

# Section 4: Land Use

## Introduction

Planning for the future growth of a municipality requires numerous and varied considerations. Utility capacity and access, available work force and housing, and the impact on public emergency services are just a few of the issues to be addressed in any growth plan. Perhaps the most fundamental development characteristic of a community, however, is the availability of land. Obviously, development of any kind will be precluded if there are no areas suitable for construction in a community. As such, it is an important part of any comprehensive plan to analyze the development potential of areas within the boundaries of a city. At the same time, it is prudent to examine the land surrounding a community to identify those areas most appropriate for future potential annexation. This section will examine current land use and future development potential for areas both within and outside the corporate limits of Lathrop.

## Land Use and Zoning in Lathrop Today

The City of Lathrop, Missouri, which covers approximately 975 acres, is comprised of 1,594 lots. To manage the development on those lots, the city utilizes a formally adopted set of zoning regulations. As stated in Lathrop City Code (Title IV Land Use., Chapter 400, Zoning Regulations.), zoning in the city exists to:

promote, in accordance with present and future needs, the safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare of the citizens of Lathrop, Missouri, and to provide for the efficiency and economy in the process of development, for the appropriate and best use of land, for convenience of traffic and circulation of people and goods, for the use and occupancy of buildings, for healthful and convenient distribution of population, for good civic design and arrangement, and for adequate public utilities and facilities by regulating the location and use of buildings, structures, and land for trade, industry, and residence, by regulating and limiting or determining the height and bulk of buildings and structures, the area of yards and other open spaces, and the density of use.

Similar to other communities in Missouri, Lathrop utilizes a standard naming convention in classifying the zone designation of each parcel, detailed in Figure 4.1. Three of the zones, R-1, R-2, and B-1 are hierarchical, in that any structure or use permitted in R-1 is also permitted in R-2, and any structure or use permitted in R-2 is also permitted in B-1. The remaining classifications are not hierarchical, with only unique, specific uses or structures permitted in each.

The current land use of a community is often best determined by examining the distribution of zoning districts. While every parcel zoned is not necessarily developed, zoning distribution can illustrate a rough picture of the current development trends in the community. Figure 4.2 details the

Zoning Designation	Description
R-1	Single-Family Residential District
R-2	Multiple-Family Residential District
B-1	Retail Business District
M-1	Light Industry District
A-1	Agricultural District
T-1	Trailer Court Park
<i>Table 4.1. Zoning Districts. Lathrop City Code, 182, 191.</i>	

breakdown of zoned parcels within the City of Lathrop. Not surprisingly, single-family residential (R-1) constitutes the largest zoning classification, representing over 96% of the lots in Lathrop and 87% of the land area (approximately 849 of Lathrop’s 975 acres). B-1 Retail Business accounts for the next highest percentage of lot zoning (34 lots representing 2.1% of the total lots). A-1 Agricultural is the second highest zoning classification in terms of land area (10%, or about 97.5 acres of Lathrop’s land area), but sixth in terms of number of lots.

Zoning	Number of Lots	Percent of Total Lots	Percent of Total Land Area
R-1	1534	96.2%	87.0%
B-1	34	2.1%	0.9%
R-2	18	1.1%	1.0%
T-1	14	0.9%	0.1%
M-1	3	0.2%	0.2%
A-1	3	0.2%	10.0%
Other	2	0.1%	0.8%

Table 4.2. Distribution of Lathrop Zoning Districts.

The distribution of land use in Lathrop is typical of a community with a high number of commuters. With over 80 percent of it’s workforce traveling outside of the city to find employment (see Section 2a: Community Development for more information), it is not surprising to see an imbalance between residential zoning and those zoning types that could potentially employ Lathrop residents (B-1, M-1). There is simply more demand for single-family homes in Lathrop than any other kind of development at this time. However, as economic development initiatives begin to draw more employers to the community, and a greater number of employment opportunities are made available within the city (particularly land-intensive M-1), it is likely that the ratio between residential and non-residential zoning will decrease.

The pattern of land use within Lathrop is generally indicative of land use clusters. The Retail Business zone (B-1) is clustered within the downtown area and along the primary east-west route through town, State Route 116. It is anticipated that these areas will continue to be the foci of business development within the community, gradually encompassing adjacent lots as demand necessitates. The only lots currently zoned Agricultural (A-1) are the recently annexed areas along the north and south edges of the community (see the next subsection for a discussion of these areas). There is only one set of congruent lots that are zoned for a trailer park (T-1), which is located between Cedar and Plattsburg Streets, west of Railroad Street. Multi-Family Residential (R-2) is more dispersed throughout the community, although concentrations are evident in the form of duplex units along Concha Street, around Railroad Circle, and the senior housing complex located in the southern part of Lathrop. For a graphic representation of the zoning distribution, please see the Lathrop Zoning Map in Appendix B, Map 6..

Open Spaces within the Lathrop Corporate Limits

The following pages consist of an examination of the larger lots within Lathrop that are not currently developed. These areas represent the best opportunity for future community growth, residential, commercial, or industrial, without requiring annexation. A great number of factors, however, influence the true availability of these lands, but it is prudent to include their development potential in any comprehensive plan. For this analysis, Lathrop is divided into quadrants, split along Plattsburg and Center Streets.

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### Lathrop Open Space Analysis, Northwest Quadrant

The northwest quadrant of Lathrop lies north of Plattsburg Street and west of Center Street. This area, which includes three sizable areas recently annexed into the community, has four large lots not currently developed, representing 193 acres of potentially developable space. These areas are detailed below.

1. This 46-acre parcel was voluntarily annexed into the Lathrop corporate limits in April 2006. The parcel, which is currently zoned A-1, is slated to be divided into 50 lots for residential housing. Access to the space is via Breckenridge Road, which borders the property to the west.

**Recommendation:** Area should be rezoned R-1 to correspond with the new housing development planned for the space. A buffer zone should be incorporated along the east side of the property to ensure adequate distance between the housing development and the grounds for the new high school, located on adjacent property to the east.

2. This 18-acre parcel was also annexed in April 2006, and is located adjacent to the north of the new Lathrop High School grounds. The property, which is currently zoned A-1, is owned by the First Baptist Church of Lathrop, and is the future home of their new church building. Access to the property is granted via State Highway A.

**Recommendation:** Area should be rezoned R-1, as appropriate for places of worship as detailed in the Lathrop city code. A buffer zone should be incorporated along the south side of the property to ensure adequate distance between the church development and the school grounds, located on adjacent property to the south.

3. This 33-acre city lot is currently being farmed. However, located just north of State Highway 116 (North Street) and in close proximity to city infrastructure, it is an ideal location for future development. The lot is currently zoned R-1.

**Recommendation:** As this property is (or will be in the near future) bounded by lots zoned R-1, the current zoning should be maintained, or perhaps expanded to include R-2. Care should be taken with any future development to incorporate buffer zones along the east side of the property, adjacent to the new school grounds.

4. This 96-acre parcel is owned by the Lathrop R-II School District, and is the future home of the Lathrop High School. The property, which was also annexed in April 2006, is currently farmed, and is designated zone A-1. Access is granted to the property from both State Highway A to the east and State Route 116 to the south.

**Recommendation:** Area should be rezoned R-1 to correspond with the new school grounds. Development on this space should incorporate green space and other stormwater runoff abatement strategies to effectively mitigate the addition of impermeable surfaces, particularly parking lots and the large high school building.

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### Lathrop Open Space Analysis, Northeast Quadrant

The northeast quadrant of Lathrop lies north of Plattsburg Street and east of Center Street. This area has four primary areas not currently developed, representing approximately 178 acres of potentially developable space. These areas are detailed below.

1. This large 140-acre lot is currently used for agricultural purposes, and is adjacent to a newer housing subdivision to the south. The lot, which is currently zoned R-1, is accessed via State Highway A. Any future residential development would likely include extensions of Latigo, Concha, and Honda Streets into the space.

**Recommendation:** Located adjacent to residential housing and across the highway from the new high school grounds, and having access to nearby municipal infrastructure, this is an ideal location for further residential development (R-1, R-2). If the area is zoned B-1 or M-1 in the future, buffer zones must be incorporated to separate the area from the residential lots to the south. In addition, any M-1 zoning will need to include a traffic study regarding ingress/egress routes in relation to State Highway A, with particular regard to congestion and safety impacts around the new high school.

2. This L-shaped area is comprised of five lots, located between North (Highway 116) and Walnut Streets. The area, which is currently zoned R-1, comprises 15 acres used for agricultural purposes, with access to the lots via either North Street or Walnut Street. The area is completely bounded by lots zoned R-1.

**Recommendation:** Property should remain zoned R-1, although commercial development potential exists for the two lots bordering Highway 116. If these lots are rezoned B-1, care should be taken to create space between these areas and the surrounding R-1 properties.

3. This 4-acre lot, located northwest of the intersection of Walnut and Valley Streets, is currently farmed. The property, which is zoned R-1, is bounded on three sides by R-1 properties and by B-1 lots to the north.

**Recommendation:** Being located outside of the Highway 116 or downtown commercial districts, this property should most appropriately remain zoned residential. Any future development should incorporate green space to buffer the B-1 lots to the north.

4. The fourth area in the northeast quadrant of Lathrop is comprised of four lots, totaling 19 acres. This area is currently held by an estate, and is zoned R-1. These four lots are not developed, and are bounded completely by R-1 lots.

**Recommendation:** Area should remain zoned for residential uses.

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### Lathrop Open Space Analysis, Southeast Quadrant

The southeast quadrant of Lathrop lies south of Plattsburg Street and east of Center Street. This area has three properties not currently developed, representing approximately 100 acres of potentially developable space. These areas are detailed below.

1. A recently-added area of land in southeast Lathrop is this 68-acre lot, voluntarily annexed into the City of Lathrop in August 2005. The property, which is currently zoned A-1 agricultural, is bordered by the Lathrop Antique Show Grounds to the north (which does not lie within the city limits) and South Street (State Highway 33) to the west.

**Recommendation:** Property should be rezoned R-1 to correspond to the planned housing development for the space. A buffer zone/green space along the north of the property should be incorporated into any development plans to serve as a transition area between the new housing development and the fair grounds.

2. This 18-acre open, non-cultivated property is located in southeast Lathrop. Access to the lot is via South Street, which borders the property to the north. The lot is currently zoned R-1, and is bordered by R-1 lots on the north and west, and R-2 on the east.

**Recommendation:** Given that any ingress/egress route to the property will pass the Lathrop R-II school grounds, efforts should be made to keep additional traffic generation as a result of development to a minimum. As such, R-1/R-2 residential zones should be favored over M-1 manufacturing and B-1 commercial zones for this property.

3. This L-shaped, 14-acre lot is located along Center Street in southeast Lathrop. The property, which is zoned R-1, is adjacent to several different usage types, including Lathrop R-II school grounds and R-2 multiple family residential (senior citizen housing) to the north, single-family residential to the east, and B-1 commercial across Center Street to the west. Access to the lot is granted via Center Street (State Highway 33). The lot is currently non-cultivated, open land.

**Recommendation:** Being located in close proximity to both school grounds and senior citizen housing, careful consideration is required regarding future land use. Low-density, single family housing is likely the best use for this property, although R-2/B-1 classification is allowable with adequate buffer zones/green space. For noise and safety concerns, M-1 manufacturing should be avoided on this property.

Lathrop Open Space Analysis, Southwest Quadrant

The southwest quadrant of Lathrop lies south of Plattsburg Street and west of Center Street. This quadrant has one area not currently developed, representing approximately 2-acres of potentially developable space. This area is detailed below.

1. The only sizable land area in the southwest quadrant of Lathrop that is currently open with development potential is a set of eight small lots, bounded by Elm Street on the west and Ash Street on the east. The lots are currently zoned R-1 single family residential, and have access to municipal utility infrastructure.

**Recommendation:** With poor access to primary transportation corridors, this area should remain zoned R-1.

### Future Growth and Annexation

As illustrated in the preceding pages, Lathrop has a moderate amount of space potentially available for future development. Two important caveats, however, must be mentioned when addressing these developable areas:

**1) Open space does not necessarily equate to available space.**

The properties listed in the previous subsection, though not currently developed, are owned by a variety of landowners, who may or may not be willing to sell and/or develop their land. Further, many of the largest lots recently annexed by the city already have development plans in place, including new residential subdivisions and the new Lathrop R-II High School.

**2) Given the projected growth patterns of Lathrop for the next 10 years, current open space will not be adequate to meet future development needs.**

Simply put, the amount of open, developable lots in Lathrop is finite, and future development demands will likely outpace its availability in the near future.

Considering these two precepts, it becomes apparent that to facilitate the future growth and development of Lathrop the city must begin to plan for the orderly and manageable expansion of its borders. The method of doing so in Missouri is annexation.

Realizing the importance of annexation, the community development committee for the Lathrop Comprehensive City Plan identified the creation of an annexation plan as one of the goals vital to city growth (see Section 2a: Community Development for more information). To facilitate the planned, orderly expansion of Lathrop's corporate limits, the committee suggested devising a multi-phase annexation plan. The plan, which would be developed in partnership between an annexation task force (ATF), the Board of Aldermen, and the Planning and Zoning Board, would examine potential annexation areas near Lathrop. Land acquisition alone, however, should not be the end result of an annexation study. In addition to annexing the most appropriate parcels of land, the planning process should consider the ability of the city to serve newly annexed areas with vital municipal services, including water and sewer provision, streets, sidewalks, street lights, and fire, police, and emergency medical services.

The first step in developing an annexation plan is to determine what areas close to the community would best suit the growth and development needs of the city. To facilitate this, an annexation study area should be designated by the ATF. Considering that any annexation plan will need to be multi-phased to serve both long- and short-term development goals of the city, the study area should also be multi-phased. One potential annexation study area methodology would be to examine the parcels within 1- and 3-mile radii of the city (see Appendix B, Map 7 for the Annexation Study Area map). By designating these two sub-study areas, the ATF can examine and catalog parcels that will have the largest potential impact on the city in the near term, while planning for long-term community growth.

Of course, not every parcel within the study area is suitable or desirable for annexation. As such, an important role of the ATF will be to inventory the parcels around the city. By creating a fully populated inventory, annexation decisions (particularly with regard to voluntary/involuntary) will be made with more complete information. Recommended information to be collected for each parcel in the inventory includes:

**All parcels in the study area**

- Owner
- Acreage
- Current development (structures or other improvements)
- Access to transportation routes

**Parcels within the 1-mile sub-area**

All the above information, in addition to:

- Current county zoning
- Infrastructure access on property
- Potential willingness to sell property
- Planned development/imminent changes in county zoning
- Interest in annexation into Lathrop

By gathering the above information, a potential annexation strategy will begin to come into focus for the city. Some factors, such as current or planned development, will automatically remove parcels from annexation consideration, thereby narrowing the annexation study area. Further, while the city is currently able to grow in any direction, the ATF or other city leaders may, based on development trends and the result of the inventory, choose to target a number parcels for possible future annexation.

General Annexation Recommendations

While specific annexation recommendations will be provided by the ATF and the Lathrop Annexation Plan, this comprehensive city plan offers the following broad recommendations for the geographic expansion of Lathrop.

**1. Recommendation: Expand toward Interstate 35, along State Highway 116**

The City of Lathrop has an enormous benefit in the nearby access to Interstate 35; in fact, that access is one of the primary economic drivers for the community's projected growth. However, to persons not familiar with the community, Lathrop is conceptually too far "from the beaten path" to attract visitors and their tourism dollars. To take full advantage of this resource, the city should methodically expand its borders towards the intersection of Interstate 35 and State Route 116.

**2. Recommendation: Work closely with Clinton County planning and zoning to ensure future annexation of desired parcels is feasible.**

It is important that the city has a good working relationship with Clinton County planning and zoning to ensure development of parcels within the study area correlate with the development goals of Lathrop. If possible, the city should be notified of county zoning changes / major developments within the annexation study area, and have input on any changes that do not align with Lathrop's future development plans.

**3. Recommendation: Municipal infrastructure build-outs on parcels adjacent to the existing corporate limits should allow for expandability, ensuring future annexed areas can receive city utilities and services.**

This action will reduce one of the primary barriers to municipal annexation, thereby accelerating the annexation process and allowing the city to take advantage of time-sensitive economic development opportunities.