
CHAPTER THREE: LAND USE

This Chapter is intended to provide information on existing land use and land use trends in the City of Janesville. Long-range land use planning allows municipalities to phase and guide development in a manner that maintains community character, protects sensitive environmental features, and provides efficient municipal services. Land use planning also enables the City to identify lands well-suited for public purposes such as schools, parks, municipal facilities, major roads, and drainage facilities.

This chapter contains a compilation of background information that will be used to form policies and programs to guide the future preservation and development of public and private lands in the City of Janesville. The policies and programs will be included in *Volume 2*. This Chapter includes maps showing existing land uses in the City at three scales and provides land use data and analysis as required under §66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes.

EXISTING LAND USE

An accurate depiction of the existing land use pattern is the first step in planning for the desired future land use pattern.

Existing Land Use Map Categories – Maps 5a, 5b, and 5c

The land use pattern as of January 1, 2020 is shown in Maps 5a, 5b and 5c. The set of categories below was used to prepare the existing land use map for the City and its planning area. Maps 5a, 5b, and 5c illustrate Existing Land Uses at three scales -a Regional View, City View, and Downtown View.

- **Residential - Single-Family:** Single-family residential development in City limits
- **Residential - Two-Family/Townhouse:** attached single family, two-family, and walk-up townhouse residential development;
- **Residential - Multi-Family:** a variety of residential units focused in particular on multiple family housing (3+ units per building);
- **Office:** Office, institutional, research, and office-support land uses;
- **Commercial:** indoor commercial, retail, institutional and service uses with moderate landscaping and signage;
- **Light Industrial:** industrial land uses and various controlled outdoor storage areas with moderate or limited landscaping and signage;
- **Community Facilities:** large-scale public buildings, hospitals, youth and elderly service facilities, and special-care facilities. Small community facilities uses may be located in lands designated as other land use categories;
- **Parks and Open Space:** park and public open space facilities devoted to playgrounds, play fields, trails, picnic areas, and related recreational activities, and conservation areas;
- **Utilities:** Public utilities such as parking lots, well stations, Rock County Airport;
- **Vacant:** undeveloped land within the City limits;
- **Agriculture:** agricultural and related uses, cropland, farmsteads, operations, and single-family residential development with maximum development densities of one dwelling unit per 35 acres;
- **Surface Water:** lakes, rivers, creeks, and perennial streams;
- **Rights-of-Way:** publicly-owned land for roads, highways, and railroads.

Existing Land Use Pattern

The total acreage of lands that are classified in each of the land use categories on maps 5a, 5b, and 5c is presented in [Figure 11](#). There are some existing land use categories listed below that are not mapped within the City, but are illustrated on the Regional Focus existing land use map, beyond the City limits.

Figure 11: Existing Land Use Totals, 2020

Land Use	Acres	Percent
Residential – Single-Family Urban	5,130	23.1%
Residential – Two-family / Townhouse	514	2.3%
Residential – Multi-family	467	2.1%
Office	266	1.2%
Commercial	810	3.6%
Industrial	1,663	7.5%
Utilities	2,121	9.5%
Community Facilities	1,024	4.6%
Parks, Open Space, and Environmental Corridors	2,851	12.8%
Vacant	1,396	6.3%
Agricultural	1,794	8.1%
Surface Water	431	1.9%
Right of Way	3,752	16.9%
Total	22,219	100%

Source: GIS Inventory 2020, City of Janesville, 2021; Rock County, 2015

Residential Development

The City features a mix of residential types and densities. Early residential development occurred in the central part of the City, around the downtown. Some of the historic neighborhoods in the City include the stately Courthouse Hill neighborhood, Look West neighborhood (part of the City's historic First Ward), and the Old Fourth Ward. The latter two neighborhoods are mixed in the type and character of housing today – with some concerns about maintenance. The City's post World War II housing development occurred on the near east

and west sides. This housing remains in fairly good condition; however, there is desire to ensure that these neighborhoods remain well-maintained and attractive. More recent residential subdivisions have been on all sides of the City, with much of it in the 1990s and 2000s focused in the north, east, and western parts of the City.



Commercial/Office Development

The City's commercial development is focused along several commercial corridors and the downtown area. Milton Avenue, Main Street, Center Avenue, Milwaukee Street, Court Street, USH 51, and USH 14/Humes Road are major commercial corridors in the City. Large-scale regional commercial uses, serving a market beyond Janesville are prevalent in the area around the USH 14 and STH 26/Milton Avenue interchanges and Milton Avenue and Humes Road. Center Avenue and Court Street provide predominantly community-serving commercial uses. Public participation activities as part of this planning process suggested a desire to identify additional locations for both regional and community scale commercial development in the City. The downtown area supports mainly service-related business, retailing, and restaurants. Given the availability of infill and development sites in and around the downtown, there are potential opportunities for residential, retail, office, and mixed-use development.



Industrial Development

The City's economy grew up around manufacturing, and as such, industrial development remains prevalent in the City even after the closure of the GM facility. Rail-oriented industrial land uses are clustered near USH 51 in the south central and north central portions of the City. Some industrial development, such as GOEX Corporation on Hwy 14, has warranted rail extensions to facilitate operations. More modern industrial development has been located in a large industrial park east of the interstate and north of Racine Street (STH 11). Additionally, a rapidly growing industrial corridor is located along Beloit Avenue, with many major employers such as Generac, Serta Simmons, and Dollar General operating from this industrial park. The City's industrial land demand suggests a need to account for potential industrial expansion areas in this *Plan*.



HISTORIC LAND DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

Land Market Trends

Trends in the City of Janesville land market suggest increasing land values and lot prices, as is the case throughout the region. This reflects the accelerating demand for new development in the area, and the increasing commuter relationship between the Janesville area and the higher-priced markets in Dane County. The State Department of Revenue reported an increase of 33.3% in the total equalized values of the City between 2015 and 2019.

Raw land values have increased in the Janesville area over the past several years. According to the City assessor's office, the average sale price of existing homes in the City of Janesville was \$173,421 in 2018, a 44 percent increase from \$120,078 in 2006. There is anecdotal evidence of value differentials between the east and west sides of the City, with land values notably higher on the east side of the City. In Rock County, the 2021 average home value was \$204,933.

Residential Development Trends

Figure 12 summarizes residential development activity in the City of Janesville from 2010 through 2020. Since 2016, the granting of residential construction permits exceeded the 10-year average, representing a rebounding market since the Great Recession and the closure of General Motors.

Figure 12: New Residential Construction Permits, 2011-2020

Year	Single-Family
2011	31
2012	62
2013	56
2014	68
2015	69

Year	Single-Family
2016	89
2017	94
2018	80
2019	98
2020	105
10-Year Average	75

Commercial Development Trends

Figure 13 summarizes new commercial development activity in the City of Janesville from 2011 through 2020. In 2019 and 2020, new commercial development permits were issued at a level significantly higher than the 10-year average.

Figure 13: New Commercial Construction Permits, 2010-2020

Year	New Commercial Permits Issued
2011	11
2012	17
2013	27
2014	18
2015	31
2016	20
2017	19
2018	23
2019	40
2020	32
10-Year Average	24

Land Supply for Housing

Section 66.10013 of Wisconsin State Statutes mandates that Wisconsin municipalities shall draft an annual “Housing Affordability Report.” The City of Janesville first prepared a report for calendar year 2018 (at the end of 2019). It is important to note that the latest report accounts for calendar year 2019; therefore, this subsection of [Land Use Chapter](#) does not account for land supply in the City during the Covid-19 pandemic.

A requirement of Section 66.10013 is that municipalities report a parcel-by-parcel inventory of available land for future residential development. The City of Janesville divides all undeveloped parcels suitable for residential development into two categories:

1. **Vacant Residential Lots** – these consist of platted residential lots that may or may not contain public street and utility improvements.

2. **Undeveloped Land** – these consist of unplatted parcels without established public street frontage or municipal sewer and water utility improvements. While most vacant residential lots have access to public utilities, due diligence is required on the part of any potential developer looking to establish housing on any given parcel.

The acreage and number of lots is determined through City assessment records. Between 2018 and 2019, the number of vacant lots decreased from 1,099 to 1,024 – a 6.8 percent decrease. As a measure of total acreage, total developable acres decreased considerably faster, from 2,271 to 1,890 acres – a 16.8 percent decrease. Figure 14 illustrates developable parcels as portrayed in the 2019 report.

Vacant, platted residential lots (marked in red) are distributed throughout the City and illustrate continued ample opportunities for infill development, but are especially concentrated along the periphery of the City, consistent with past observed development trends. Undeveloped and unplatted parcels (marked in yellow) mainly exist along the urban fringe, but are especially concentrated along the growing northeast side of the city, and along the western border of Janesville. Although this land is available for future residential development, not all this land is necessarily zoned for residential purposes at this time. Vacant lands in general are also illustrated in the existing land use maps that correspond with this chapter.

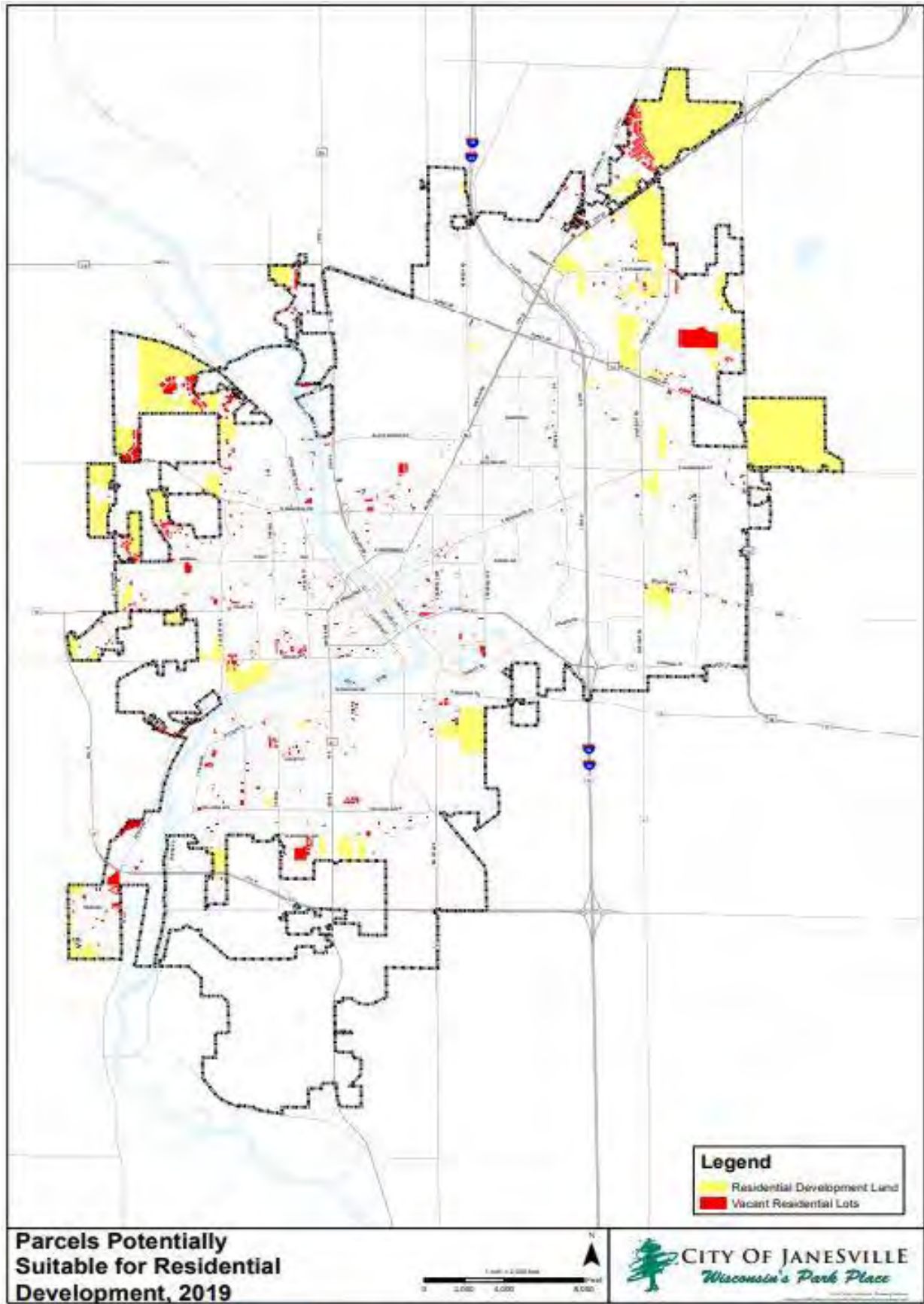


Figure 14: Parcels Suitable for Residential Development, 2019

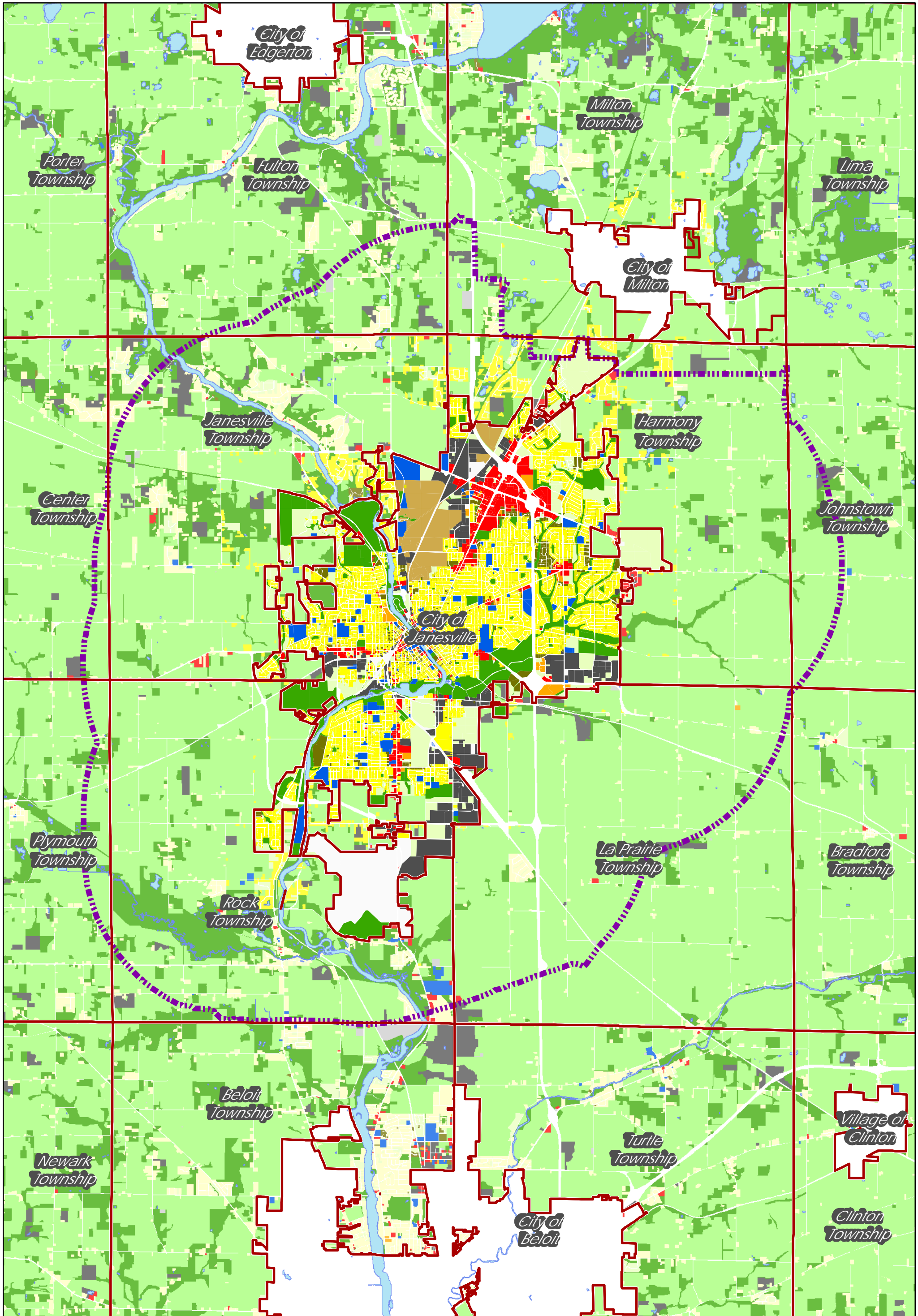
PROJECTED LAND USE DEMAND

Volume 2 of the *Plan* will bring together supply and demand. The *Future Land Use Map* and policies and programs detailed in *Volume 2* will suggest how to accommodate future land use demand within the supply of lands potentially available for development. This includes recommendations of which types of land uses, if any, would be most appropriate for given locations within the City and the surrounding areas.

KEY LAND USE ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The following are some of the key issues and opportunities for the City identified in this Chapter and through public input in the planning process that will be considered in preparation of recommendations in *Volume 2* of the *Comprehensive Plan*.

- Guiding growth and development to accommodate future City growth should be balanced with minimizing the negative impacts of growth such as traffic problems, declining level of service, excessive land use consumption, and degradation of environmental resources.
- The City's Land Use recommendations should consider short and long-term growth edges and land use phasing strategies.
- Siting and character of future residential neighborhoods should consider residential density, building "neighborhoods" that encompass a wider range of housing types and mixture of uses that would be included in a typical "subdivision."
- Locating sufficient acreage for future industrial and regional commercial expansion areas remains vital for the City's economy.
- Identification of development and redevelopment opportunities along existing key commercial corridors.
- Improvement of the image and functionality along key corridors including Milton Avenue, W. Court Street, and Center Avenue (USH 51) can be achieved through redevelopment, sign controls, road design, and landscaping standards.
- The City's supply of under-utilized buildings and parcels suggests the opportunity for pursuing revitalization and redevelopment, particularly in the downtown.
- There are opportunities for mixed-use development in the downtown and other appropriate locations throughout Janesville.
- Potential land use conflicts associated with downtown redevelopment will need to be addressed.
- The City should continue prioritizing the asset of the Rock River to stimulate downtown and riverfront development and redevelopment, while minimizing conflicts associated with urban redevelopment.

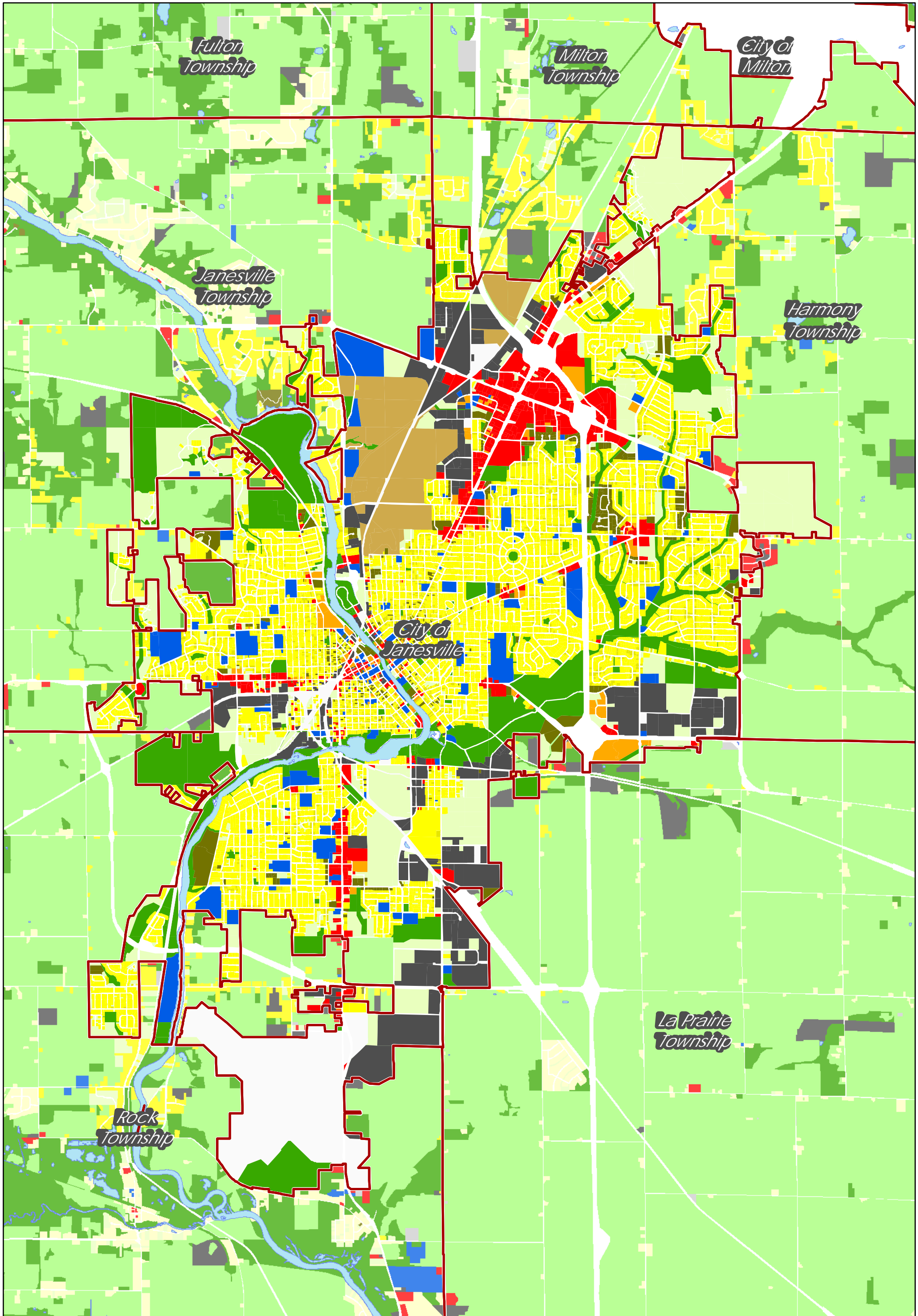


4. Existing Land Use (Regional)



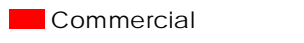
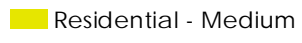
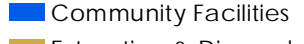
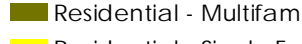
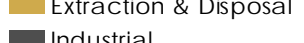
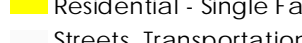
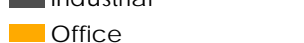
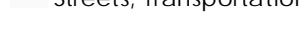
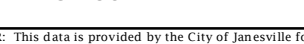
- Agriculture or Vacant
- Park, Recreation & Environmental Spaces
- Commercial
- Residential - Medium Density
- Community Facilities
- Residential - Multifamily
- Extraction & Disposal
- Residential - Single Family
- Industrial
- Streets, Transportation & Utilities
- Office
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction



CITY OF JANESVILLE
Wisconsin's Park Place



5. Existing Land Use (City View)

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Agriculture or Vacant |  Park, Recreation & Environmental Spaces |
|  Commercial |  Residential - Medium Density |
|  Community Facilities |  Residential - Multifamily |
|  Extraction & Disposal |  Residential - Single Family |
|  Industrial |  Streets, Transportation & Utilities |
|  Office | |

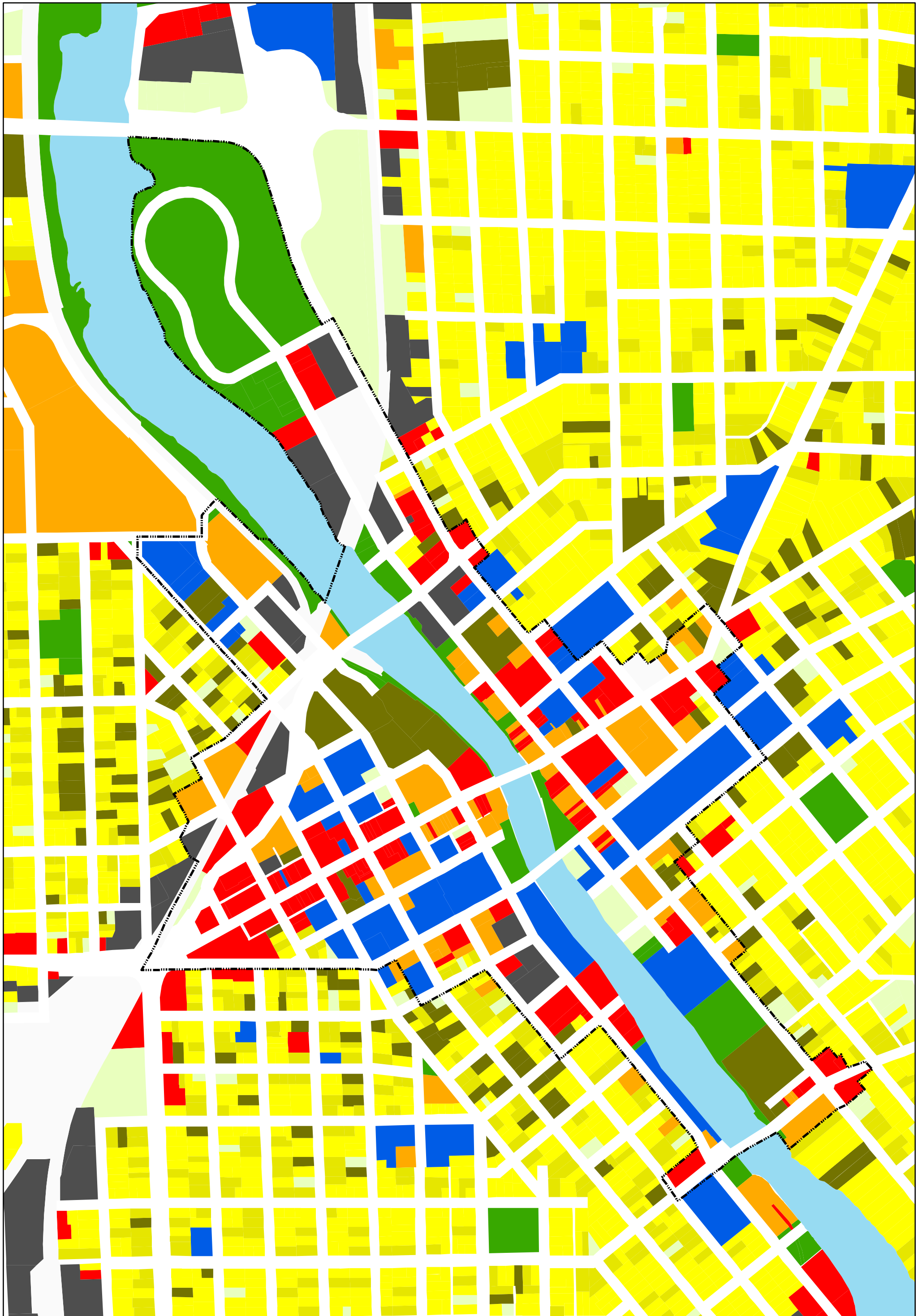


CITY OF JANESVILLE

Wisconsin's Park Place

3/14/2022; 2.Pennycook, Engineering Division
S:\Projects\Planning\Comprehensive_Plan\Update_Comp Plan Maps\Vol 1\Update_March 2022\Map 5b Existing Land Use (City).mxd

DISCLAIMER: This data is provided by the City of Janesville for informational purposes only. The City does not warrant or guarantee the accuracy or reliability of this data. The recipient of this data assumes any risk of its use for any purpose.



6. Existing Land Use (Downtown)

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Agriculture or Vacant | Park, Recreation & Environmental Spaces |
| Commercial | Residential - Medium Density |
| Community Facilities | Residential - Multifamily |
| Extraction & Disposal | Residential - Single Family |
| Industrial | Streets, Transportation & Utilities |
| Office | Downtown Alliance Boundary |



CITY OF JANESVILLE
Wisconsin's Park Place

