

## 2.8 EXISTING ZONING

Existing zoning differs from land use in that zoning details the specific codes that determine the allowable operations that can be conducted on a specifically zoned property, as well as regulations guiding the placement, orientation, and construction of structures. These regulations are in place to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens throughout the community.

Land use and zoning go hand in hand, though zoning tends to be more specific than land use. The intent of updating zoning is to help ensure that adjacent land uses are compatible and provide a safe, pleasant, and conforming environment for citizens to live, work, and socialize, and to protect investments made by property owners.

There are currently eight zones in which land can be designated within the City of Wadena: R-1 (One to Four Family Residence District), R-2 (Multiple Family Residence District), C-B (Central Business District), C-1 (Commercial), I-1 (Light Industrial District), I-2 (Heavy Industrial District), F (Flood Plane District), and PID (Planned Industrial District). All definitions and permitted uses for each district can be found in Chapter 11 of the City of Wadena City Code. In general, the intensity of use increases as the designation increases.

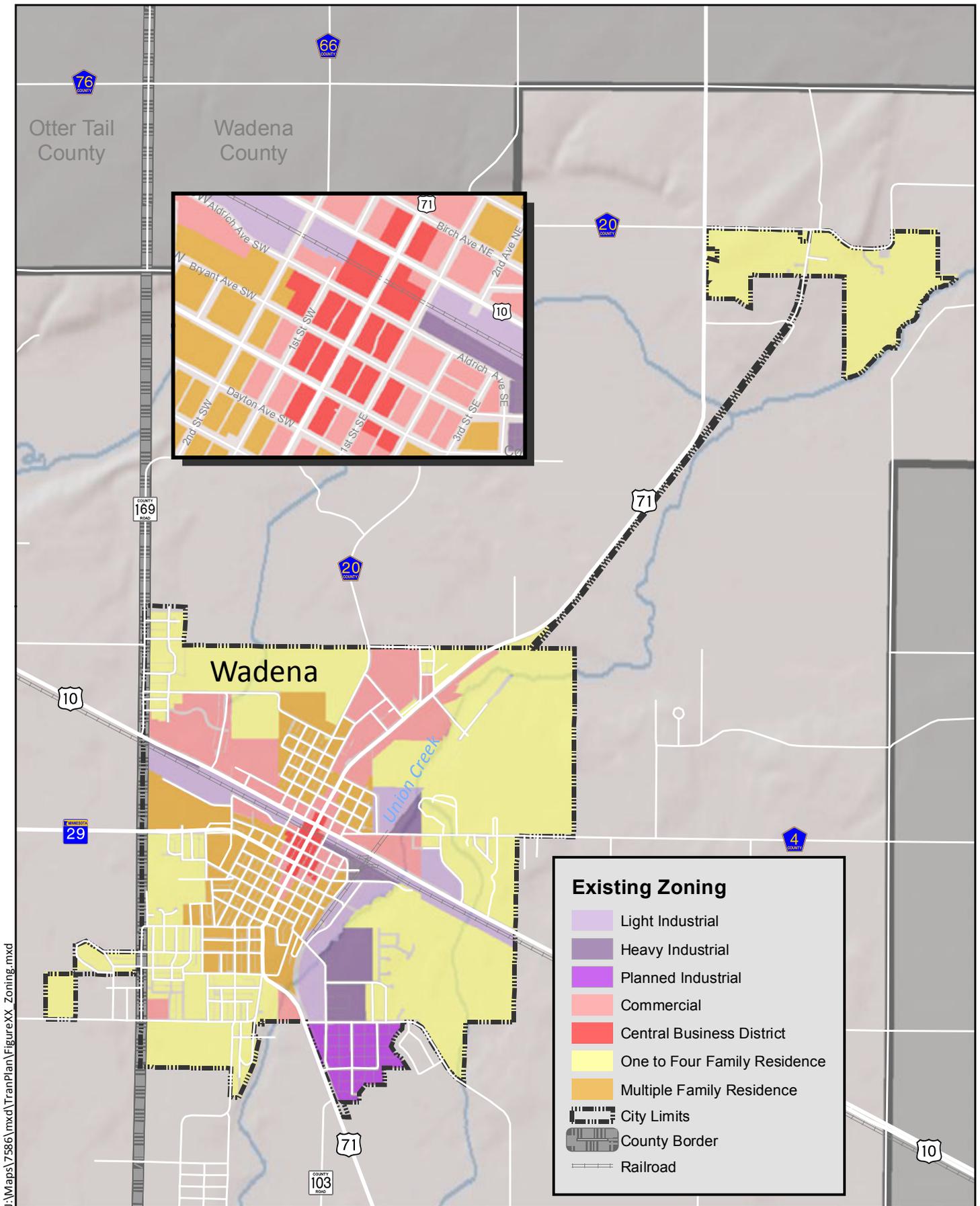
Existing zoning of the City of Wadena is shown in **Figure 2-18**. The entirety of Downtown Wadena is zoned Central Business District (C-B) to maintain the historic retail and cultural center of the city. This zoning primarily permits retail shops and services. Surrounding the Central Business District (C-B) is a commercial district which provides for more intense retail in differing formats than allowed in C-B. Most often this comes in the form of strip commercial and medium to large box retailers appealing to auto-oriented patrons.

Progressing outward, the city has zoned most of the traditional neighborhood areas surrounding the Central Business District as Multi-Family Residential (R-2). This zoning classification is likely utilized to increase the density around Downtown Wadena. Although the zoning may be R-2, the primary housing in these neighborhoods comes in the form of detached single-family residential units, each on a lot typically about .16 acres in size. This tends to be the lot size found in most R-1 Districts not only in Wadena but also in most environments found in urban areas.

When approaching the outer limits of Wadena, lots, blocks, and homes generally increase in size. These areas were likely developed at a later time period as the population of the city grew. The grid street network in these outer areas does not strictly follow the grid network in the city core. The zoning in these outer areas is predominately R-1, a less intense residential usage accommodating, per City of Wadena Code, one to four family residences.

Land that is along the Burlington Northern Rail Corridor is zoned as Light Industrial (I-1). As rail has become less utilized to move goods throughout the nation, properties along rail corridors often times become underutilized as well. Unfortunately, this is also the case in Wadena with many rail frontage properties being left unused. The southeast quadrant has the only Heavy Industrial (I-2) zoned properties located within the city, adjacent to which is a separate zone facilitating the future expansion of the industrial park to the south.





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### Existing Zoning -- Wadena

Wadena Comprehensive Plan  
City of Wadena, MN

Figure 2-18

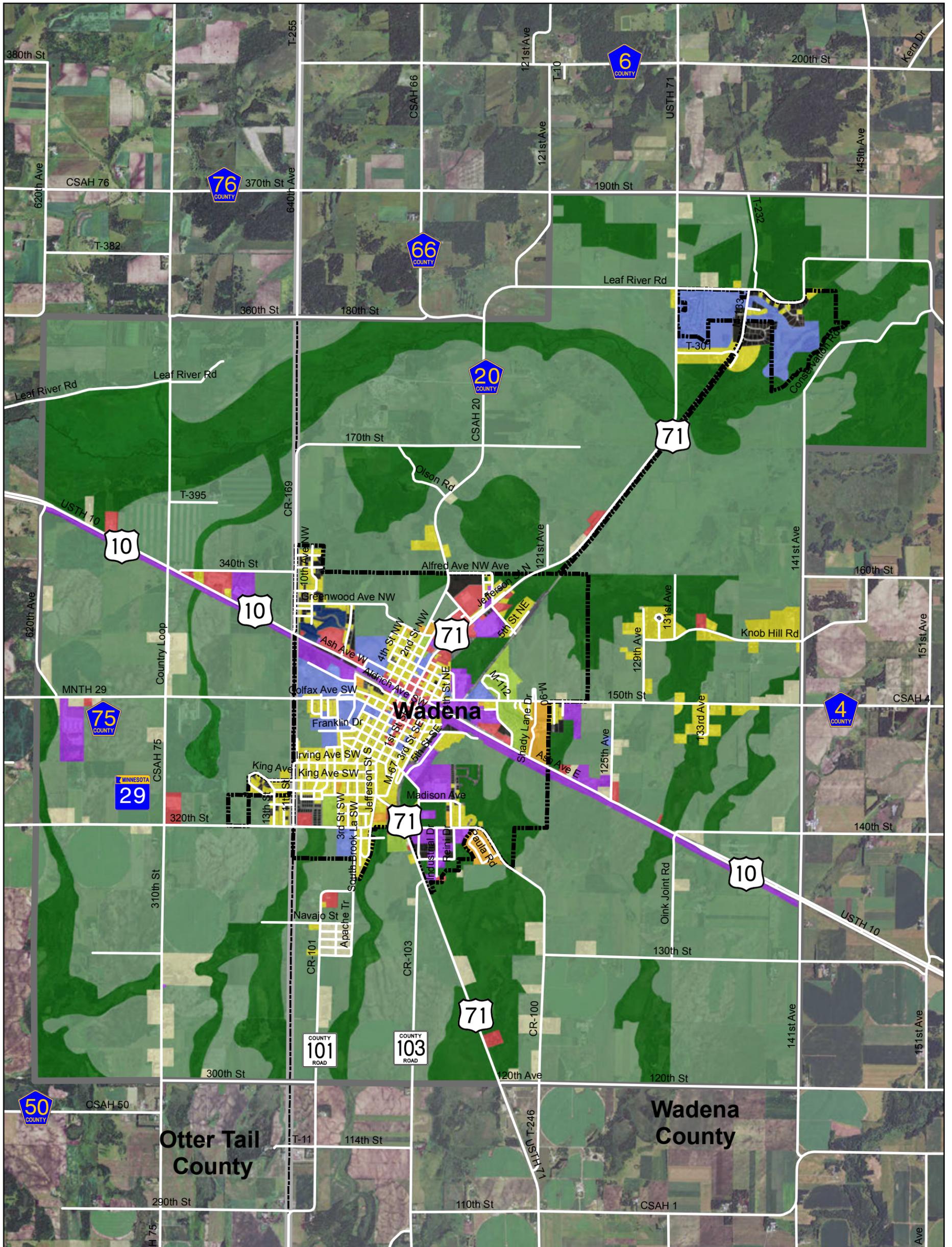
## 2.9 EXISTING LAND USE

The existing land uses within the City of Wadena are shown in **Figure 2-19**, and are typical of similar cities throughout central Minnesota. The center of the community, both culturally and physically, is the historic downtown commercial district. This is surrounded by single family residences, which fit into a low or medium density residential designation (depending upon the lot sizes) in a traditional neighborhood format. As development progressed, newer style development patterns emerged, namely developments not incorporating the grid pattern of central Wadena. A modern commercial district with a “Big Box” retailer is located along US 71, at the north end of the community.

Wadena's location along a major rail corridor has led to the development of industrial uses along the rail right of way. Some industrial sites are no longer active, creating opportunities to purchase additional highway right of way and/or improve aesthetics along the US Hwy 10 corridor.

Development in the last 10-20 years tended to occur outside of the city's boundaries. These new developments are located along the fringes of heavily wooded areas and are reminiscent of development trends around the lake region. Development of this nature has left undeveloped properties within the City of Wadena vacant, especially properties that were devastated by the tornado that swept through the city on June 17, 2010 destroying many homes and buildings.

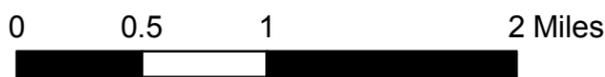
Wadena recently constructed a new high school along its western edge adjacent to MN Hwy 29. School officials and city leaders have expressed concerns based on their observations – truck traffic along this route will conflict with the need to provide a safe route to school for children who can easily walk a few short blocks to school from adjacent neighborhoods.



**Existing Land Use**

- Low Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Park/Open Space
- Agriculture
- Public/Institutional
- Water
- Vacant
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Rural Residential
- Wooded

- Extraterritorial Area
- City Limits
- County Border



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Within the current municipal limits of Wadena there is ample undeveloped or underutilized property that could be developed or redeveloped. Below is a figure that details the current acreages of all the different land uses within the municipal limits of the City of Wadena.

**Table 2-6: Existing Land Use Acreage Consumption within the City of Wadena, 2012**

| Land Use                   | Inside City Limits |            | ETA Only |            | All Together |            |
|----------------------------|--------------------|------------|----------|------------|--------------|------------|
|                            | Acres              | Percentage | Acres    | Percentage | Acres        | Percentage |
| City of Wadena             | 2857.76            | 100.00%    | 21068.16 | 100.00%    | 23925.92     | 100.00%    |
| Wooded (Undevelopable)     | 485.25             | 16.98%     | 5461.18  | 25.92%     | 5946.43      | 24.85%     |
| Agricultural (Developable) | 713.58             | 24.97%     | 14204.03 | 67.42%     | 14917.61     | 62.35%     |
| Vacant (Platted)           | 149.95             | 5.25%      | 40.36    | 0.19%      | 190.31       | 0.80%      |
| Low Density Residential    | 494.39             | 17.30%     | 157.7    | 0.75%      | 652.09       | 2.73%      |
| High Density Residential   | 69.23              | 2.42%      | 33.23    | 0.16%      | 102.46       | 0.43%      |
| Park & Open Space          | 297.59             | 10.41%     | 60.57    | 0.29%      | 358.16       | 1.50%      |
| Public & Institutional     | 201.88             | 7.06%      | 2.83     | 0.01%      | 204.71       | 0.86%      |
| Industrial                 | 288.41             | 10.09%     | 259.5    | 1.23%      | 547.91       | 2.29%      |
| Commercial                 | 150.07             | 5.25%      | 86.32    | 0.41%      | 236.39       | 0.99%      |
| Rural Residential          | 7.41               | 0.26%      | 762.44   | 3.62%      | 769.85       | 3.22%      |

Approximately 25 percent of the land within Wadena's corporate limits is agricultural in nature and could be developed to accommodate future growth.

Approximately 17 percent of the undeveloped land within the city is classified as Wooded. This classification is given to areas with dense tree stands. These areas often include hilly terrain and water features such as lakes or streams. Wooded areas are considered natural areas that could largely be preserved, although some may not have the quality of natural vegetation that warrants protection from development. As the city grows, it may benefit from an inventory and assessment of the surrounding wooded areas to determine the health and quality of significant wooded areas and copses. The forest areas in and around Wadena are a huge asset to the city and its residents, and city growth that is designed to preserve the wooded characteristics will enhance the aesthetic appeal of the community and contribute to opportunities for economic growth. As a result, people will begin to identify with Wadena as offering an urban lifestyle in a pleasing natural environment. Due to the nature of the land in these areas, the development would likely prevent or complicate future annexation and would gradually degrade the wooded designation of the property.