

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The purpose of this section is to review and analyze land use in the Town of Ridgeway. The land use element is the compilation of all other elements of this plan. Designating land uses and standards for development requires the Town to be able to adequately provide utilities, maintain roads, and support other services. Therefore, the policies and programs of the land use element must be supported by all other elements of the plan. This section will consider both current and future land use in the Town of Ridgeway. At the present time, the dominant developed land use in the Town is agricultural.

**Wisconsin State Statute 66.1001(2)(h)**

*(h) Land-use element.* A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to guide the future development and redevelopment of public and private property. The element shall contain a listing of the amount, type, intensity and net density of existing uses of land in the local governmental unit, such as agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial and other public and private uses. The element shall analyze trends in the supply, demand and price of land, opportunities for redevelopment and existing and potential land-use conflicts. The element shall contain projections, based on the background information specified in par. (a), for 20 years, in 5-year increments, of future residential, agricultural, commercial and industrial land uses including the assumptions of net densities or other spatial assumptions upon which the projections are based. The element shall also include a series of maps that shows current land uses and future land uses that indicate productive agricultural soils, natural limitations for building site development, floodplains, wetlands and other environmentally sensitive lands, the boundaries of areas to which services of public utilities and community facilities, as those terms are used in par. (d), will be provided in the future, consistent with the timetable described in par. (d), and the general location of future land uses by net density or other classifications.

**LAND USE POLICIES**

The following are the land use policies for the Town of Ridgeway.

**Residential Development Policies**

- **The minimum parcel size to build a single-family residence as new development will be one acre.**

All building parcels will be required to meet the land division requirement of the Town of Ridgeway. The maximum amount of farmland to be used as a residential building site will be one acre.

- **All new driveways and access easements will require the review and approval of the Town Board of the Town of Ridgeway.**

Driveways must be constructed and approved prior to obtaining a Building Permit from the Town of Ridgeway.

- **All new residential development, including access driveways, will be required to conform to the natural limitations presented by the topography, soils, and vegetation of the land being developed.**

Residential development will be required to conform to the performance standards established in the Comprehensive Plan in Table I.1.

- **The Town of Ridgeway will not accept the dedication or maintenance responsibility for any additional roads servicing residential development.**

Refer to the Town's rural residential siting criteria sheet in Section I, Implementation Element, and Map H-1 in this Section for more information.

**Commercial, Manufacturing and Agricultural Development Policies**

As a part of reviewing manufacturing, commercial or agricultural development proposals, developers will be required to submit impact statements assessing in detail the proposed project's impact on (a) farms and farmland; (b) natural resources; (c) Town roads; (d) fire and emergency medical services; (e) Town taxes; and (f) community setting. This impact assessment must demonstrate positive benefits to the community before such development will be permitted.

Town officials welcome development proposals that conform to the Town Land Use Policies and recognize that proposals may vary greatly in their scope and impact. It is understood that the detail required for a proposal may also vary depending on the scope and impact of a proposal.

- **Commercial and manufacturing development will be permitted in conformance with all the other policies established for development in designated areas. In addition, the Town of Ridgeway will encourage new commercial and manufacturing development to "cluster" or locate in or adjacent to existing commercial or manufacturing areas. New development shall be compatible with adjacent land uses and shall not degrade the environment.**
- **Except for small family businesses, new commercial and manufacturing development will be required to have frontage on either a county or state highway or an adequately improved Township road. Commercial and manufacturing development at any proposed highway interchange shall be controlled to promote safe, compact, and convenient highway-oriented**

**facilities.**

Small family businesses may be permitted in any part of the Town provided that primary members of the immediate family conduct the business. Signage shall be determined by conditional use restrictions.

- **Manufacturing businesses requiring large quantities of water and wastewater disposal will be encouraged to locate in areas where municipal sanitary sewer and water systems are available.**
- **Agricultural businesses providing farm services and/or supplies will be permitted to locate within the farming areas of the Town.**

Agricultural business development will be reviewed by the Town as a conditional use that may receive variance from the other policies and performance standards of the Comprehensive Plan.

- **Recreation and institutional development proposed in the Town of Ridgeway will be required to meet all of the polices and standards of the Comprehensive Plan.**
- **When rezoning is requested, only that portion of land necessary for the projected use shall be rezoned.**

Those lands that exhibit the greatest long-term commitment to agriculture based upon soil type, ownership patterns, investment and other criteria previously identified and mapped shall continue to be recognized.

This policy recognizes that prohibiting all development in agricultural areas is not realistic; certain Ag-related uses such as grain storage facilities or implement sales and service requiring a rural location may be permitted. Those land uses and activities that could conflict with the agriculture use or adversely affect the long-term investment in land and improvements in areas designated for farmland preservation shall be discouraged. This policy provides for a minimum amount of residential development in agricultural areas. Rezoning would be required for residential construction. Farmers within the Town are encouraged to follow soil conservation plans and utilize soil conservation practices.

The Town shall cooperate with other agencies and units of government to establish eligibility for farmers who wish to receive tax credits for participation in farmland preservation programs. Agencies and bodies responsible for the preparation of plans for public improvements, such as roadway corridors, power lines, pipelines, or sanitary landfills shall be requested to recognize the agricultural goals of the Town.

### **US Highway 18/151 Interchange Area Commercial, Manufacturing and Agricultural Development Policies**

Because of the unique characteristics and opportunities presented to the Town of Ridgeway by the 2018 addition of a highway interchange on US 18/151 immediately to the west of the Village of Ridgeway, additional Land Use Policies specific to the Interchange Area (see the blue-highlighted area on map H.2) have been established. This interchange development area is subject to all of the guidelines listed above in Element H under the heading "Commercial, Manufacturing and Agricultural Development Policies" as well as the specific policies listed below. Existing agricultural use in this area will be supported by the Town of Ridgeway and taken into consideration when nonagricultural development is proposed.

- **The development should provide needed services, resources or assets to the Town of Ridgeway and complement development promoted by the Village of Ridgeway.**

- **Development that requires connection to public water and/or sewer service will be considered provided the Village of Ridgeway is agreeable to providing access to those services.**
- **The anticipated traffic type, volume and pattern must be compatible with the existing public roadways so as not to create a significant safety risk or need for road modification or maintenance at the expense of the Town of Ridgeway.**
- **Development that produces hazardous, volatile or other substances deemed a potential threat to public health and safety, whether by design or as a by-product, are discouraged unless there are credible measures put in place for mitigating the potential impacts.**
- **Development that creates sights, sounds or odors that may be deemed offensive or a nuisance to existing land uses within the area are discouraged unless there are credible measures put in place for mitigating the potential impacts.**
- **The Town of Ridgeway may consider investing in infrastructure, such as roads, utilities, water, sewer, etc. if deemed to be of benefit to the public, and may encourage cooperation of the Village of Ridgeway.**
- **When considering an individual development proposal, the Town of Ridgeway will take into account the consistency with, and impact on, existing development in the area.**
- **Survey results show that preserving scenic views and rural character is important to Town of Ridgeway residents. Town officials therefore request that new business owners beautify their properties with trees, shrubs, fencing and the like.**

Refer to the Town's commercial siting criteria sheet in Section I, Implementation Element, and Map H-1 in this Section for more information.

#### **Resource Protection and Other Recreation Areas**

- **All plans for development in or adjacent to important natural features will be carefully reviewed by the Town Plan Commission and Town Board to ensure that existing natural features are preserved whenever possible.**
- **Soil erosion control measures will be encouraged in all land uses.**
- **The preservation and maintenance of areas needed to support wildlife shall be encouraged.**

#### **Environmental Protection Policies**

- **The Comprehensive Plan is designed to protect the natural environment and special features of the ridge and valley land characteristic of the Town of Ridgeway.**

Development in floodplains or steep slopes will be prohibited. All development will be managed to protect the natural lay of the land, groundwater resources, floodplains, and the aesthetic qualities of this landscape. The Comprehensive Plan is designed to guide new development in the Town of Ridgeway. In most cases, the statements are general in nature, with the intent of providing some flexibility in their application. The policies have been coordinated with the policies of County Zoning and will be used in combination with other policies, ordinances, and regulatory powers as appropriate.

#### **Rural Non-Farm Areas**

- **Unsewered residential subdivisions on soils identified as having severe or very severe**

limitations for septic tank absorption fields and dwellings with basements shall not be allowed.

- **Unsewered residential subdivisions in areas where public sewers are available or planned shall not be allowed.**
- **New unsewered residential lots shall be one acre or more in size as per the Residential Development Polices in this Section H.**
- **Strip residential development along roadways shall be discouraged in order to protect the use of the roadway for moving traffic and to ensure a more visually attractive Town.**
- **Land divisions, site design, and construction plans shall be related to the natural topography of the site. Significant natural features existing on a site should be preserved wherever practicable.**
- **Where land development is undertaken, commonly accepted erosion control practices shall be followed in site preparation and construction. The guidelines, standards, and specifications to be followed are in the publication "Minimizing Erosion in Urbanizing Areas", USDA Soil Conservation Service.**
- **The Town of Ridgeway will encourage energy conservation techniques in the site planning and construction of new uses within the Town.**

#### **Farm Preservation Policies**

- **Residential parcels may be created by certified survey if not on soils classified as prime Class I, and II, and at the discretion of the Town Board, Class III land.**
- **Development will not be permitted on productive farmlands (lands having a history of farming activity including cropland) and/or lands containing soils defined as Class I, II or Class III at the discretion of the Town Board as designated in the Soil Survey Report for Iowa County prepared by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service.**

An exception to this policy will be granted where farmland parcels are too small to be economically used for agricultural purposes or which are inaccessible to modern farm machinery needed to produce and harvest agricultural products.

- **New private driveways or roads for non-agricultural purposes shall not be permitted to cross or dissect productive farmlands unless allowed along existing line fences or natural features such as a stream.**
- **Any new private development requiring utility extensions (electric power lines, telephone lines, gas distribution lines) to cross productive farmlands in a manner that will disrupt farming activities will not be permitted.**
- **To avoid possible farm nuisance complaints, developments meeting the above criteria will not be permitted to locate within 1,000 feet of an operating farm unit or agricultural facility.**

If in the opinion of the Town Board a greater distance is required to avoid possible conflicts from existing or proposed agricultural operations, a greater set back distance may be required.

- **The Town will encourage farmland erosion control practices.**

Ridgeway will work with the Iowa County Soil Conservation Service and will require landowners to follow approved farm conservation plans aimed at reducing soil erosion rates. Farmland that has a history of strip cropping, contouring, sod waterways, or terraces cannot be changed without

written permission from the Town Board and the Iowa County Soil Conservation Service.

- **The Town will monitor intensive, confinement, and/or large-scale farming operations to avoid possible land use conflicts and environmental nuisances.**

Any farm operation (farm unit) exceeding 300 animal units as defined below will be subject to review and approval in compliance with the performance standards of the Town of Ridgeway Comprehensive Plan.

- **Those lands that exhibit the greatest long-term commitment to agriculture based upon soil type, ownership patterns, investment or other criteria previously identified and mapped shall continue to be recognized as agricultural land.**

This policy recognizes that prohibiting all development in agricultural areas is not realistic, and that certain ag-related uses such as grain storage facilities or implement sales and service requiring a rural location may be permitted. Those land uses and activities that could conflict with the agricultural use or adversely affect the long-term investment in the land and improvements in areas designated for farmland preservation shall be discouraged. This policy provides for a minimum amount of residential development in agricultural areas. Rezoning would be required for residential construction.

#### **EXISTING LAND USE**

The Town of Ridgeway is a predominately agricultural and forestry-based community. See Maps E.2 and E.8 in Section E, Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resource Element, for existing Ridgeway land use maps.

Table H.1 gives an overview of land use based on the official Statement of Assessment for the Town of Ridgeway.

**Table H.1: Town of Ridgeway Land Use Assessment Statistics – 2018**

<b>Real Estate Class</b>	<b># of Parcels</b>	<b>Percent of Land Area</b>	<b>Value of Land and Improvements</b>
Residential	250	2.0%	\$39,961,300
Commercial	17	0.4%	\$1,476,800
Manufacturing	0	0.0%	\$0
Agricultural	745	73.9%	\$2,493,400
Undeveloped	411	7.4%	\$1,947,200
Agricultural Forest	229	10.3%	\$4,520,800
Productive Forest Lands	111	5.1%	\$4,469,900
Other	90	0.9%	\$9,686,900
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,853</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>\$64,556,300</b>

(Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue)

<https://www.revenue.wi.gov/sfreports/cotvc/2018soalOWa.pdf>

Relative to the 2003 Statement of Assessment used in the preparation of the previous 2005 Town of Ridgeway Comprehensive Plan, the number of residential parcels has increased from 239 to 250 parcels. The percent of township agricultural land area has decreased from 76.6% to 73.9%.

**Land Classification Definitions**

Applicable Town of Ridgeway land use policies, as described in Section H of the Town of Ridgeway Comprehensive Plan, may vary depending on the type of land classification.

The following definitions of real estate classifications are based on Wisconsin's State Statutes, and interpretations of these statutes in the Wisconsin Property Assessment Manual which can be found on the Department of Revenue website.

<https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/70/32>

<https://www.revenue.wi.gov/Pages/Assessors/home.aspx>

**Agricultural property**

Agricultural property is land devoted primarily to agricultural use, including buildings and improvements. Agricultural use includes:

- Growing of crops or maintaining pasture using agronomic practices such as soil management and cultivation.
- Physical evidence of ag use such as crops, fencing or livestock.
- Specific Conservation Programs as described by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue. <https://www.revenue.wi.gov/pubs/slf/tax18.pdf>
- Tillable Class 1, 2 and 3 soils

Note: Small acreage (waterways, small windbreaks, field roads, etc.) incidental to ag use do not warrant separate classification.

**Residential property**

Any parcel or part of a parcel of untilled land that is not suitable for the production of crops, on which a dwelling is located. In the absence of infrastructure present, residential property may include small parcels of vacant, untilled land for sale.

**Commercial property**

Commercial property is land and improvements used for retail businesses, or vacant, untilled land for which the Highest and Best Use analysis points to a retail business. Commercial businesses are devoted to or include:

- buying and reselling
- providing services that support residential, agricultural, manufacturing or forest uses
- Apartments of four or more units
- Mobile home communities
- Stores with apartments above the store

**Manufacturing property**

Manufacturing property includes land, buildings, structures and other real property used in manufacturing, assembling, processing, fabricating, making or milling tangible personal property for profit. Manufacturing property also includes warehouses, storage facilities and office structures that support the manufacturing, and all raw materials, supplies, machinery, equipment, work in process and finished inventory located at the manufacturing site.

Manufacturing does not include on-farm processing if the raw materials are grown on the farm.

**Forested property**

This classification is Production Forests and DNR-MFL Forests acreages combined. In the Town of Ridgeway it is the second largest classified land use.

**Undeveloped property**

This classification refers to areas that were formerly classified as swamp/waste. It is open land that includes bogs, marshes, lowlands brush land, and uncultivated land zoned as shore land and shown to be wetland.

**Other property**

Remaining land types that do not fall into the above categories, including federal, state, and county lands, school property, and cemeteries, are classified as "other". Refer to Maps E.2 and E.8, Section E, Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resource Element, and Table H.1 for more information.

**IDENTIFICATION OF LAND USE AREAS**

The Town of Ridgeway Comprehensive Plan identifies land use areas in Section H of the plan, areas defined as places that make sense for future development. Map H.1 indicates the land use areas for future development in the Town.

**REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

No redevelopment opportunities were identified by the Plan Commission.

**EXISTENCE OF PROPERTIES WITH CONTAMINATED SOIL OR GROUNDWATER**

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources maintains the Wisconsin Remediation and Redevelopment Database which includes the Bureau for Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System (BRRTS). The database provides information about contaminated properties and other activities related to the investigation and cleanup of contaminated soil or groundwater in Wisconsin. The database includes information about investigations and cleanups of contaminated soil and groundwater, spills, Superfund sites and DNR funding assistance.

The following site is the only Town of Ridgeway location listed in the BRRTS database that currently requires the possibility of future action: the former 151 Express, 6189 HWY 151, Ridgeway, currently the site of Cedar Direct, 3350 County Road BB, Dodgeville. This is a closed investigation of a Leaking Underground Storage Tank, with an existing obligation for soil sampling and analysis in the event of future excavation to see if residual contamination remains.

The following site is a Village of Ridgeway location listed in the BRRTS database that currently requires future action. The Badger Mart at 408 Main Street, Ridgeway, is an ongoing open investigation of a Leaking Underground Storage Tank. The status of this investigation is currently listed as "remediation" with a closure request package being prepared.

In the event of a future hazardous materials spill in Ridgeway Township, the BRRTS database would be updated. The database is maintained by the DNR's Remediation and Redevelopment program and can be viewed at [dnr.wi.gov/topic/Brownfields/Contact.html](http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Brownfields/Contact.html).

**EXISTING AND POTENTIAL LAND USE CONFLICTS**

There are a variety of land uses that can potentially cause land use conflicts. There are two common acronyms used to describe land use conflicts – NIMBY's (Not In My Back Yard) and LULU's (Locally Unwanted Land Uses). One of the most common occurrences, especially in a rural setting, is the presence of agricultural operations near non-farm populations.

The presence of agriculture and non-rural land use in close proximity often generates conflict due to potential incompatibility. Agriculture can affect adjoining small rural lots, which are used essentially for residential purposes. Similarly, the presence of small rural lots creates an adverse influence on the continued operation of agriculture enterprise. The issue of rural-urban conflict can arise when there is no separation between incompatible uses. Land use conflicts may arise in such situations through noise, odor, farm chemicals, light, visual amenity, dogs, stock damage and weed infestation, lack of

**Potential Land Use Conflicts**

- Landfills or Waste Facilities
- Jails or Prisons
- Halfway Houses or Group Homes
- Airports, Highways, Rail Lines
- Low Income Housing
- Strip Malls and Shopping Centers
- "Cell" Towers, Electrical Transmission Lines
- Large Livestock Operations
- Industrial or Manufacturing Operations

understanding, and lack of communication to name just a few.

Development along State Highway 151 is an undesirable land use in Ridgeway, although the Town does not perceive it as a land use conflict per se. Agriculture and open space are integral to Ridgeway's character. The Plan Commission does foresee subdivision development in the Town becoming a land use issue in the future, due to increased development pressure on agricultural lands.

### **INTEGRATED LAND USE**

Certainly, education and communication at all levels is fundamental to land use conflict resolution. Finding a way to separate incompatible land uses while recognizing the benefits that can be achieved through land use integration is key. Integration may be achieved through physical separation or a simple vegetative buffer designed to screen one land use from another. Such practical strategies require landowners with potentially conflicting land uses to acknowledge their impacts and then design their operations or development to account for this impact. A community approach utilizing physical solutions, planning strategies, and a long-term vision for the land will enable multiple and differing land uses to exist.

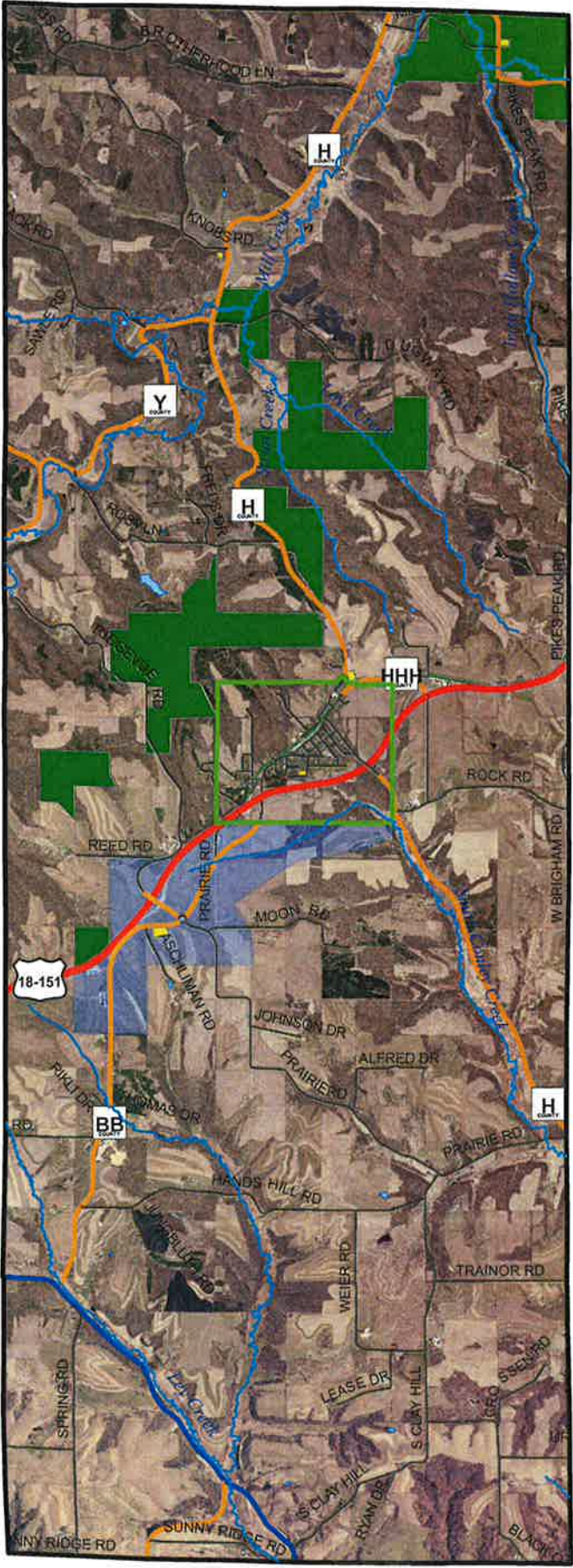
### **FUTURE LAND USE**

Natural beauty, small-town atmosphere, and recreational opportunities were the top reasons why people choose to live in the Town of Ridgeway. It stands to reason that people in Ridgeway want to keep and improve their farms, maintain their homes and property, protect their investments, and improve their standard of living. However, agriculture promises to continue to change the future of farming; existing



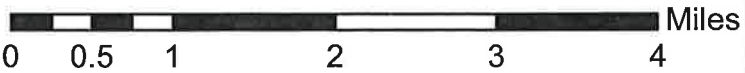
homes and buildings will need remodeling, repairs, or improvements; new buildings and homes will be constructed. In order to achieve its vision, Ridgeway needs to protect its natural beauty, preserve the small-town atmosphere, and continue to explore and expand recreational opportunities, while still supporting agriculture. This approach will help the Town continue to be a desirable place to live, work, and play.

Town of Ridgeway  
 H.1 Revised  
 August 2019

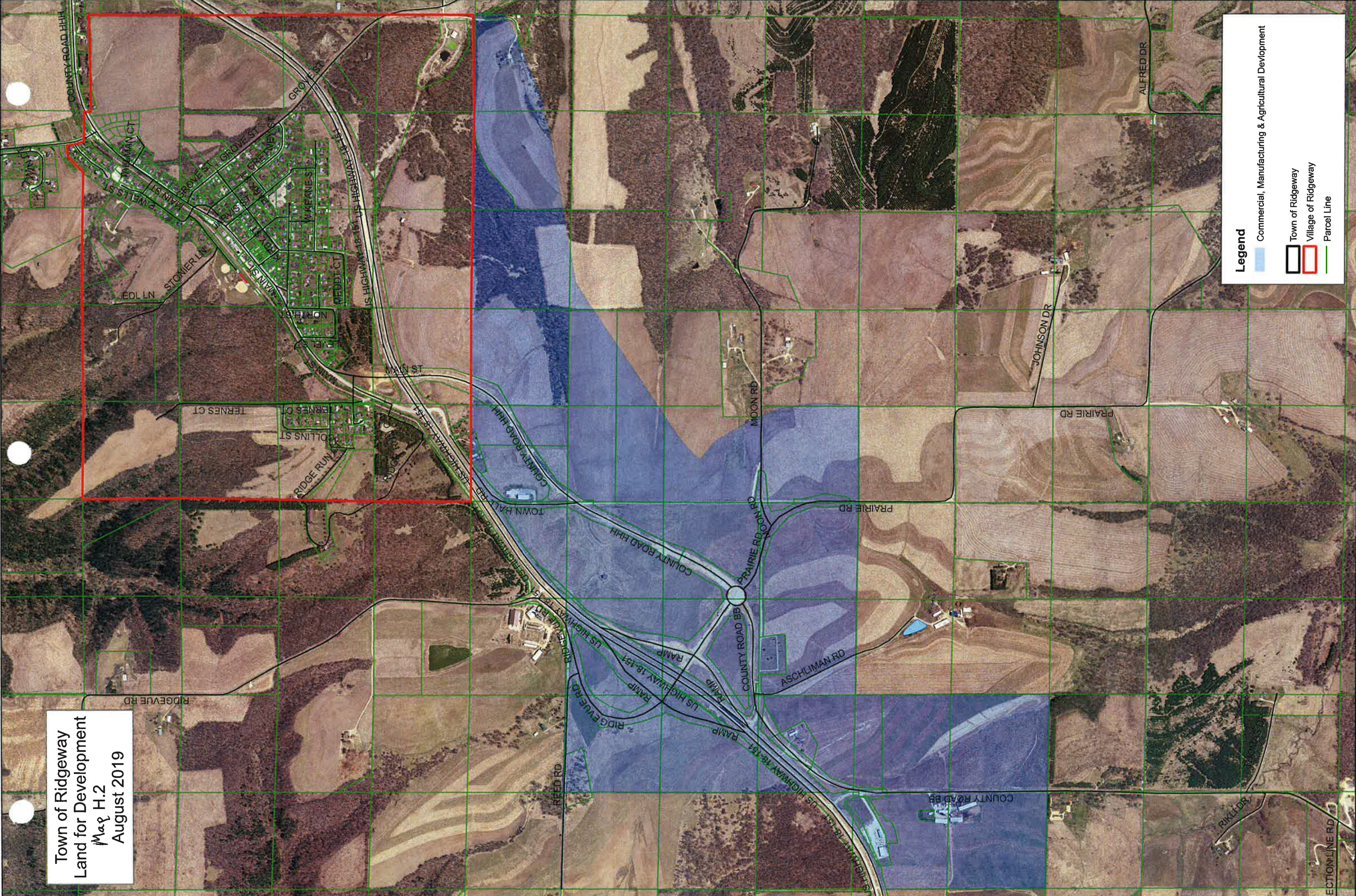


**Legend**

- Conservancy / Recreational
- Commercial, Manufacturing & Agricultural Development
- Cemeteries
- Town of Ridgeway
- Village of Ridgeway



Town of Ridgeway  
 Land for Development  
 Map H.2  
 August 2019



**Legend**

- Commercial, Manufacturing & Agricultural Development
- Town of Ridgeway
- Village of Ridgeway
- Parcel Line

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