

CHAPTER TWELVE

LAND USE



Existing Land Use

The existing land use map shows how land use within Audubon County is currently being utilized. Land use does not necessarily reflect the current zoning designation or the desired future land use pattern. Land use categories in Audubon County include agriculture, residential, commercial, industrial, incorporated cities, and parks and open space.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Audubon County has an area of 443 square miles or 283,520 acres. The breakdown by land use category can be found in table 12.1 below. It is important to note that these numbers are approximate and classifications from the Audubon County Assessor were the determining factor.

Table 12.1: Land Use

Land Use	Approximate Acres
Agriculture	280,843
Residential	1,164
Commercial	515
Industrial	100
Parks and Open Space	898

Agriculture

Agriculture land use is the largest land use within Audubon County. Agricultural lands make up 90% of the county's total acreage. When looking towards the future, land that is dedicated towards agriculture is expected largely to remain agricultural. On a small scale, some land may be developed into residential or industrial properties, but the number of acres anticipated to be changed is modest.

Audubon County currently has several niche farming operations and these operations help diversify not only the agriculture economy, but the county's economy as a whole. Registered with Audubon County, there are eight beekeepers, ten organic crop operations including vegetables, one vineyard, and one evergreen tree farm (Christmas Trees).

Residential

Residential lands are the second largest land use within Audubon County. Residential lands include any land within the county, outside of city limits, that has a residential structure located on it. A large portion of this land classification comes from the communities of Hamlin and Ross with the remaining acres being residential properties throughout the county. Residential structures which are on the same property as farming operations are not classified as residential, instead they are included in the agriculture classification.

Parks and Open Space

Parks and open spaces make up the third largest land use within the county. Littlefield Recreation Area makes up approximately 44% of this land use classification. The remaining land in this classification is land dedicated to the T-Bone Trail, parks in Hamlin and Ross, and other smaller county-owned land parcels.

Commercial

Rural commercial lands make up the second smallest land classification within Audubon County. Companies including AMVC, Puck Enterprises, and LANDUS Cooperative own land and operate within this land use. These companies are located throughout the county.

Industrial

Industrial lands in rural Audubon County make up the smallest land use classification. Some of these industries are located along Highway 71 just south of the City of Audubon, and others are spread throughout the county.

GOALS

Utilize land use patterns to allow for niche farming within the county

Niche farming can include a variety of farming types from organic, to tree, to apiculture and everything in between. Allowing for these establishments to locate within the county creates an environment which encourages residents to pursue entrepreneurial desires.

- Action Items:**
- When examining current land use for future land use changes, recognize niche farming operations and ensure that future land use patterns will not be a detriment to their operations
 - Ensure land use patterns allow for the creation of additional niche farming operations