



Land Use Planning and Zoning Update

2023

City of Nekoosa Land Use Planning & Zoning Update -2023-

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Introduction

The City of Nekoosa recognizes that land use planning for the future is sound public policy. Proper planning urges community leaders to think proactively and coordinate community efforts, resources and time.

Land use changes in the City have more often than not been driven by socioeconomic conditions. However, land use can also be effectively guided by community decision making and public policies. This plan is designed to guide current and future development of Nekoosa, and provides the foundation for zoning and land use policy decisions. It promotes Nekoosa’s unique assets to preserve its “small town” character; retain and attract families; promote community and economic development; and create a sustainable balance between the built and natural environment. It is intended to serve the City Council, Plan Commission and most importantly Nekoosa residents.

Statutory Basis

This plan was prepared pursuant to § 66.1001 of the Wisconsin Statutes. It shall be considered

an update and supplement to the City of Nekoosa Comprehensive Plan 2012. Both plans are to be used in coordination, along with any other community plans, like Nekoosa’s Strategic Plan and Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation.

Planning Process

The planning process for this plan spanned over several months and generally followed three steps. A multi-faceted approach was used to analyze existing land uses (Step 1); establish guidance and recommendations for future land use (Step 2); and update zoning as the primary implementation tool (Step 3).

The Plan Commission was primarily responsible for overseeing the coordination and development of this plan. The commission met frequently to prepare and review all plan components and associated maps, prioritize community needs, and determine specific recommendations. Public participation was highly encouraged throughout the planning process primarily through public meetings and a public hearing.

The planning process is not finished with the completion or adoption of this plan. The City of Nekoosa will be responsible for the implementation of this plan.

Plan Components

This plan consists of three components. They are essential tools for administering a successful, effective and rational local planning and zoning program.

1. Existing Land Use Inventory and Map
2. Future Land Use Plan and Map
3. Zoning Overview and Proposed Map

Existing Land Use

Current land use and development patterns were identified and analyzed through a detailed inventory. It is important to know the location and extent of existing land uses and activities in a community. Having a thorough understanding

of existing land use provides the foundation for future land use planning and policy development.

Future Land Use

The Future Land Use Plan serves as a guide for future development and growth of the City of Nekoosa. The Future Land Use Map provides a visual guide to land uses intended in the City over the next 10–20 years.

Zoning

Zoning is the primary implementation tool for achieving the desired outcomes of this land use plan. Zoning guides land use and development in a community. The proposed zoning map is the final product of this process and plan. The previous zoning map was comprehensively updated to reduce zoning inconsistencies, nonconformities and split-zoned parcels.

Plan Implementation

The first step toward implementation of this plan is adoption of the plan by the Nekoosa Common Council. Wisconsin Statute § 66.1001(4) provides specific procedures that are necessary to adopt the plan. Subsequently, the Common Council shall consider repealing its existing zoning map, and replace it with the proposed updated zoning map included in this plan. This new map will promote a more successful and coordinated planning and zoning program.

The Zoning Administrator, Plan Commission and Common Council are all essential actors in the administration and success of this plan. They are responsible for ensuring that the plan is being used, and not just sitting on a shelf at City Hall. This plan contains components and maps that shall be used as a community decision-making guide by city staff, plan commissioners, council members and the public. Future decisions related to zoning, development and infrastructure should be in accordance with this plan.

Existing Land Use

Current land use and development patterns in the City of Nekoosa were identified and analyzed through a detailed inventory. It is important to know the location and extent of existing land uses and activities in a community. Having a thorough understanding of existing land use provides the foundation for future land use planning and policy development.

The following land use inventory was performed in the summer of 2022. It was developed using 2020 aerial photography interpretation, assessment records, site checks, and local expertise. All lands in Nekoosa are categorized under one of the following general land use classifications:

1. General Residential
2. Multi-Family Residential
3. Commercial
4. Industrial
5. Natural Areas/Undeveloped
6. Institutional/Governmental
7. Parks & Recreation
8. Agricultural

(Note: Existing land use classifications are NOT zoning districts)

General Residential

The residential land use designation consists of any areas used for residential activities including single-family and two-family homes. Residential development in Nekoosa consists mostly of traditional single-family residential structures. Higher density residential development is concentrated in central portions of the city near the Downtown Area. Low density residential development is scattered throughout the city in areas closer to the city limits.

Multi-Family Residential

The multi-family residential land use classification includes residential structures

containing three or more dwelling units. This includes apartment buildings, condominiums, senior housing and assisted living facilities. In Nekoosa, mobile home parks were also included in this category.

Commercial

The commercial classification includes any areas for which the primary function involves retail sales and services. Specific uses may include restaurants, gas stations, downtown shops and retailers, grocery stores, banks, small offices, etc. Current commercial activities in Nekoosa are clustered in the Downtown Area and along Market St/HWY 173. A few other commercial properties are scattered around the City, however not many.

Industrial

The industrial classification includes buildings and premises, which are devoted to light and heavy industrial uses, manufacturing, production, etc. The Nekoosa Industrial/Business Park is included in this category. The paper mill and associated rail yard make up a majority of this land use classification.

Natural Areas/Undeveloped

The natural areas and undeveloped areas classification is the largest land use in Nekoosa. This classification consists of woodlands, forests, wetlands, open space, unused urban/rural lands, etc. This classification can also be referenced to identify areas of environmentally sensitive lands. These areas often have natural limitations for building site development such as floodplains, wetlands, high groundwater, and other environmentally sensitive lands.

Institutional/Governmental

This classification includes governmental and institutional buildings and grounds for which the function involves administration, safety,

education, assembly, etc. This designation includes schools, city buildings/facilities, places of worship, libraries, cemeteries, etc. The Nekoosa School District facilities make up a large portion of this land use.

Parks & Recreation

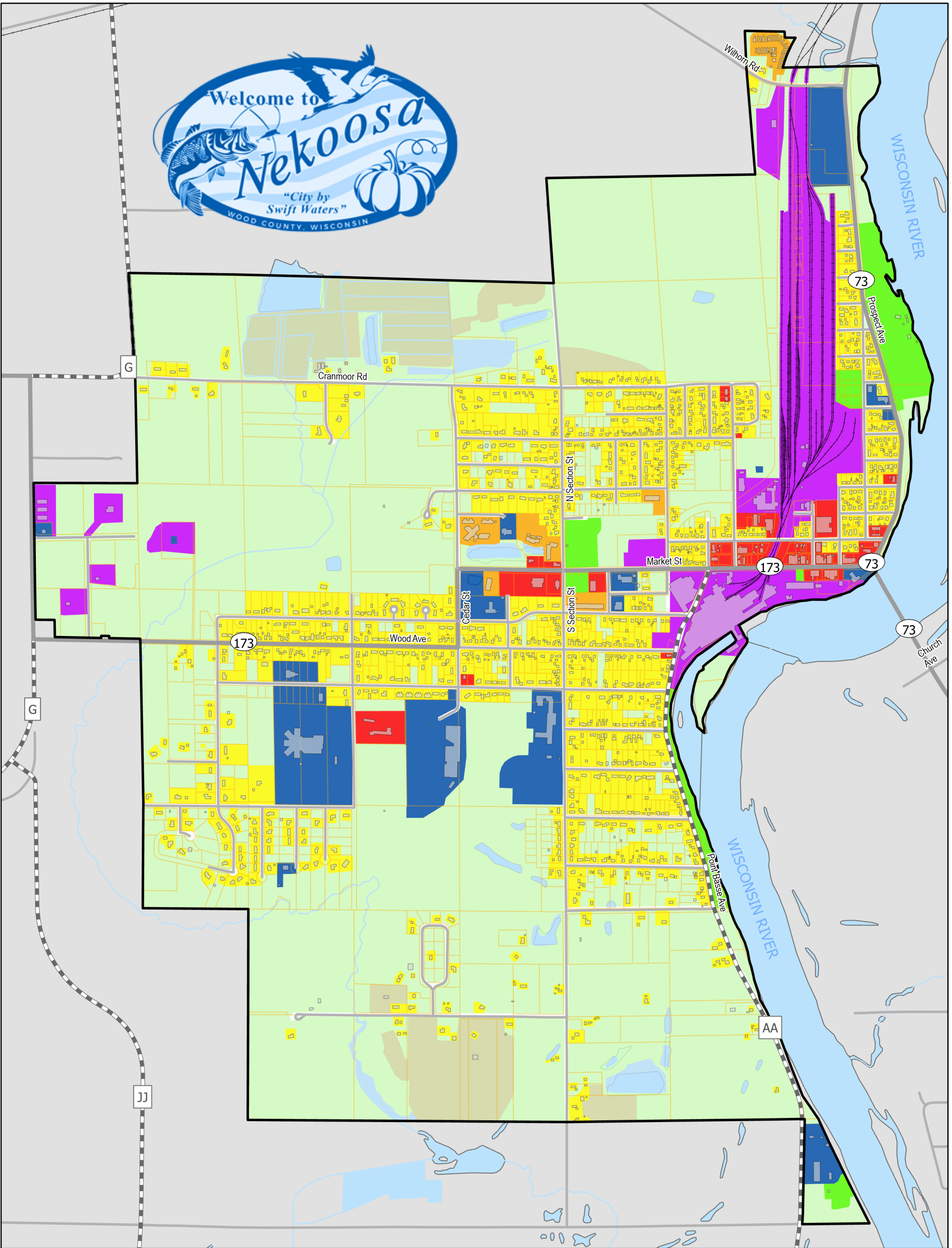
These areas provide opportunities for recreational activities, typically hosting playgrounds, playfields, picnicking, fishing, boat launches, splash pad, disc golf, and more. Facilities and amenities are related to recreation and public gathering. Riverside Park, William Kautzer Recreational Plaza and the Jim Freeman Memorial Boat Landing are examples of these areas.

Agricultural

The Agricultural land use designation consists of those areas utilized for cultivated crop lands, pasture lands, farm lands, agricultural lands, cranberry bogs, etc. This includes buildings for which the primary function is agriculture related. Agricultural areas are located on both the north and south sides of the city, closer to the unincorporated areas of adjacent towns.

The Existing Land Use Map illustrates the location and extent of the aforementioned land use classifications in the City of Nekoosa.

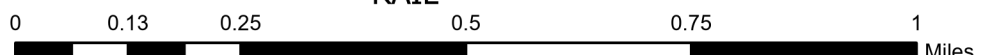
A clear understanding of the Nekoosa community as it exists today, will help shape and guide public policy and community decisions that will influence the City in the future.



EXISTING LAND USE

General Residential	Natural Areas / Undeveloped
Multi-Family Residential	Institutional / Governmental
Commercial	Parks and Recreation
Industrial	Agricultural

NEKOOSA CORPORATE LIMITS	STRUCTURES
PARCELS	LOCAL ROAD
COUNTY-HIGHWAY	STATE-HIGHWAY
RAIL	



Future Land Use

This Future Land Use Plan serves as a guide for future development and growth of the City of Nekoosa. The Future Land Use Map provides a visual guide to land uses intended in the City over the next 10–20 years. The City’s community plans, existing land use inventory, public input and plan commissioner’s expertise, provided the foundation for this Future Land Use Plan.

The Future Land Use Map is a policy guide and is not the same as the Zoning Map. It is intended to be used as a community decision-making guide by city staff, plan commissioners, council members and the public. Future decisions related to zoning, development and infrastructure should be in accordance with this plan. Predicting the exact location of future land uses is challenging. This map uses generalized boundaries to be flexible and allow for land use decisions to be made on a case-by-case basis.

All lands in Nekoosa are categorized under one of the following future land use classifications:

1. Lower-Density Residential
2. Higher-Density Residential
3. Downtown Commercial Core
4. Community Mixed-Use
5. Industrial
6. Institutional
7. Parks & Recreation
8. Agriculture

(Note: Future land use classifications are NOT zoning districts)

Future land use planning establishes a blueprint for Nekoosa’s desired future.

Higher Density Residential

This future land use classification identifies areas of focus for coordinated higher density residential development and infill development. A majority of Nekoosa’s residential growth is existing and planned within this classification. These areas are the most advantageous/suitable for building and development. These areas are located within close proximity to existing municipal sanitary sewer/water services, stormwater infrastructure, police and fire protection and transportation facilities. These locations also avoid areas with potential environmental development constraints such as: wetlands, floodplain and surface water.

Residential growth in Nekoosa has continued to slowly progress over the past few decades. City officials shall continue to encourage residential development that promotes a range of housing choices that meet the needs of persons of all age groups, income levels and needs. This includes planning for more single and two-family homes. It also includes expanding the stock of multi-family housing that may appeal to younger families and empty nesters. There is a shortage of rental options and senior housing is limited. Providing a diversity of housing options in Nekoosa will better accommodate the future needs of its current and future residents. It is important that the City continue to focus efforts on maintaining the vitality of its existing residential areas by promoting housing rehabilitation and maintenance.

Lower Density Residential

This classification identifies areas of the City designated for lower density development. These areas are generally less suitable for development. This is mainly due to lack of municipal sanitary sewer/water services and stormwater infrastructure. Environmental development constraints are also located within these areas. Scattered development and

redevelopment of single-family homes connected to POWTS/septic systems will most likely continue in these areas. Careful consideration must be given to proposed development in this area in an effort to promote orderly and cost-effective expansion of City services. Cranberry production and agricultural land uses are allowable in this classification.

Downtown Commercial Core

Downtown Nekoosa functions as its primary commercial area. It also contains a mix of uses including commercial, service, business, industrial, residential, etc. This classification allows for a mix of land uses that are compatible and desirable in the Downtown area. This area is planned not only as a commercial/service core, but also as a strong civic, social, and community center. Principles and practices of community placemaking should be incorporated in this district. Future land uses should be rooted in community needs, values, history, and natural environment.

Community Mixed-Use

Market Street west of the Downtown area contains a mix of commercial, institutional, recreational and residential uses. A mixed-use category has been created to guide land uses in this general area. Market Street/STH 173 is a planned commercial corridor, but also allows for other compatible and desirable land uses, before transitioning into the adjacent residential areas of the City.

Industrial

This classification is designated to provide locations for the various manufacturing and industrial uses in the city. City officials shall accommodate desired manufacturing businesses and industries to promote economic development and industry diversification. The Nekoosa Business/Industrial Park is planned for

future business/industrial development. The City should evaluate industrial sites and projects on a case-by-case basis.

Institutional

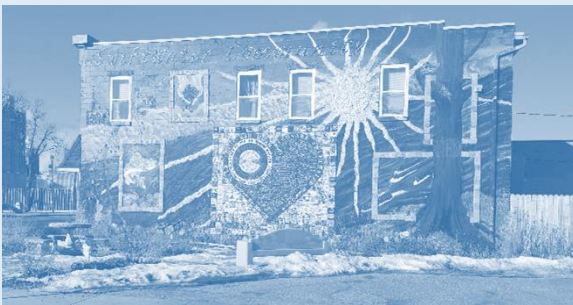
This future land use classification is intended to accommodate institutional, civic, governmental and other related uses. This includes, but is not limited to schools, churches, medical facilities, and municipal buildings and facilities. Some smaller institutional uses may not be mapped on the Future Land Use Map because they were compatible within other districts.

Parks & Recreation

This classification includes all existing and planned park and recreation areas. Future improvements and recommendations are identified in the City of Nekoosa Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP) and could be located in any land use classification. City officials must ensure that parks, playgrounds and other similar recreation areas are well served by bike and pedestrian infrastructure (sidewalks, trails, routes, etc.)

Agricultural

No significant agricultural land use additions are anticipated or planned for the future. It is important to minimize the intrusion of incompatible land uses within agricultural areas.



Development & Growth Constraints

The City of Nekoosa has several limitations and constraints to future growth and development.

The Future Land Use Map illustrates the location and extent of the following for reference purposes:

1. Environmentally Sensitive Areas: Surface Water, Wetlands and Floodplains.
2. Areas not served by municipal sanitary sewer.
3. Enbridge Pipeline

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Environmentally Sensitive Areas, or ESA's, are defined, generally, as those areas that are unsuitable for certain development because of the potential adverse impacts on the natural environment. These areas include, but are not limited to wetlands, floodplain, shorelands and other such physical constraints. The general location of these areas are shown in the Future Land Use Map. Numerous wetlands and floodplains within the City make development a challenge. They are the City's primary constraint to future development.

The exact boundaries of environmentally sensitive areas shall be located through field surveys by appropriate regulatory agencies. Many of the ESA's in Nekoosa are already protected under current laws and ordinances. Any consideration of development within or adjacent to an ESA must be in conformance with all applicable federal, state, and local rules and regulations. If properly developed, certain land uses can protect and preserve ESA functions while at the same time maximizing use of the resource.

Municipal Sewer and Water

A majority of the City is served by municipal sanitary sewer and water. Roads without sanitary sewer are shown in the map. For the future, the

City shall encourage well-coordinated development in areas with existing municipal facilities and infrastructure. Any expansions and additions shall be done in the most cost-effective, efficient and responsible manner possible. Future development shall only be served by POWTS/Septic as a last resort. POWTS are planned to be incrementally eliminated in the City for the future.

Pipeline

Enbridge has several underground pipelines traversing the City including lines 6, 13, 14/64, and 61. The pipelines range in size from 16-42 inch-diameter lines transporting crude oil and diluent. The pipeline location is shown on the Future Land Use Map. This may have an impact on future development and growth decisions.

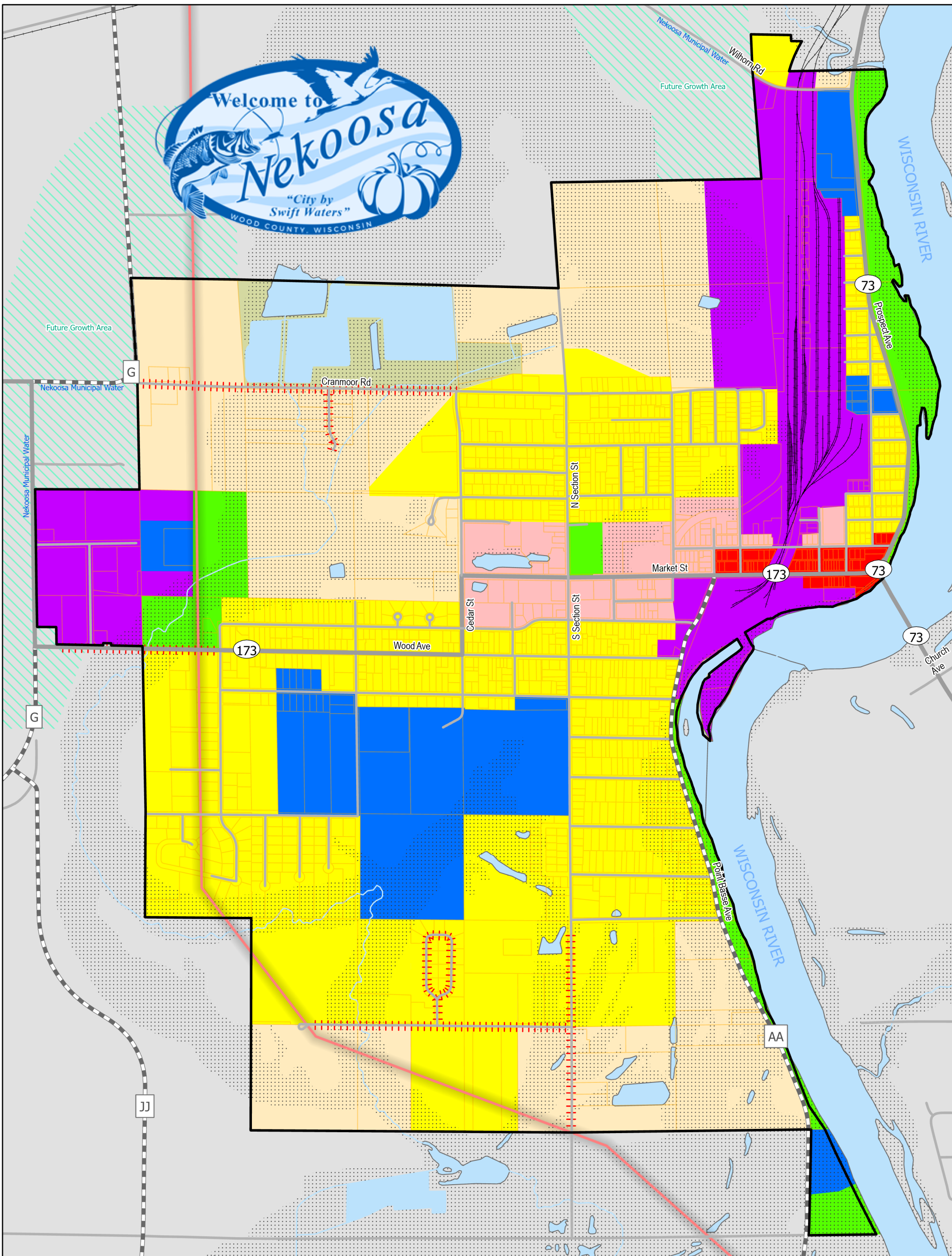
Future Growth Areas

Future growth and development is planned within current city-limits. The City is not actively pursuing annexation of unincorporated areas. However, future growth areas have been identified in areas that are the most suitable for City expansion based on existing conditions, if the opportunity presents.

Future Land Use Implementation

The primary implementation tools for this plan and map are the City's Zoning and Land Division Ordinances. These ordinances provide the regulatory framework to: (1) Promote and guide orderly growth and development. (2) Achieve desired future land uses.

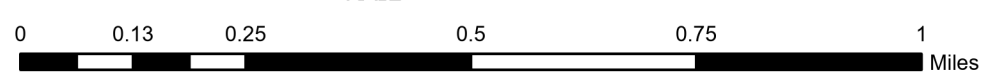
Again, this plan and map shall be used as a community decision-making guide by city staff, plan commissioners, council members and the public. Future decisions related to zoning, development and infrastructure should be in accordance with this plan.



FUTURE LAND USE

Higher Density Residential	Lower Density Residential
Downtown Commercial Core	Community Mixed Use
Industrial	Institutional
Parks & Recreation	Agricultural

NO MUNICIPAL SANITARY SEWER
PIPELINE
ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS
LOCAL ROAD
COUNTY HIGHWAY
STATE HIGHWAY
RAIL



Zoning

Zoning is a widely used and accepted municipal tool for guiding land use and development within a community. It is the primary implementation tool for achieving the desired outcomes of this land use plan.

Among its many purposes, zoning provides the regulatory framework to:

- Promote and guide orderly growth and development.
- Achieve desired future land uses.
- Protect public health, safety and general welfare.
- Separate incompatible land uses.
- Maintain community character and esthetics.

Zoning works by determining how different areas of the community will be used (e.g. residential, commercial, industrial, etc.) and guides the design and location of structures, as well as lot sizes/shapes. The intent of zoning is to balance individual property rights with the interests of the community to create a healthy, safe and desirable living environment.

The City of Nekoosa has actively administered a zoning program since its enactment in 1988. Over time the City has amended its ordinance and map as needed. Keeping these components updated is essential for administering a successful, effective, and relevant local zoning program.

This plan includes a proposed zoning map for consideration and adoption by the Nekoosa Common Council. The proposed zoning map is the final product of this process and plan. The previous zoning map was comprehensively updated to reduce zoning inconsistencies, nonconformities and split-zoned parcels. The new map will promote a more successful and coordinated planning and zoning program for the City. The updated existing and future land use components were

essential for guiding specific updates to the zoning map. It is recommended that the City of Nekoosa repeal the current zoning map and replace it with the updated zoning map.

Zoning consists of two components:

1. Zoning Map
2. Zoning Ordinance

Zoning Map

The Zoning Map identifies different zones, or districts, for various land uses in the City. These districts are designed to separate incompatible uses and promote a mix of compatible uses.

All lands in Nekoosa are divided into the following general zoning districts:

1. Single-Family Residential District (R-1)
2. Two-Family Residential District (R-2)
3. Multifamily Residential District (R-3)
4. Mobile Home Residential District (R-4)
5. Central Business District (B-1)
6. General Business District (B-2)
7. Industrial District (M-1)
8. Agricultural District (A-1)
9. Conservancy District (C-1)

Each district has some clearly “permitted uses” and other “conditional uses” requiring approval of the Plan Commission and/or Common Council for specific site proposals. Some land uses are “prohibited uses” in the City.

- Permitted Uses: Listed in the ordinance and allowed by right throughout the district provided they meet the standards of the ordinance.
- Conditional Uses: Listed in the ordinance and MAY be allowed if they meet ordinance standards and conditions imposed. Assigned by ordinance to the Plan Commission and City Council for action.

- Prohibited Uses: Land uses not allowed in the district. Uses not listed in the ordinance are generally prohibited unless the City finds they are substantially similar to a listed use.

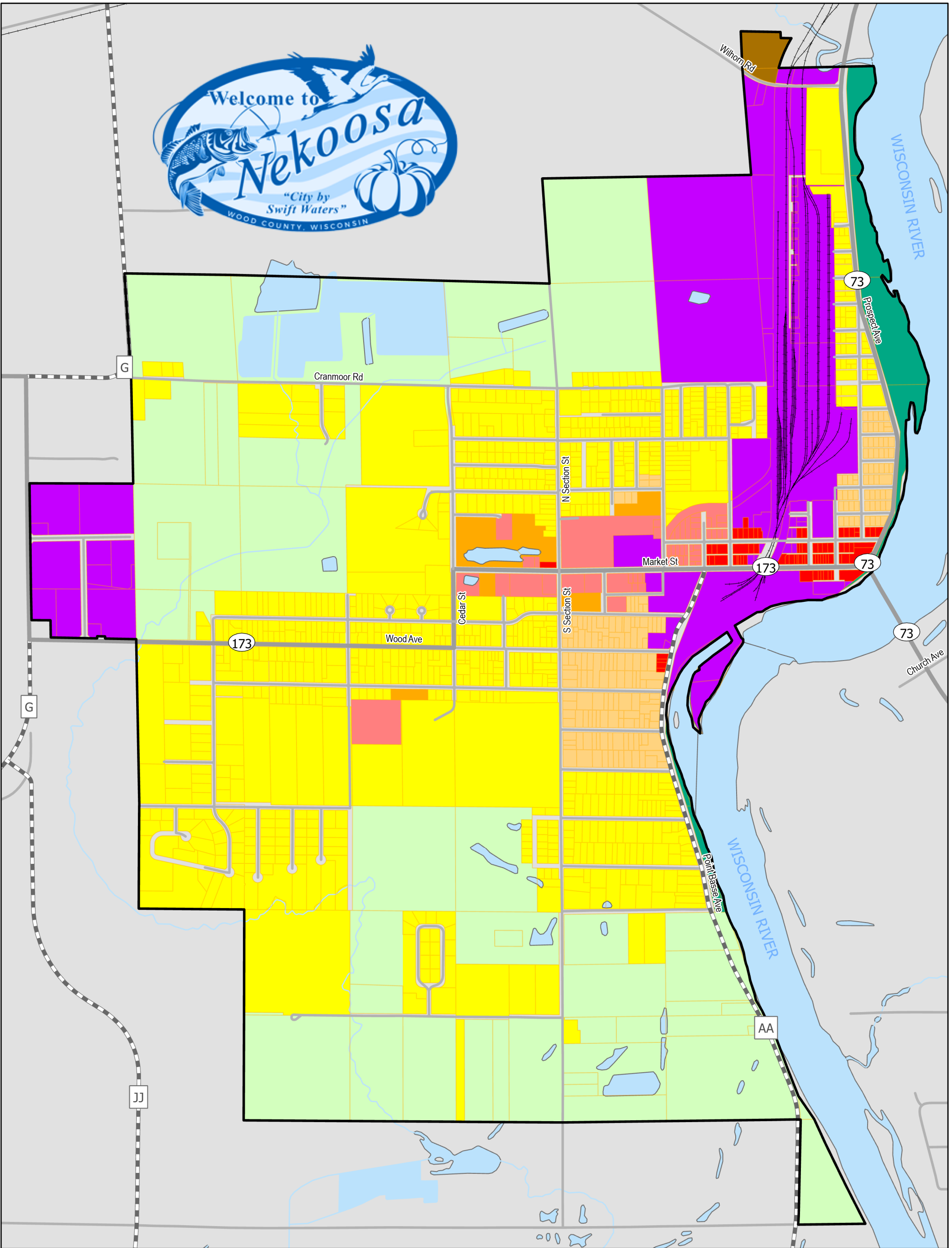
Zoning Ordinance

The Zoning Ordinance provides the text/narrative that describes various land uses that are allowed in each zoning district, dimensional requirements (e.g. lot size, setbacks, building size), and other development standards such as parking, signage, landscaping and stormwater management. Permitting and zoning administration authority, processes, and procedures are also outlined within the ordinance.

Flexibility is built into the zoning ordinance to allow for some forms of relief:

- Rezone: The zoning map may be amended to accommodate development that is consistent with the City’s community plans and desirable to the community.
- Variance: Relief from a provision of the zoning ordinance may be granted for a specific property if certain legal standards are met.
- Appeal: Decisions of the Zoning Administrator and Plan Commission may be appealed to the City Zoning Board of Appeals as outlined in the ordinance.

Zoning is the primary implementation tool for achieving the desired outcomes of this plan.



PROPOSED ZONING MAP

R-1 Single-Family Residential	B-1 Central Business
R-2 Two-Family Residential	B-2 General Business
R-3 Multi-Family Residential	M-1 Industrial
R-4 Mobile Home Residential	A-1 Agricultural
G-1 Conservancy	

NEKOOSA CORPORATE LIMITS
 PARCELS
 _____ LOCAL ROAD
 - - - - - COUNTY HIGHWAY
 _____ STATE HIGHWAY
 _____ RAIL

