

WEST BRANCH

2026 Comprehensive Plan Update



Acknowledgements



Thank you to all the individuals committed our team's process

- **IISC Staff:** Travis Kraus & Ashley Laux
- **Faculty Advisors:** Travis Kraus & Bogdan Kapatsila
- **West Branch Partners:** John Fuller, Adam Kofoed & Erin Monaghan
- **Key Stakeholders**
- **Community Members**

Meet Our Team



**Gypsy
Russ**



Abdul Rashid



**Lydia
Rose**



**Trevor
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**Megan
Anhalt**



**Joe
Maxwell**



**Emma
Davis**

Masters of Urban & Regional Planning

Masters in Sustainable Development

A photograph of a park scene. In the foreground, a large tree with green leaves and small white flowers is partially visible. In the background, there is a sandy volleyball court with a net. The sky is clear and blue. The text "Planning for West Branch" is overlaid in the center of the image.

Planning for West Branch

WEST BRANCH

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

- **Long-term guide** for growth and change
- Outlines relevant **goals and strategies**
- **Coordinates investment**, public and private
- Not regulatory, but **informs future decisions**
- Ensures growth reflects community

West Branch is a charming, tight-knit, and historic community steeped in a rich heritage.

West Branch 2050 **balances mounting infrastructure, service, and development pressures with many resident's desire to maintain a small-town lifestyle.**



2026 Plan Update

More than a facelift



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More than a facelift

- Collaborative development
 - *Historic Preservation Plan*
 - *Housing Needs Assessment*
 - *Capital Improvements Plan*



2026 Plan Update

More than a facelift

- Collaborative development
 - *Historic Preservation Plan*
 - *Housing Needs Assessment*
 - *Capital Improvements Plan*
- Responds to shifting status quo
 - *Infrastructure/service capacity*
 - *2.2% growth rate*
 - *Climate considerations*
- Refines future land use map
- Updates strategic goals
- Includes sustainability feature
- Includes public accessibility feature



A photograph of a park scene. In the foreground, a large tree with green leaves and small white flowers is partially visible. In the background, there is a sandy volleyball court with a net. The sky is clear and blue. The text "Community Engagement" is overlaid in the center of the image.

Community Engagement

What Is Your Favorite Place in West Branch?

Football Game Kick-off

Webinar

Open House

Community Survey

Stakeholder Interviews

Fall Fest

314 Total

Other visible text on leaves: The Honey Den, School, Branch Out, Walking Trails, Downtown Shopping, The park, Herb & Lou's, 223 Vintage, Main Street Sweats, Library, Main Street, Downtown, Football Field.

Survey Engagement

3-month feedback period:

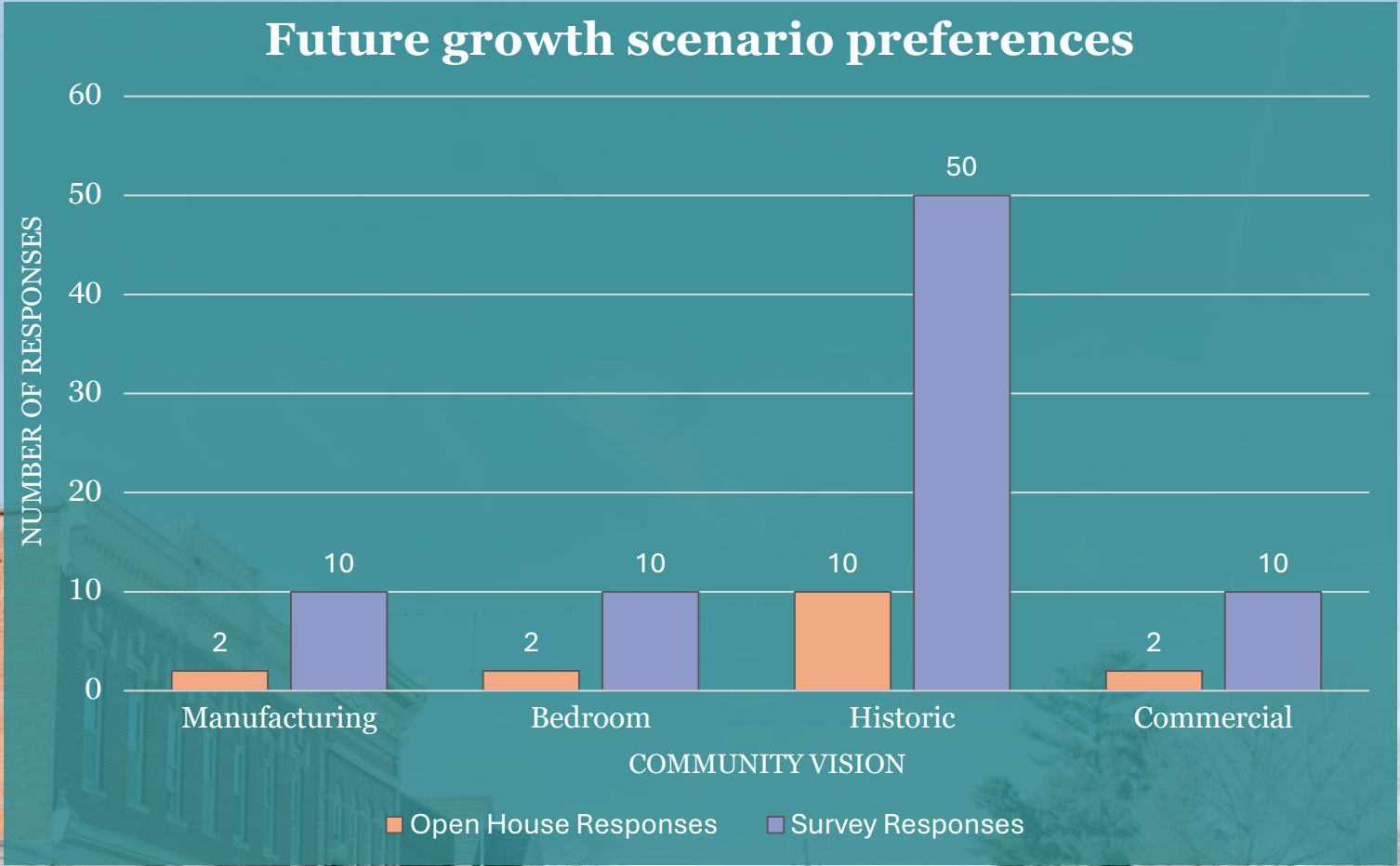
- November - January

Distribution methods:

- Facebook
- West Branch City Website
- Door-to-door solicitation

181 complete responses





Plan Content

A photograph of an outdoor volleyball court. In the foreground, a large tree with green leaves and small white flowers is partially visible. The court is sandy with some faint lines. In the background, a volleyball net is strung between two poles. The sky is clear and blue.

Included Chapters



Land Use



Transportation



Housing



Parks and Recreation



Community Facilities,
Utilities, & Infrastructure



Disaster Mitigation



Economic Development



Historic Preservation

Strategic Goals



Goals

- Broad & aspirational
- 1-4 per chapter
- 26 across chapters

Objectives

- Directional & outcome-based
- 2-5 per goal
- 76 across chapters

Strategies

- Specific & action-oriented
- 1-5 per goal
- 178 across chapters

3 Goals:

- Parks and Recreation
- Utilities, Facilities and Infrastructure
- Land Use

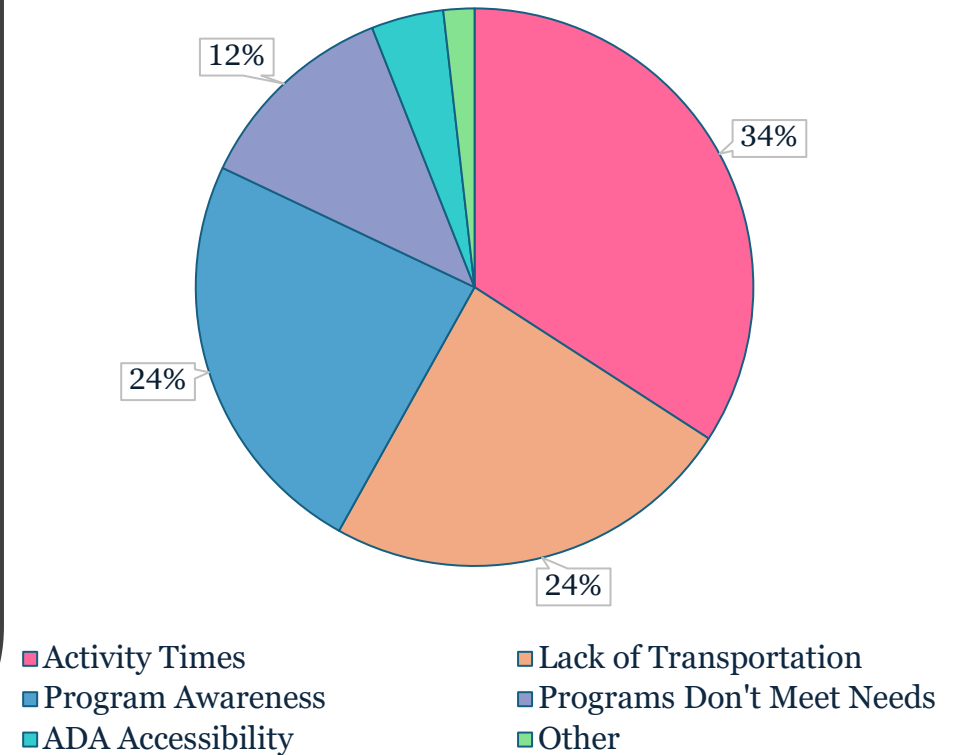
Strategic Goals



Goal #1: Provide an adequate supply of recreational facilities to serve current and future populations.

- Develop recreational facilities that meet the needs of all residents
- Implement development regulations and incentives to promote parks and green space

Accessibility Barriers for City and Library Programming



Parks & Recreation in West Branch

Provide inclusive programming

- Determine ideal time for programming for various demographics
- Adjust outreach efforts to improve awareness

NRPA recommends 10.2 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents (~20 acres of additional park land, by 2050)



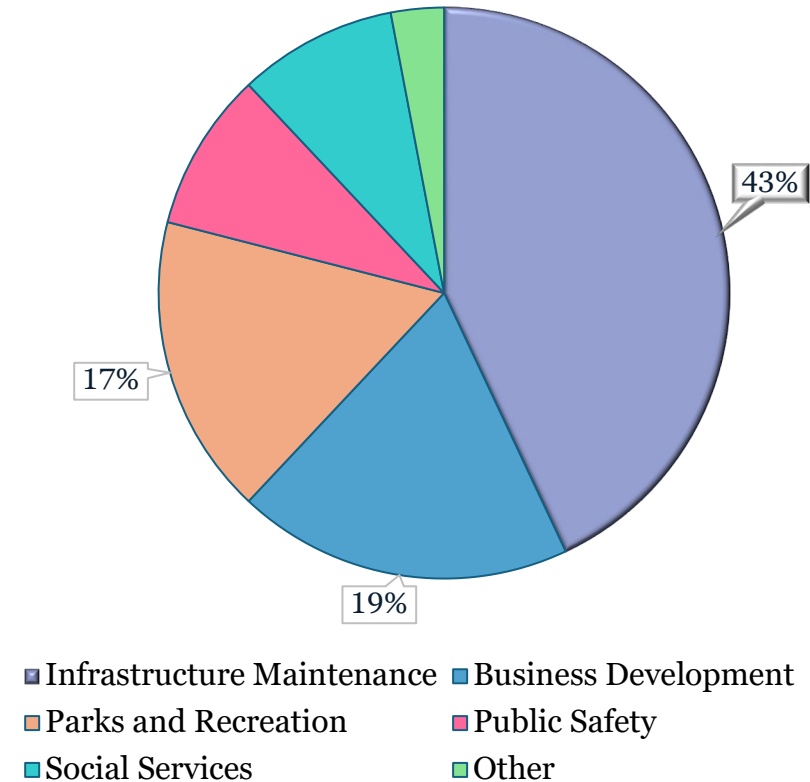
Strategic Goals



Goal #2: Improve infrastructure affordability and capacity.

- Maintain infrastructure capacity to provide for residents and accommodate growth
- Utilize Best Management Practices to reduce stormwater infiltration and inflow

Which investment do you believe is most urgent?



Riparian Buffers in West Branch

25-50 feet wide natural barrier along Wapsi Creek

- Provide “breathing room” for creek
- Shrubs and trees for flood mitigation

Supports sustainable development

- Restores native habitats
- Recreational opportunities
- Protects property



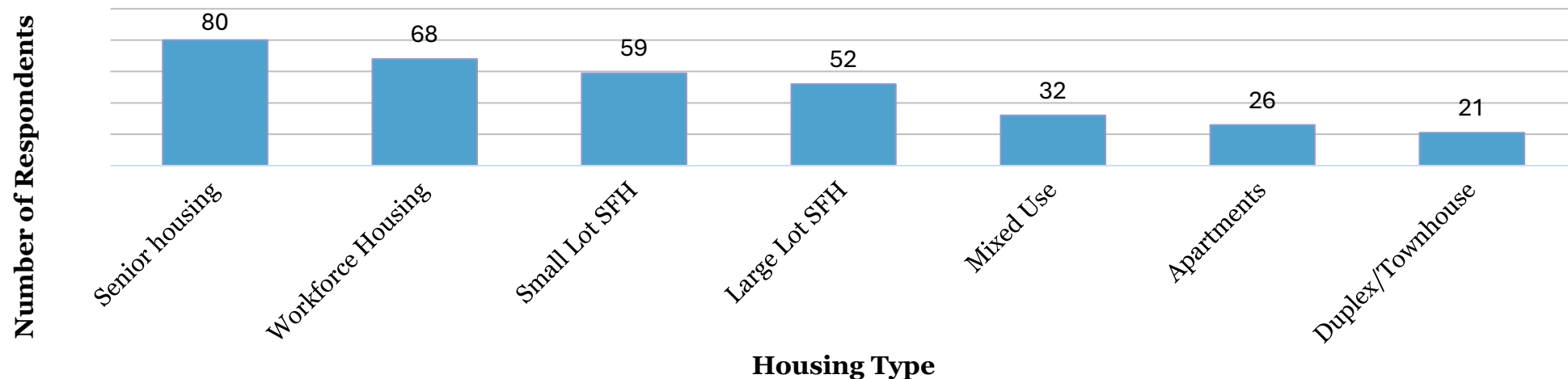
Strategic Goals



Goal #3: Create an attractive built environment that reinforces historic identity and long-term stability.

- Encourage development of diverse housing for all ages
- Support mixed-use development in appropriate areas

Housing Types Ranked Very and Extremely Important by Respondents





Land Use in West Branch

Prioritize infill development to reduce annexation

- Encourage compact, walkable development
- Promote historic character via design standards

Reduction in parking minimums downtown

- Maximize efficient use of high-value land
- Increase stock of affordable housing

Future Land Use

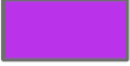
A photograph of a park scene. In the foreground, a large tree with green leaves and small white flowers is partially visible. The background shows a sandy volleyball court with several nets and poles. The sky is clear and blue.

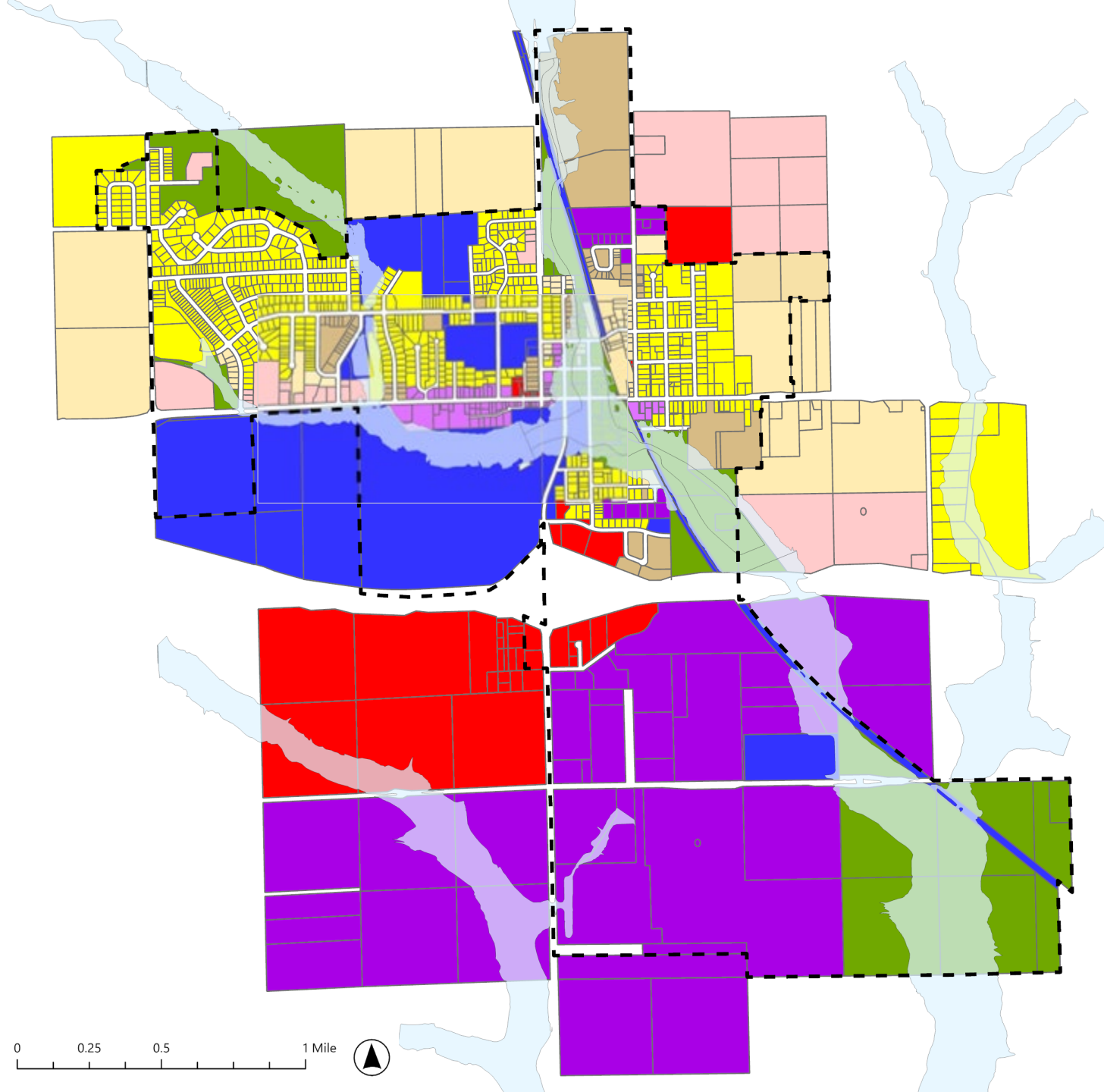
Future Land Use Map

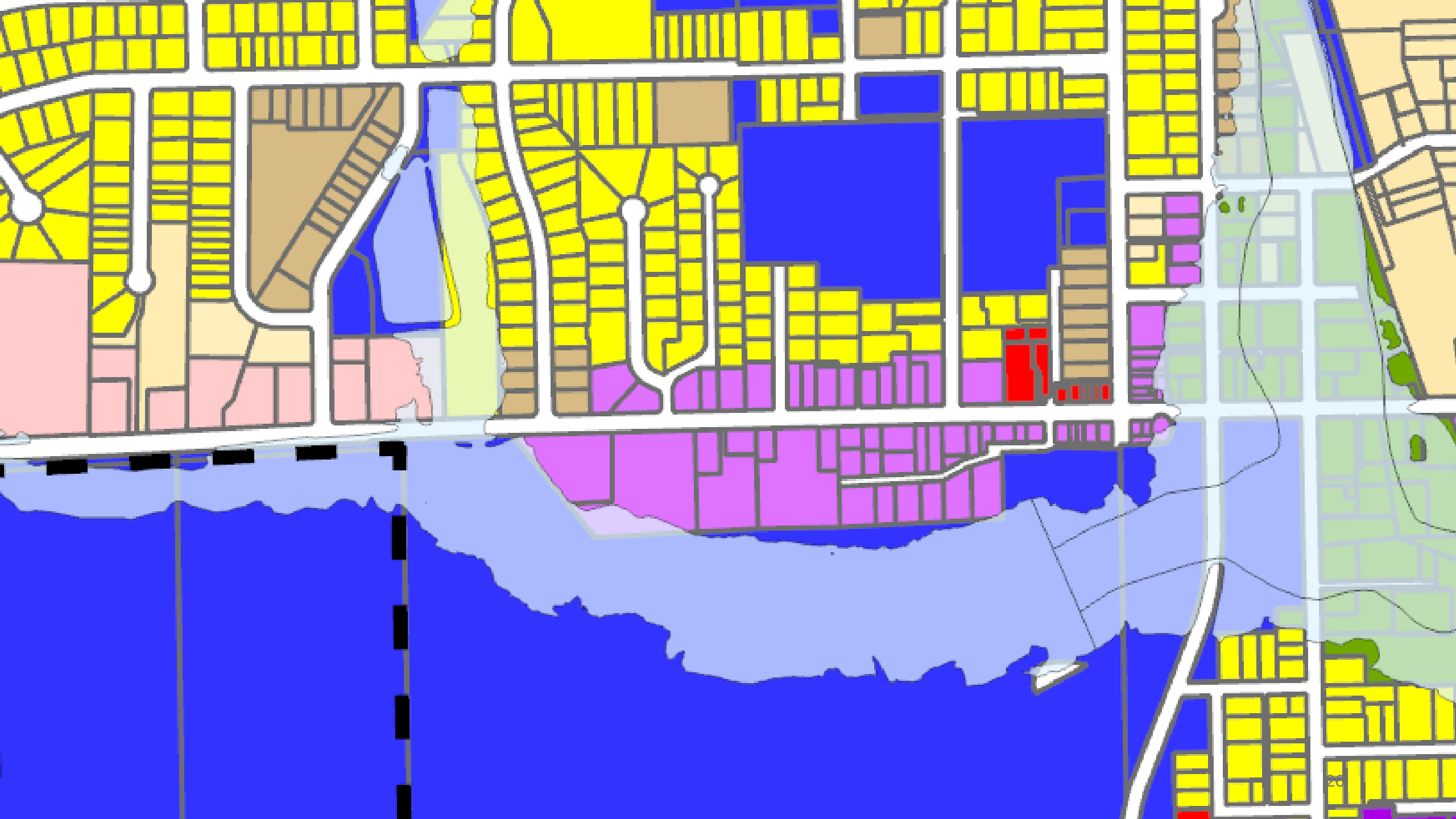
Managed Growth

- Informed by
 - Current conditions
 - Community feedback
 - Best practices
- Balances competing priorities
 - Affordable, dense, and walkable
 - Aligns with historic character
 - Resilient and adaptable

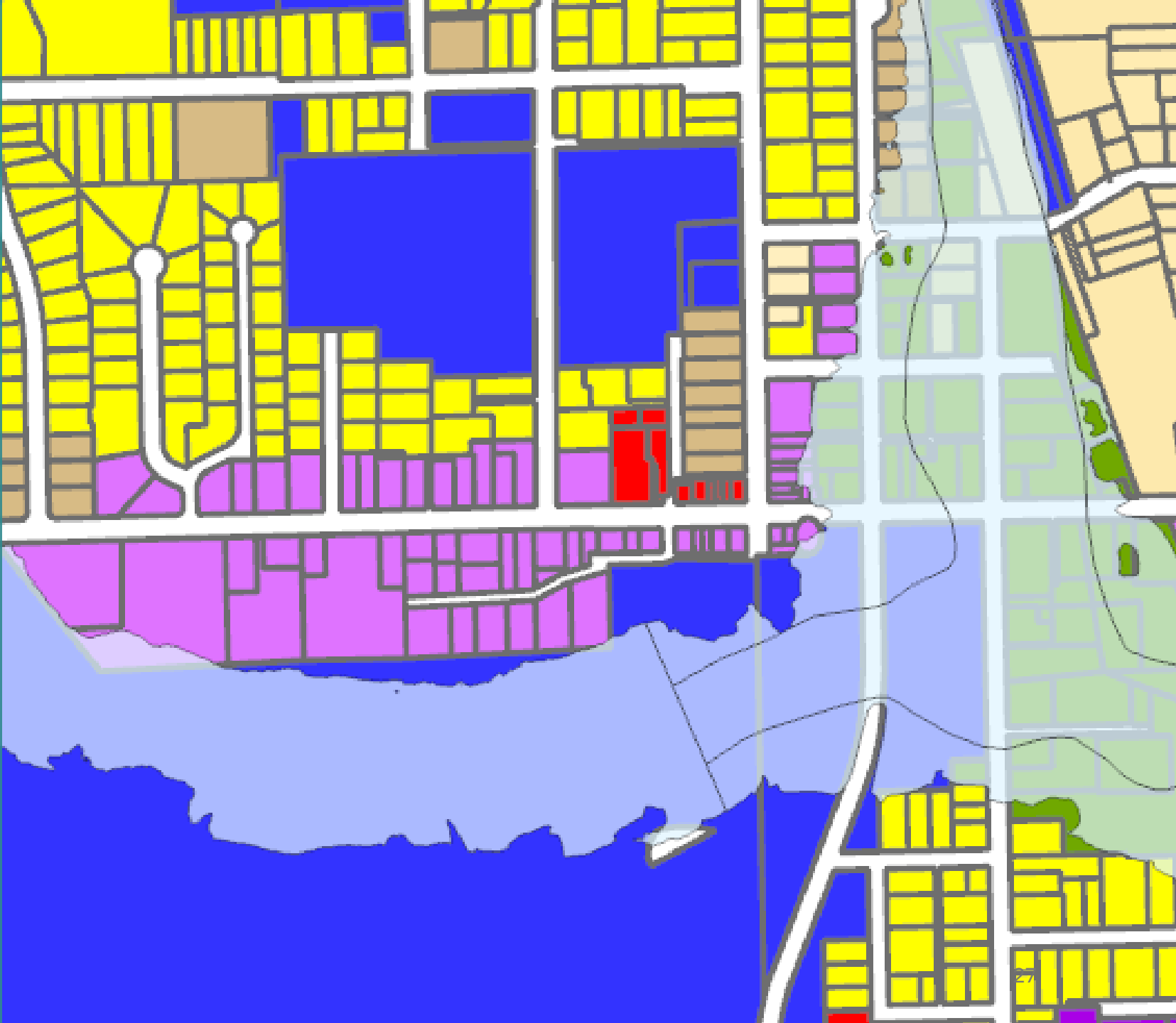
Legend

-  Low Density Residential
-  Medium Density Residential
-  High Density Residential
-  Downtown Mixed-Use
-  Residential/Business
-  Commercial
-  Industrial
-  Public Land
-  Open Space
-  West Branch Boundary



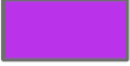


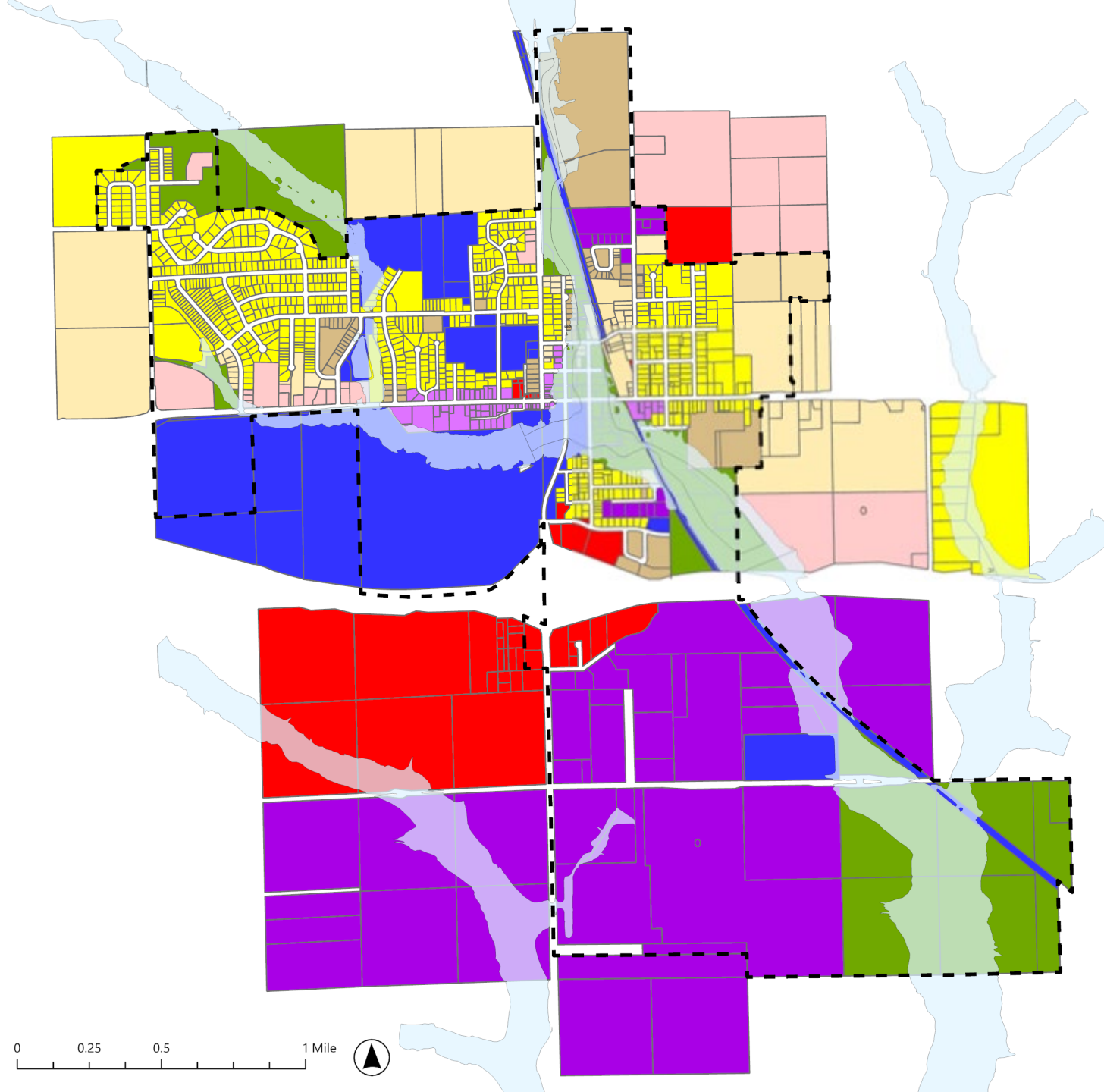
Downtown Mixed-Use

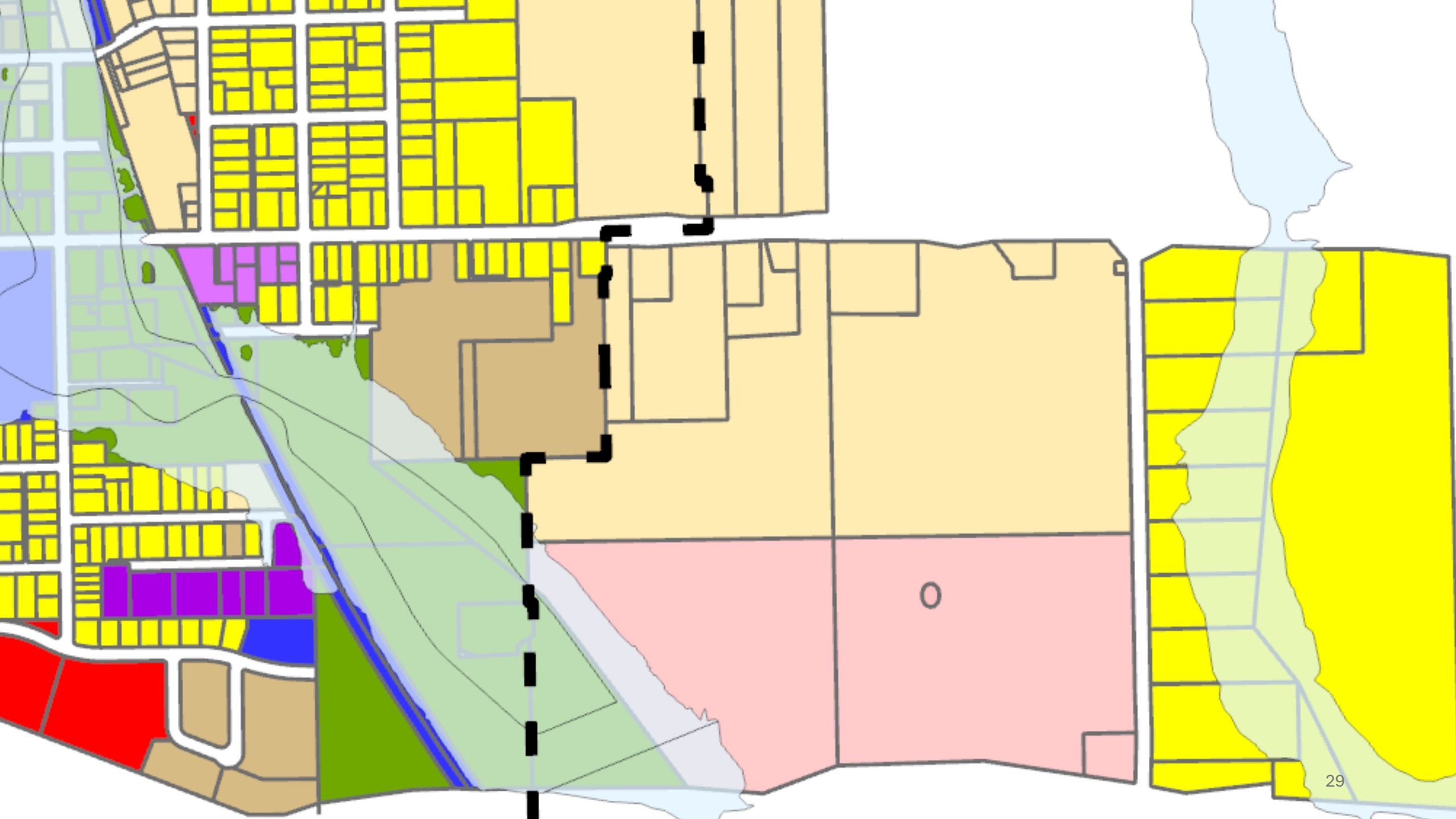


- **Scott Drive-Oliphant St**
- Street level businesses
- Affordable upper story housing units

Legend

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-  Medium Density Residential
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-  Downtown Mixed-Use
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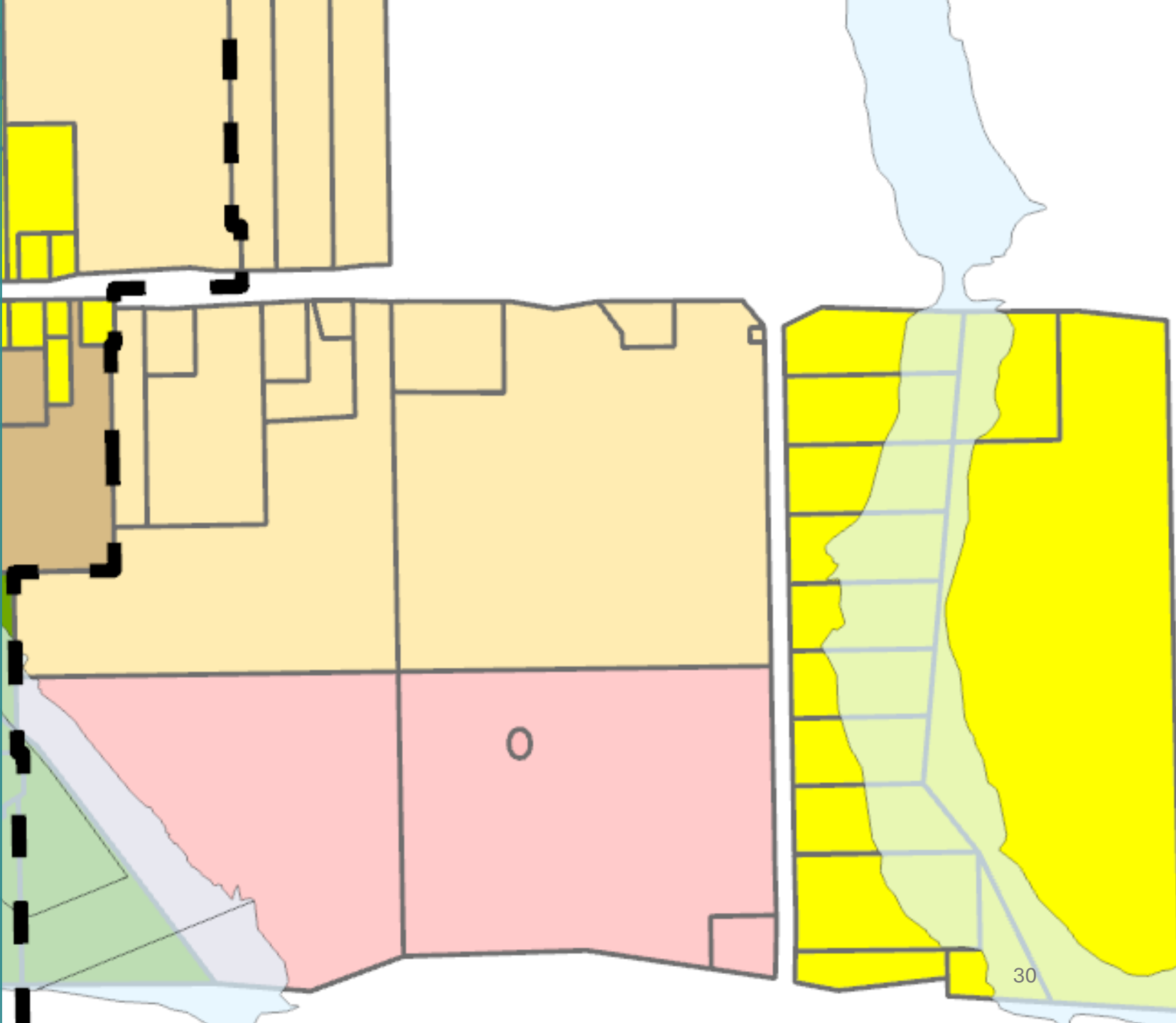




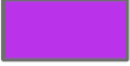
Medium Density Residential

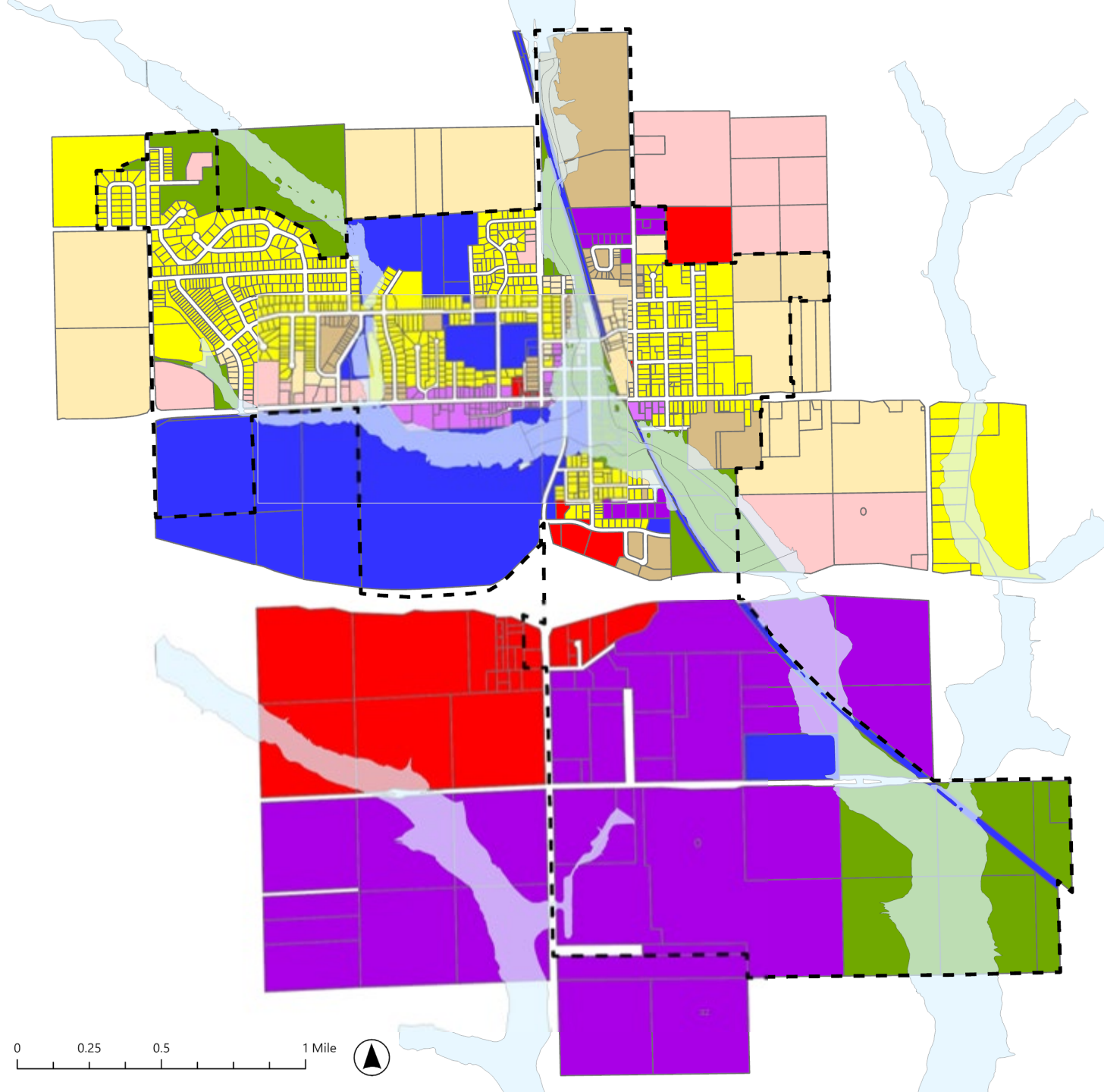


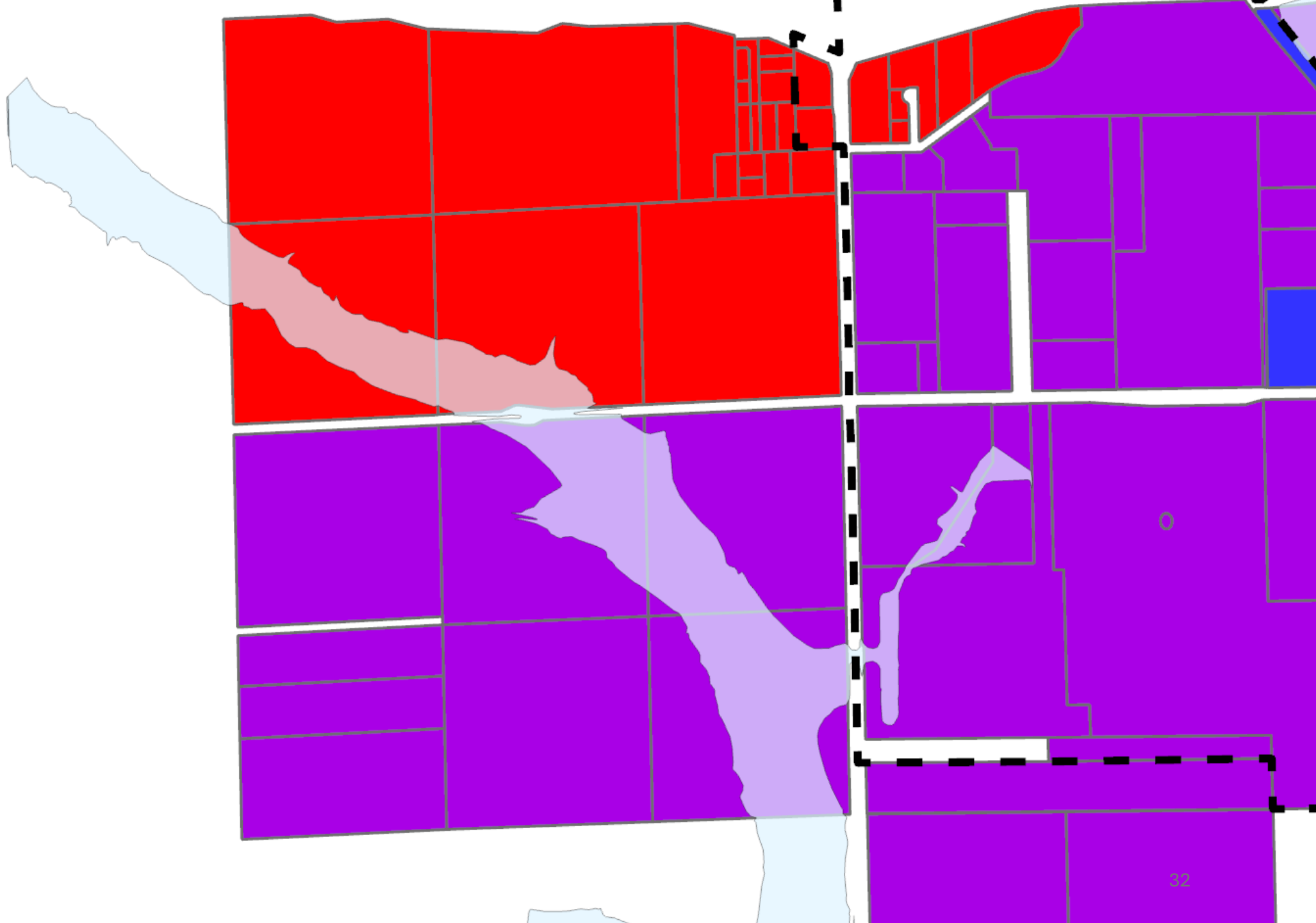
- **Eastern edge of town**
- Develops out from established infrastructure
- Medium density close to downtown



Legend

-  Low Density Residential
-  Medium Density Residential
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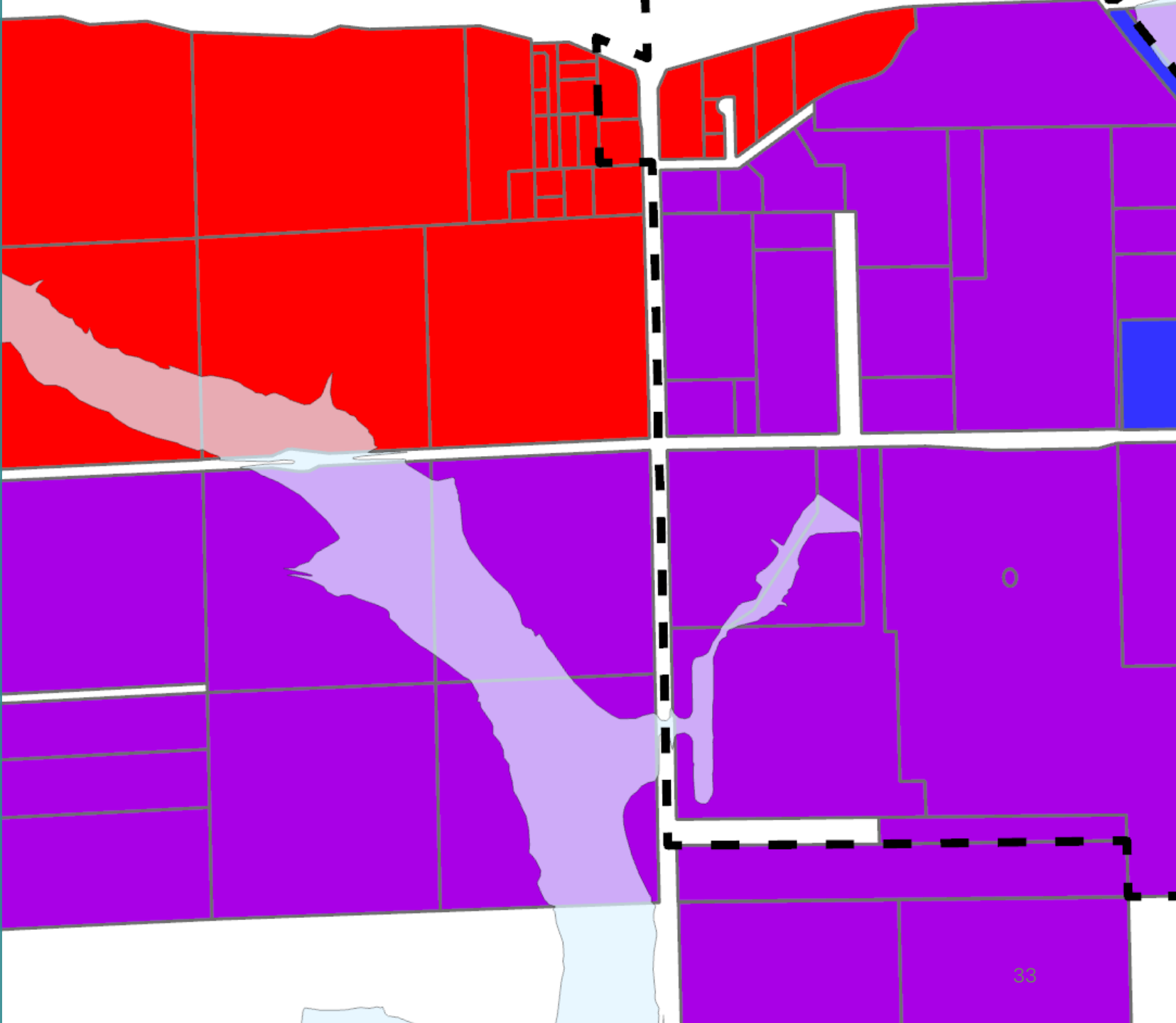




Highway Commercial / Industrial



- **South of I-80**
- High-impact commercial
- Expanded industrial footprint
- Contributes to tax base



An aerial photograph of a small town, likely West Branch, Iowa, in autumn. The town features a mix of residential houses, commercial buildings, and a prominent white water tower. The surrounding landscape is a vast expanse of golden-brown agricultural fields under a clear blue sky. A road runs through the town, and a large green field is visible in the foreground.

West Branch 2050

- Balances growth & infrastructure costs for sustainable development.
- Preserves small town character while expanding service and amenities.
- Offers a diverse array of housing, economic, and recreational opportunities.

Thank you!

We now have time to answer any questions

*Where
Friends
Meet*



HISTORIC
WEST
BRANCH

Since 1875

Community Input

Football
Game
Kick-off

61

Webinar

1

Community
Survey

181

Stakeholder
Interviews

10

Open
House

28

Fall Fest

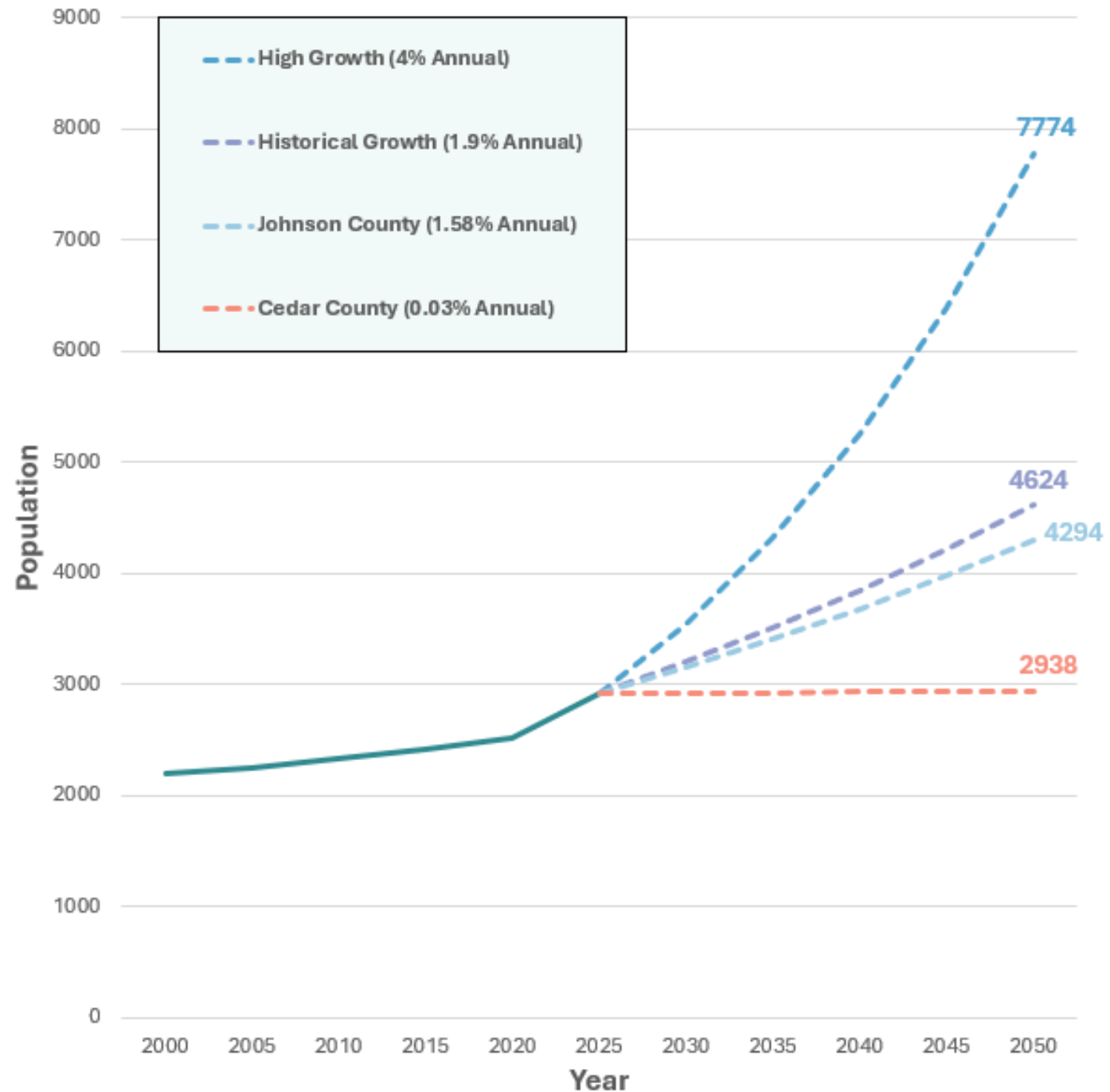
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Land Use Requirements



Time Period	Years	Population	Population Change	Housing Units Needed	Land Required (Acres)
Short-term	2026-2030	3,576	369	151	20
Medium-term	2031-2040	4,445	1,238	507	66
Long-term	2041-2050	5,525	2,318	950	124

Scenario Planning





No changes to minimum lot sizes (infill upzone scenario)							
	Sq feet	Percentage	Distribution	sq feet needed	Acreage needed	Multiplier	Total Acreage Needed
Single	6567	71.80%	381.55	2,505,607	57.52	1.5	86.28
Two Units	4200	4.10%	21.79	91,507	2.10	1.5	3.15
3-4 Units	2916	8.00%	42.51	123,965	2.85	1.5	4.27
5-9 Units	2000	6%	34.01	68,019	1.56	1.5	2.34
10+ Units	1800	9.90%	52.61	94,695	2.17	1.5	3.26
				Total	66.20	1.5	99.30

Changes to minimum lot sizes (infill upzone scenario)							
	Sq feet	Percentage	Distribution	sq feet needed	Acreage needed	Multiplier	Total Acreage Needed
Single	4667	71.80%	381.55	1,780,671	40.88	1.5	61.32
Two Units	4200	4.10%	21.79	91,507	2.10	1.5	3.15
3-4 Units	2916	8.00%	42.51	123,965	2.85	1.5	4.27
5-9 Units	2000	6%	34.01	68,019	1.56	1.5	2.34
10+ Units	1800	9.90%	52.61	94,695	2.17	1.5	3.26
				Total	49.56	1.5	74.34

Change lot size and increase MFH (infill upzone scenario)							
	Sq feet	Percentage	Distribution	sq feet needed	Acreage needed	Multiplier	Total Acreage Needed
Single	4667	61.80%	328.41	1,532,667	35.19	1.5	52.78
Two Units	4200	6.60%	35.07	147,304	3.38	1.5	5.07
3-4 Units	2916	10.50%	55.80	162,704	3.74	1.5	5.60
5-9 Units	2000	9%	47.29	94,589	2.17	1.5	3.26
10+ Units	1800	12.40%	65.89	118,608	2.72	1.5	4.08
				Total	47.20	1.5	70.79