses such as the offices and professional services

of doctors, dentists, architects, engineers, attorneys, computer programmers, graphic artists, insurance agents,

travel agents, financial planners, and other similar recognized professions and consultation services. This category

may also include corporate headquarters, financial institutions, and medical facilities.

Industrial

The plan envisions that the areas devoted to industrial land uses would occupy 5,307 acres, or about 3 percent of

the County. This category would accommodate manufacturing and other industrial uses, such as warehouses and

outdoor storage of commercial vehicles and building materials.

Business/Industrial Park

The business/industrial park category occupies 2,725 acres, or about 2 percent of the County, on the 2035 land use

plan map. This category would allow a mix of office, retail, service, and industrial uses, and reflects the modern

business park where a mix of office and compatible service and/or industrial uses are typically accommodated. It

is anticipated that these areas would be developed in an attractive park-like setting with landscaping, consistent

signage, and similar or compatible building materials and designed to present an integrated image to customers

Governmental and Institutional

The governmental and institutional land use category includes governmental and institutional buildings and

grounds for which the primary function involves administration, safety, assembly, or educational purposes. This

includes public and private schools, government offices, police and fire stations, libraries, cemeteries, religious

institutions, hospitals, nursing homes, and similar facilities. In the City of Kenosha only, this category would also

allow commercial office buildings that are not associated with a government or institutional use. The plan

envisioned that areas devoted to governmental and institutional uses would occupy 3,861 acres, or about 2 percent

of the County.

Park and Recreational

The park and recreational land use category includes lands developed with facilities for public and private outdoor

recreation and publicly-owned indoor recreational facilities. It includes both public parks and privately-owned

recreational areas, such as a ski hill and golf courses. The plan envisions that the areas devoted to park and

recreational uses would occupy 5,090 acres, or about 3 percent of the County, in 2035. This acreage does not

include the natural resource areas which are encompassed in the natural resource related land use categories such

as the environmental corridor, isolated natural resource area, "other conservancy lands to be preserved", and

wetland categories.

Street and Highway Right-of-Way

All existing street and highway rights-of-way (as of December 2008), future street rights-of-way shown on

adopted neighborhood plans, and the proposed right-of-way for the IH 94 freeway corridor, including interchanges,

currently under development, are shown on Map 65 as a separate category. Chapter XI provides additional information regarding planned transportation facilities in Kenosha County. There are 10,910 acres, or

about 6 percent of the County, within street and highway rights-of-way.

Other Transportation, Communication, and Utility

This category includes transportation facilities other than street rights-of-way, such as airports, park-ride lots, and

railroad rights-of-way. It also includes parcels used for private and public utilities that provide residents and

businesses with electric power, natural gas, communications, water, and sewage and solid waste management

facilities and services. This category occupies 2,367 acres, or about 1 percent of the County, on the 2035 land use

plan map.

Extractive

Extractive land uses involve onsite extraction of surface or subsurface materials. In 2008, extractive uses in

Kenosha County include nonmetallic mining areas of sand and gravel operations. When permitted, extractive

areas may also include the nonmetallic mining of rock and peat. Extractive lands identified on the County 2035

land use plan map include existing and planned areas to be used for nonmetallic mining operations, and

encompass 1,384 acres, or about 1 percent of the County. All extractive uses require the preparation of a

reclamation plan for re-use of the site when mining is completed. Existing extractive sites have prepared such

plans, and the sites will be reclaimed in accordance with those plans when mining operations have been

completed.

Landfill

A landfill is an engineered facility for the disposal of nonhazardous solid waste that is located, designed,

constructed, and operated to contain the solid waste and pose no substantial hazard to human health or the

environment. The two active landfills in the County, Pheasant Run Landfill and the WE Energies boiler and coal

ash landfill, are identified on the County land use plan map, and encompass 421 acres, or less than 1 percent of

the County. A planned expansion of the Pheasant Run landfill is reflected on Map 65. Landfills have the potential

to be reclaimed for other uses. A complete inventory of former, inactive, and transitional landfills in Kenosha

County, as identified by the DNR, is provided in Map 68 and Table 86 and Map 96 and Table 147 in

Chapter XIII.

Environmentally Significant Areas

To effectively guide urban development and redevelopment in the County into a pattern that is efficient, stable,

safe, healthful, and attractive, it is necessary to carefully consider the location of planned land uses in relation to

natural resources. Locating new urban development outside of environmental corridors and other environmentally

sensitive areas will serve to maintain a high level of environmental quality in the County, and will also avoid

costly development problems such as flood damage, wet basements, failing pavements, and infiltration of clear

water into sanitary sewerage systems. Properly relating new development to such environmentally significant

areas will also help preserve the scenic beauty of the County.

This comprehensive plan recommends substantial preservation of remaining primary and secondary

environmental corridors, isolated natural resource areas, and other environmentally sensitive areas. Development

within these areas should be limited to required transportation and utility facilities, compatible outdoor recreation

facilities, and very low density residential development carefully designed so as to minimize the impact on natural

resources. Lands proposed for urban development that contain or appear to have environmentally sensitive areas,

such as primary environmental corridors or isolated wetlands, should be field verified and staked for precise

delineation of such features on the property prior to development.

Primary Environmental Corridor

Environmental corridors, more fully described in Chapter III, are linear areas in the landscape that contain

concentrations of high-value elements of the natural resource base. Primary environmental corridors contain

almost all of the best remaining woodlands, wetlands, and wildlife habitat areas, as well as floodplains and steeply

sloped areas where intensive urban development would be ill-advised. Primary environmental corridors are at

least two miles in length, 400 acres in area, and 200 feet in width. The protection of the primary environmental

corridors from additional intrusion by urban development is one of the principal objectives of this plan. Primary

environmental corridors occupy 23,616 acres, excluding associated surface water areas, or about 13 percent of the

County. This land use category includes certain areas of “planned” primary environmental corridors consisting of

existing “farmed wetlands” adjacent to such corridors that are located within existing or planned urban or cluster

developments. Farming activities on these wetlands may likely cease, which will likely cause the wetland to

return to a natural condition.

Secondary Environmental Corridor

Secondary environmental corridors contain concentrations of high-value elements of the natural resource base, but

are smaller in area than primary environmental corridors. Such corridors are at least one mile in length and 100

acres in area, except where secondary corridors connect to or serve to link primary environmental corridor

segments. In such cases, no minimum area or length criteria apply. Secondary environmental corridors, under the

plan, occupy 6,409 acres, excluding associated surface water areas, or about 4 percent of the County, and includes

certain areas of “planned” secondary environmental corridors consisting of existing “farmed wetlands” adjacent to

such corridors and located within existing or planned urban development. Secondary corridors should be carefully

integrated into urban development with the goal of preserving corridor resources. Such areas may serve as

corridors for the movement of wildlife and may also lend themselves for certain uses, such as parks,

drainageways, or stormwater detention or retention areas.

Isolated Natural Resource Area

Isolated natural resource areas consist of areas with important natural resource values which are separated

geographically from primary and secondary environmental corridors. Most of the isolated natural resource areas

in the County are wetlands or tracts of woodlands that are at least 200 feet wide and five acres in area. Isolated

natural resource areas, under the plan, occupy 3,903 acres, excluding associated surface water areas, or about 2

percent of the County, and include certain areas of “planned” isolated natural resource areas consisting of existing

“farmed” wetlands adjacent to such isolated natural resource areas and located within existing or planned urban

development. The plan recommends that these areas be preserved in essentially natural, open space uses whenever

possible, since these areas sometimes serve as the only available wildlife habitat in an area and provide natural

diversity to the landscape. Isolated natural resource areas also lend themselves for certain uses such as parks,

drainageways, or stormwater detention or retention areas.

Other Conservancy Land to be Preserved

The plan also recommends that 3,671 acres of other conservancy lands be preserved. This land use category

includes woodlands, natural areas, and critical species habitat sites located outside environmental corridors and

isolated natural resource areas; a significant geological site; and common open areas of residential developments,

including conservation subdivisions. This category also includes portions of State-owned wildlife areas and

certain nonfarmed wetlands that are outside environmental corridors and isolated natural resource areas. The

preservation of these areas may provide the only available wildlife habitat in an area and lend unique character

and natural diversity to the community in a manner similar to isolated natural resource areas. If natural vegetation

develops on some of this open land, the re-vegetated areas may eventually be reclassified as an environmental

corridor or isolated natural resource area.

Nonfarmed Wetlands Outside Environmental Corridors, Isolated

Natural Resource Areas, and Other Conservancy Land to be Preserved

This category consists of primarily nonfarmed wetlands (wetlands with natural vegetation), typically less than five

acres in size, that are located outside environmental corridors, isolated natural resource areas, and other

conservancy lands to be preserved. These areas contain soils that are poorly drained and support wetland

vegetation during years of normal or high precipitation or periods of normal or high water table. Nonfarmed

wetlands five acres or larger are typically located within environmental corridors or isolated natural resource

areas. This land use category also includes certain existing farmed wetlands that are located within parcels of

existing or planned urban development (ranging from rural residential uses to industrial uses), where farming

activities may likely cease, and the wetland will revert to natural conditions. Wetlands are regulated under State

and Federal laws and County ordinances. Development of wetlands, usually requiring them to be filled, is limited.

Permits to allow development in wetlands generally require "mitigation," which requires new wetlands to be

created or existing degraded wetlands to be restored. Mitigation may be required on the same development site or

in a different location. Wetlands under this land use category encompass 1,509 acres, or about 1 percent of the

County.

Farmed Wetland (Overlay)

This category consists of farmed wetlands located outside of existing or planned urban or cluster developments

that contain soil conditions which can support wetland vegetation; however, wetland vegetation is absent due to

cultivation, use as a pasture, or other agricultural activities. Farming may continue in accordance with County and

local zoning ordinances and other applicable laws. If natural vegetation develops on some of these wetlands when

farming ceases, the re-vegetated areas may eventually be reclassified as part of an environmental corridor or

isolated natural resource area. Wetlands under this land use category encompass 883 acres, or less than 1 percent

of the County.

Development on Parcels Containing Environmentally Significant Areas

Where possible, this comprehensive plan recommends that urban development be located entirely outside of

primary and secondary environmental corridors, isolated natural resource areas, and other environmentally

significant areas. While calling for the preservation of primary environmental corridors, the plan recognizes that

in some cases it may be necessary to allow very low density residential development on the upland portion of

such lands. In addition to limited residential development, land uses such as transportation and utility facilities

and certain recreational uses may also be accommodated within these environmentally significant areas without

jeopardizing their overall integrity. Guidelines for the types of development that may be accommodated within

various component natural resource features of environmental corridors are set forth in Table 82 in Chapter VIII.

Even though these guidelines are not exhaustive, with good judgment they may be extended to, and be used for

the evaluation of, proposals for similar types of development not specifically listed.

Surface Water

The surface water land use category includes lakes, ponds, and major rivers, including those associated with

environmental corridors and isolated natural resource areas. Surface waters encompass 5,607 acres, or about 3

percent of the County.

100-Year Floodplain (Overlay)

Floodplains are identified as an overlay on the Kenosha County land use plan map, and encompass 20,193 acres,

or about 11 percent of the County. The floodplain overlay includes areas adjacent to rivers, streams, and lakes that

are subject to inundation by the 100-year recurrence interval flood event. Floodplains shown on Map 65 are based

on the best information available at the time the map was prepared and include floodplains delineated as part of

the Des Plaines and Pike River watershed studies; the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) 1981

Flood Insurance Study (FIS); the Lake Michigan floodplain elevation identified in a report titled "Revised Report

on Great Lakes Open-Coast Flood Levels (Phase I)," prepared by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1988,

which updates elevations used for the 1981 FIS; and, in some cases, the floodplain delineations from the

preliminary FEMA Map Modernization program underway as this comprehensive plan was being developed.

Since floodplains are continuously refined and amended, local communities and/or the County should be

consulted for the most current floodplain delineations. A comprehensive update of floodplain mapping in

Kenosha County is being conducted by FEMA, and is expected to be completed in 2010.