

# 03

## EXISTING & FUTURE LAND USE



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### INTRODUCTION

The land use plan is a central focus of a Comprehensive Plan. It provides direction and guidance for how land uses, infrastructure, and related elements fit within the geographic context of the community. It also provides direction for how growth should be accommodated, including: character, scale, and intensity. Additionally, it serves as a guide for new development proposals and investments.

Major factors to consider when planning for land use in Elkhart include:

- **Creating “complete” communities.** A complete community is an area where residents can conveniently meet daily needs without having to make long trips. While it is not feasible or desirable to structure all neighborhoods this way, it is a potential model for making places more livable.
- **Transitioning from auto-oriented to transit/bike-pedestrian oriented development.** There is an increased interest in growing in ways that are walkable, bike-able, and pedestrian friendly. This means including development patterns that are often more compact and intensive (in terms of housing units and jobs) with sidewalks, trails, and bike lanes in mind.
- **Diversity as strength.** A diverse mix of land use types can contribute to resiliency as a community. Rather than a mono-culture of uniform housing and commercial types, this

mix ensures that fluctuations in market and preferences won’t unduly impact a large proportion of the community’s fabric.

- **Building a sustainable city.** Sustainability is an important value throughout this plan. In terms of land use, it has implications from the small scale (e.g. how buildings are constructed and maintained) to citywide (e.g. responsible use of resources, preparing a community to respond to climate change).
- **Maintaining supporting systems and public services.** Land use bears a close and vital relationship to public infrastructure, utilities, and services. The City will need to plan and invest responsibly in these systems – both to maintain existing facilities and to provide new ones in response to changing and expanding needs.

# Land Use Goals, Objectives & Strategies

Growth is an important pursuit of the City. It is necessary to increase tax base and to continue to provide high quality services to the city's businesses and residents. In order to plan for and manage growth accordingly, the following goals have been developed.



LAND USE GOAL 1: Encourage the development of land uses that increase the tax base of the community.



LAND USE GOAL 2: Provide for transition and buffering adjacent to intensive development types and uses.



LAND USE GOAL 3: Identify appropriate locations for future facilities and amenities such as parks, public services, city, county and school district.



LAND USE GOAL 4: Encourage the development of housing and employment to established centers and districts.



LAND USE GOAL 5: Provide safe pedestrian and bicycle access to all activity centers and districts in coordination with the development of these areas.

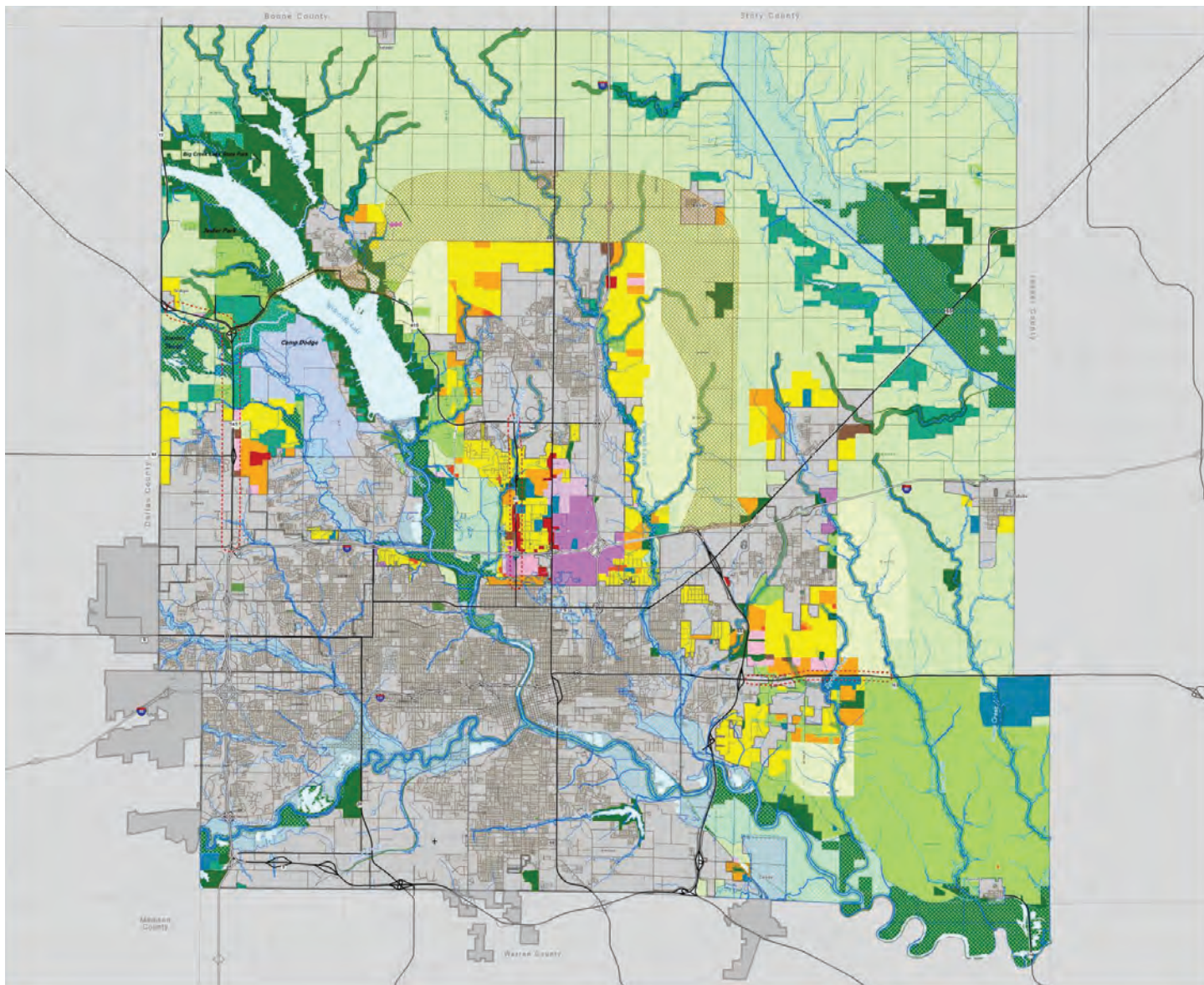


LAND USE GOAL 6: Encourage the location and maintenance of local businesses in the main street, identified commercial centers, and districts.



LAND USE GOAL 7: Encourage the redevelopment of under utilized properties that benefit from existing infrastructure and transportation improvements.

# Polk County | Future Land Use



Source: Polk County, ESRI Basemap

The Future Land Use Plan from the Polk County 2030 Comprehensive Plan as shown above is intended to provide the framework for the continuing development and redevelopment of the community. This was created in coordination among city and county plans, as well as incorporates the Northeast Beltway Plan (which is discussed further in the Transportation Chapter).

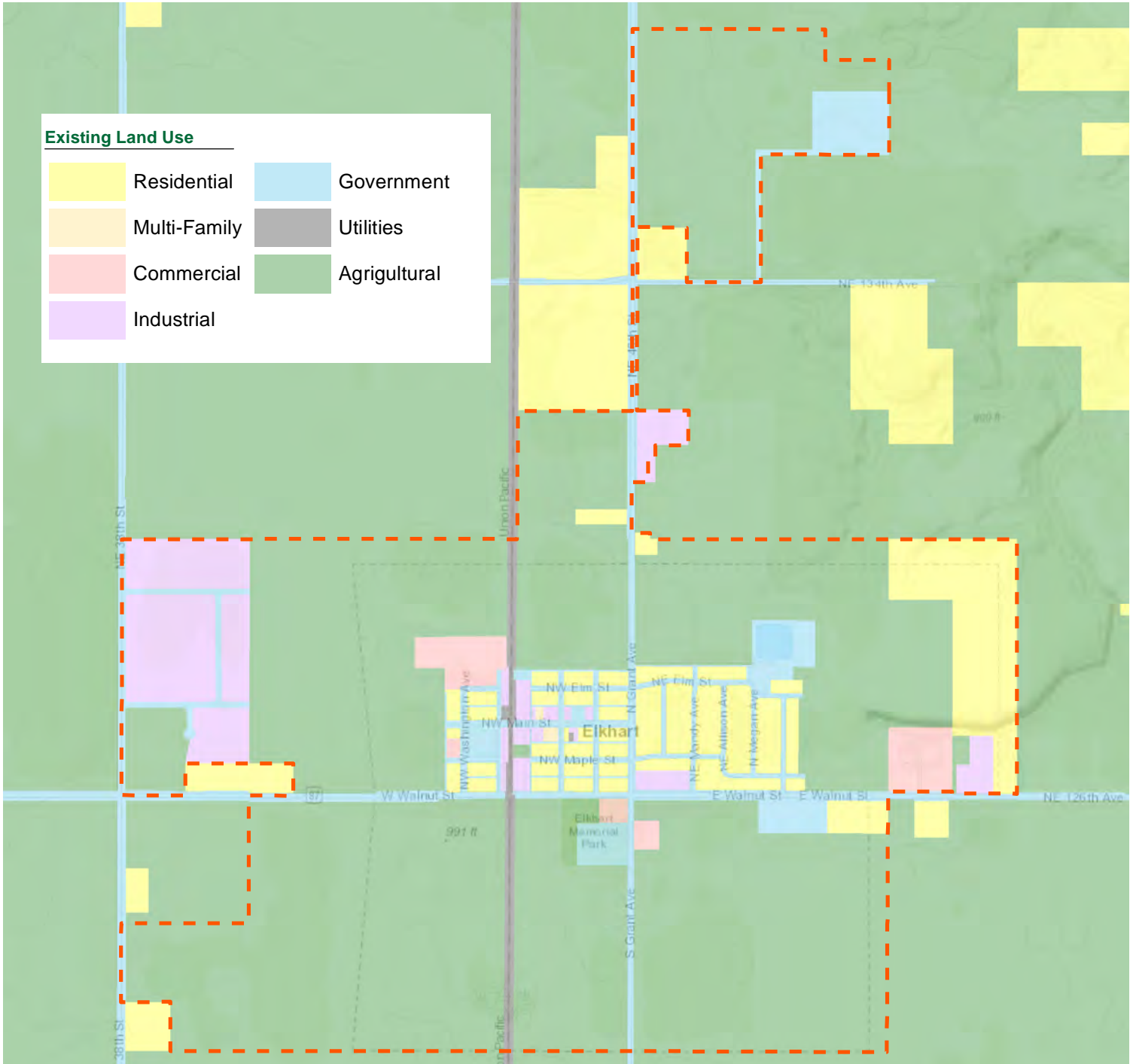
With information from the Polk County Comprehensive Plan to serve as a basis, the following pages analyze Elkhart specifically with maps illustrating the existing Land Use and Zoning. This information, as well as input provided by the steering committee helped guide the Future Land Use map.

## Polk County Future Land Use





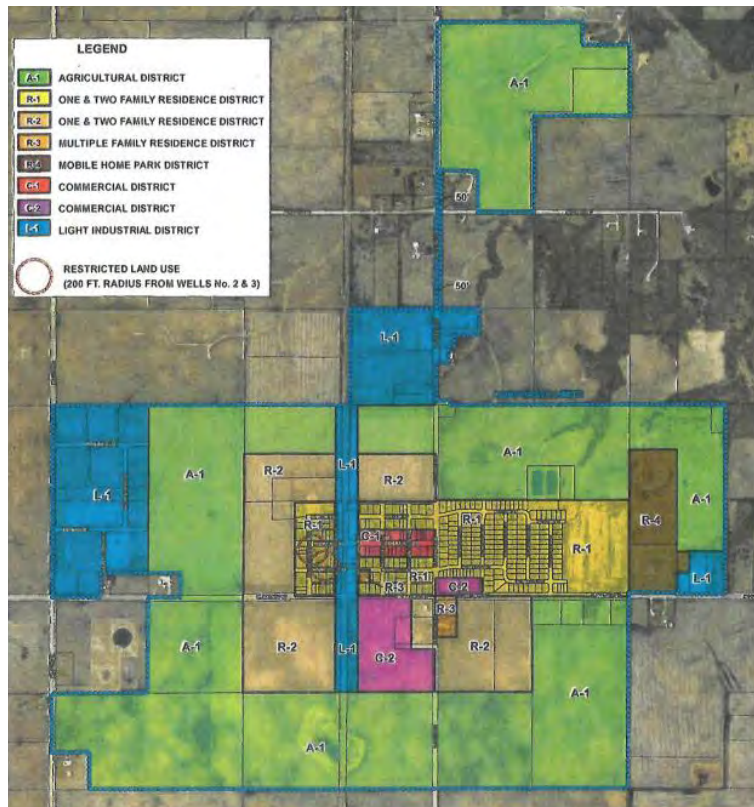
# Elkhart | Existing Land Use Map



Source: Polk County, ESRI Basemap

The existing land use plan for Elkhart was created utilizing data from the Polk County Assessor. According to that information, 84% of Elkhart's land is classified as agricultural, 11% residential, and 5% commercial. As Elkhart continues to grow it will be imperative to plan future land uses in a manner that preserves the current small town feel while expanding opportunities for current and future residents.

# Elkhart | Existing Zoning Map



Source: City of Elkhart, ESRI Basemap

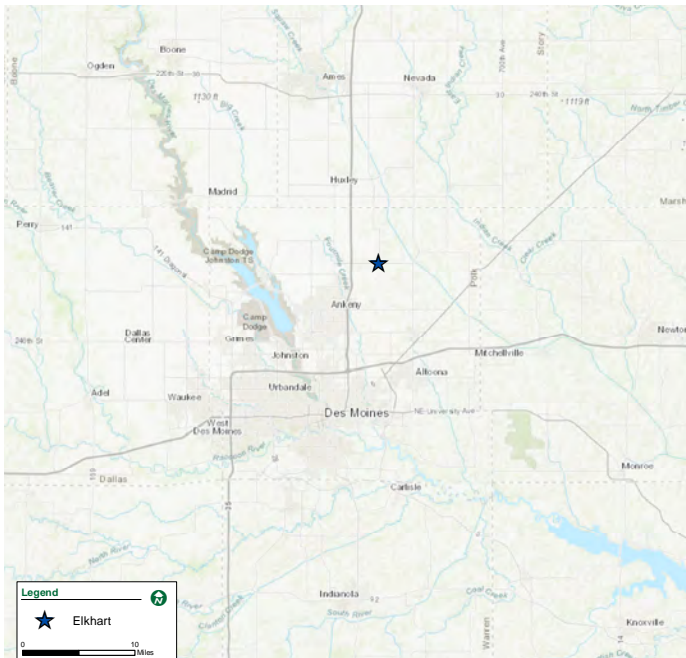
The existing zoning map shown above is a rendition of the map previously created by Veenstra and Kimm, Inc. Both the land use and zoning maps influence the planning and placement of future land use decisions. Additional information that helped shape the future land use map include:

- Regional Location
- County Location
- Existing Elkhart Land Area
- School Districts
- Natural Resources
- Slope and Topography
- Watershed Districts
- Floodplain
- Sanitary Systems
- Stormwater Systems
- Water Systems
- Land Cover

Maps for each of these elements are included within the appendix of this document.

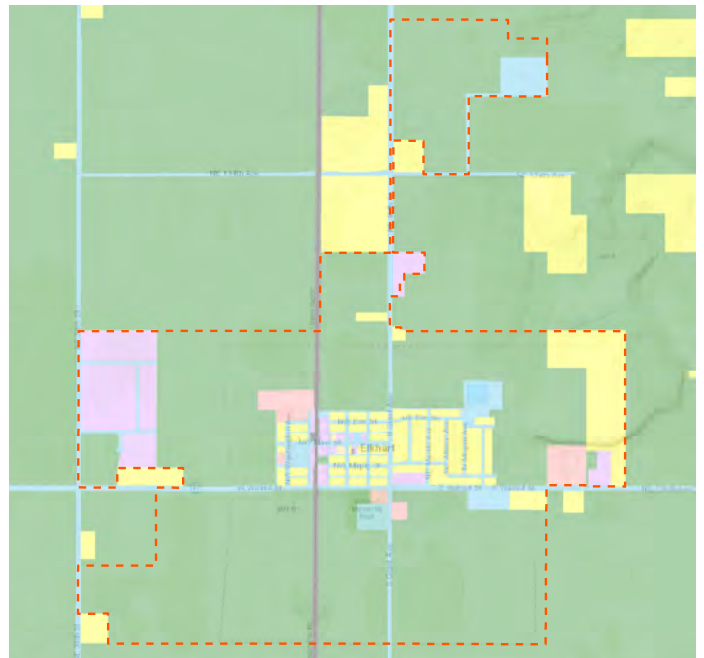
# Elkhart Location & School District

## REGIONAL LOCATION



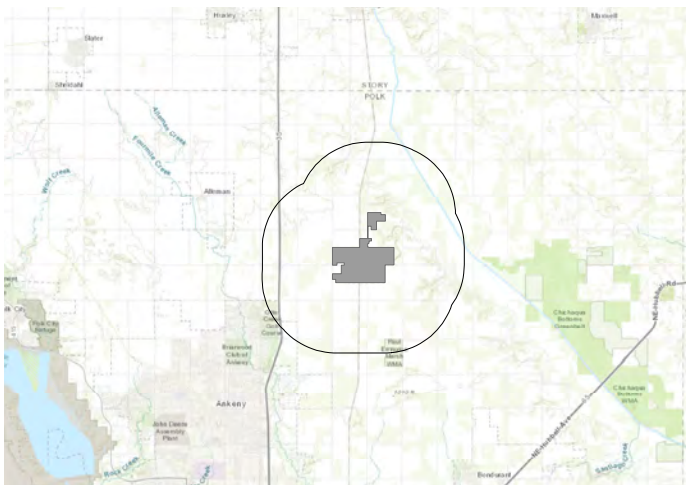
Source: Polk County, ESRI Basemap

## EXISTING LAND AREA



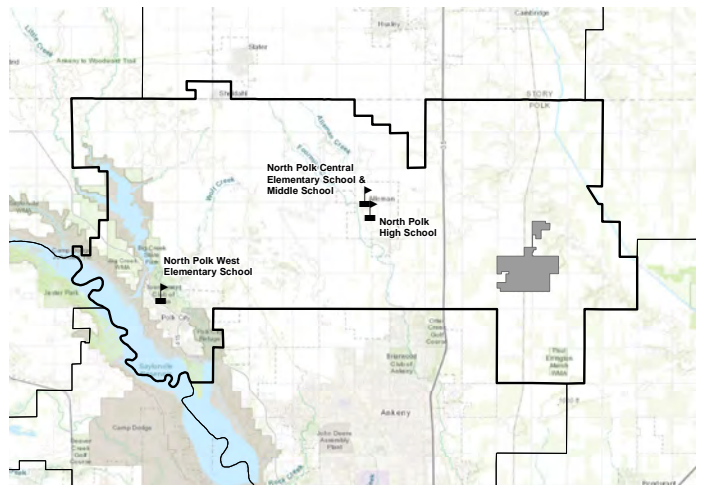
Source: Polk County, ESRI Basemap

## COUNTY LOCATION



Source: Polk County, ESRI Basemap

## SCHOOL DISTRICT



Source: ESRI Basemap, IA Dept. ED

The maps above depict Elkhart's regional location, county location, existing land area, and the adjacent school districts. See the Appendix for full maps.



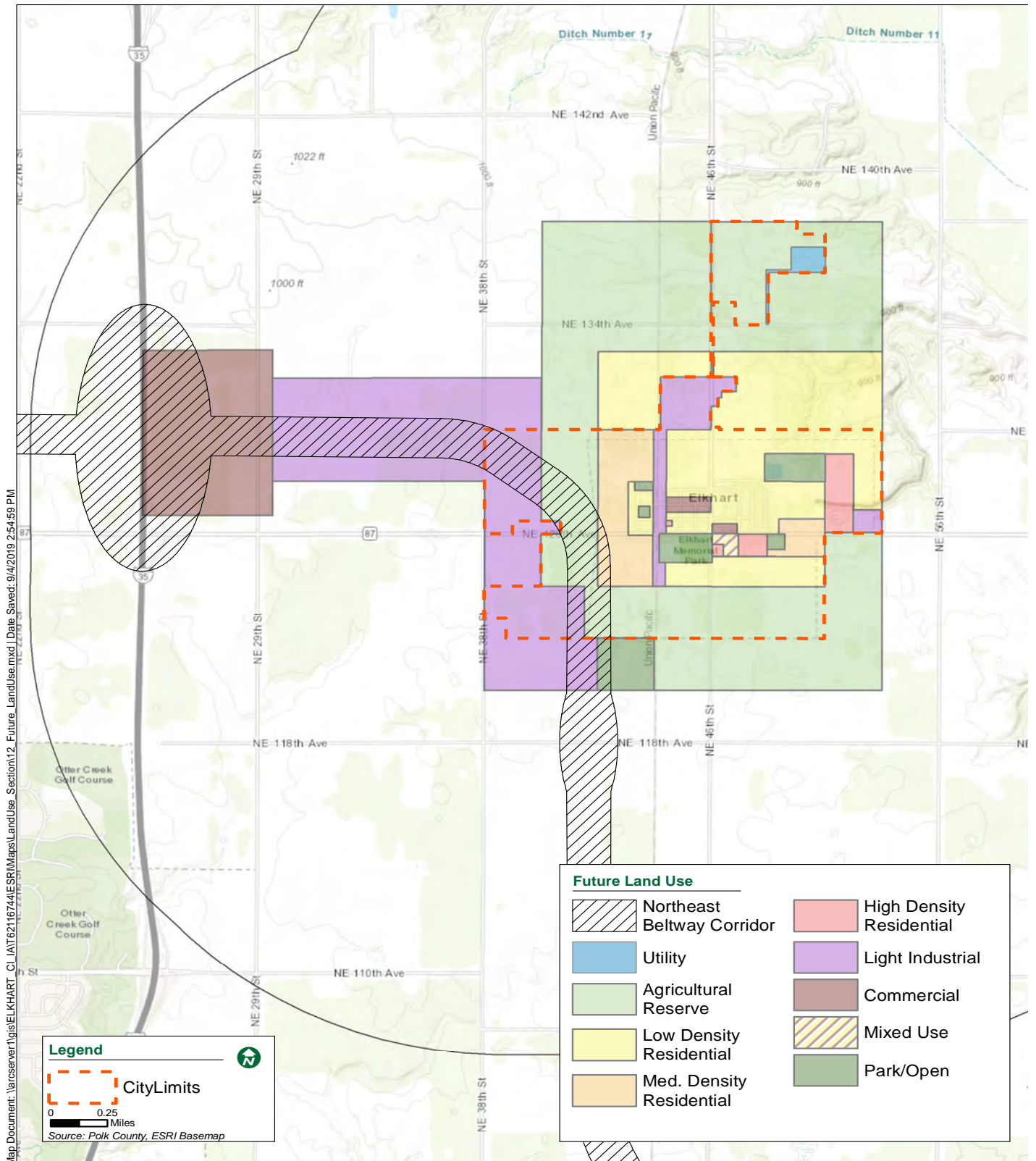
# Elkhart | Future Land Use Plan

Comprehensive Plan

Elkhart, Iowa

Future Land Use Map

September 2019



Source: ESRI Basemap



Future land use is intended to provide guidance to the Community for reviewing future development and infrastructure investments. Future land use plans identify land use categories more broadly than the adopted zoning ordinance. The use of broader categories of land uses provides for flexibility in development form, while still achieving the overall vision of the community. For the purpose of this plan the following applies:

**Utility** – uses that are necessary to provide infrastructure of civic needs. This can include utilities or other public facility buildings and uses.

**Agricultural Reserve** – the immediate use of the land is not anticipated during the planning horizon and is intended to remain in agricultural production until such time as the land area is needed for development.

**Low Density Residential** – Residential uses that are often classified as single family detached dwellings or configurations of living units that are generally limited to one or two units per structure.

**Medium Density Residential** – Residential uses that generally range from one to four units per structure. Typically uses include attached townhomes, rowhouses, tri-plexes or four-plexes.

**High Density Residential** – Residential uses that contain multiple residential units per structure. Typically uses include apartment buildings.

**Light Industrial** – Uses that are often manufacturing or related to the production of goods or components. Typically uses mostly occur within enclosed structures with limited outdoor storage or activity.

**Commercial**- Uses including retail sales or consumer services.

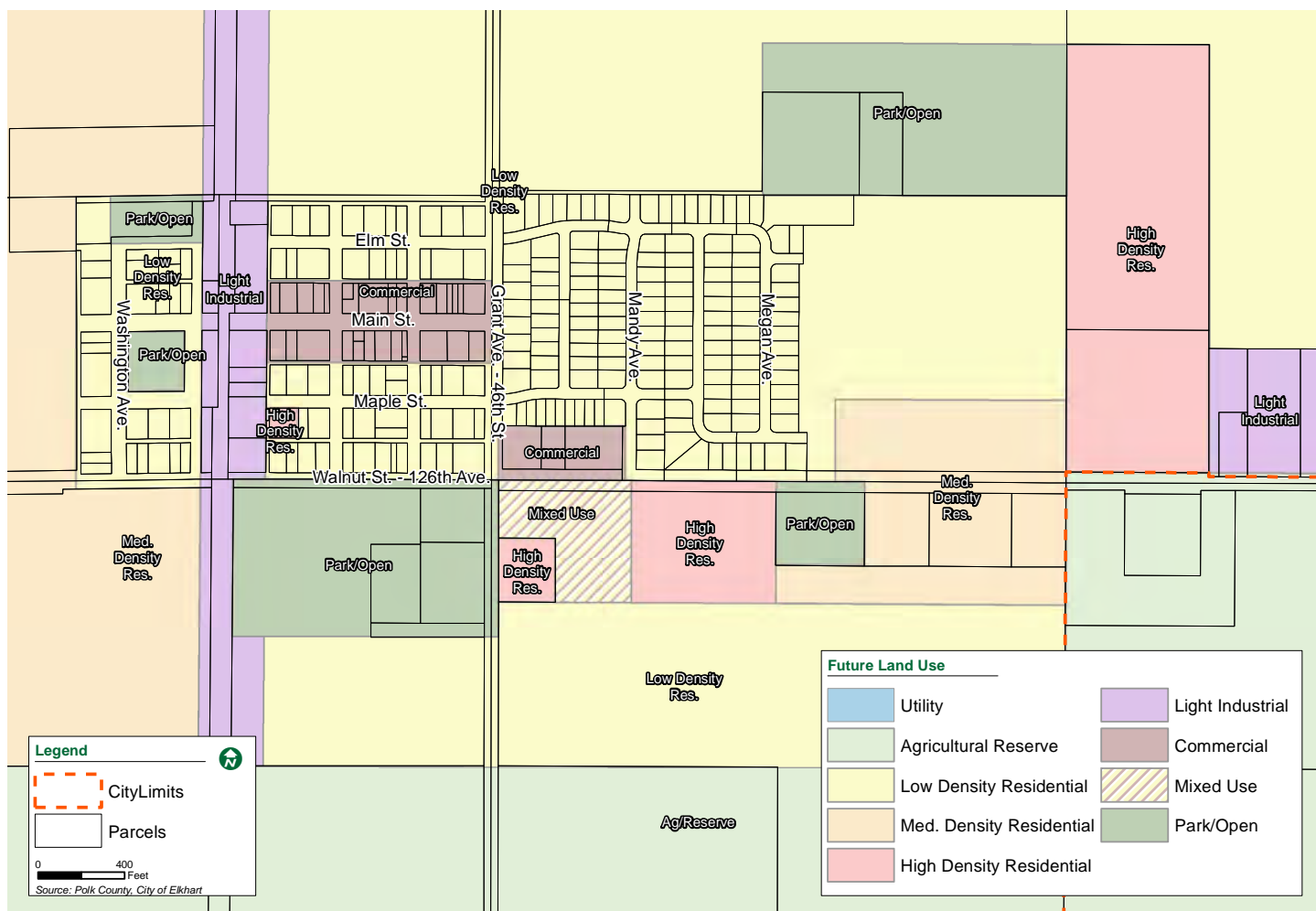
**Mixed Use** – Development that includes a mixture of residential and commercial uses and they may include recreational components or other amenities for the benefit of the development or greater community.

**Park/open** – Uses intended to provide active or passive recreation for the community.

**Northeast Beltway Corridor** – Transportation corridor identified in the Polk County 2030 Comprehensive Plan.

The map on the previous page designates future land uses for every parcel in the incorporated. It is expected that industrial growth will be directed to the industrial park and surrounding area. High intensity residential development will occur in east part of the community in the area including and near the existing mobile home park. The plan considers land uses in certain geographic areas outside of the corporate limits. Chapter 354 of the Iowa Code provides that Cities that have regulations regarding the subdivision of land have the authority to review requests that are located outside the boundary but within two miles. The City does not have zoning authority in this area, as Polk County has adopted zoning regulations.

# Elkhart | Future Land Use Detail



Source: ESRI Basemap

The map above is intended to provide more future land use detail in the developed portion of the City. It is anticipated that the growth of low density residential uses will continue north of the established single family neighborhoods, while medium density residential uses could be encouraged west of Washington Avenue. The area located at the northeast and southeast corner of Walnut Street and Grant Avenue can accommodate future commercial uses, while the land located west of the existing ballfields could be expanded for additional ball field/recreational development.