

Chapter 3 Land Use



Avon's character is defined by its geographic setting and how land is used within the Town. Land use is largely dependent on the various forms of land use controls which have been in effect since 1957, as well as the historic development of the Town prior to the adoption of these Regulations. In order to make decisions about how land should be used in the future, it is first necessary to conduct an inventory of existing land use. A land use analysis was performed by consultants (Fuss & O'Neill) utilizing computer technology known as Geographic Information System (GIS). The Tax

Assessor's records were utilized. These records assign a unique identification number to each parcel of land in Avon along with a land use code. GIS software can link this attribute (land use) with mapped data (the Town's parcel-based map). Land uses were categorized by residential, business, industrial, open space, agricultural, institutional, utilities, roads and vacant land. This information is presented in **Table 3.1**, along with a comparison to land use inventories which were conducted in the preparation of previous Plans. **Charts 3.1-3.4** are pie charts which graphically depict land use in the years 1979, 1989, and 2004.

Chart 3.1 Land Use 1968

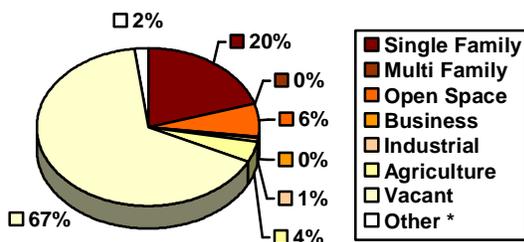


Chart 3.2 Land Use 1979

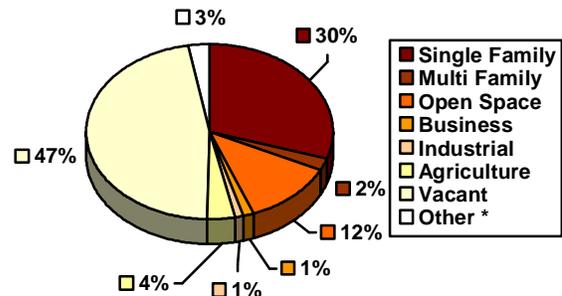


Chart 3.3 Land Use 1989

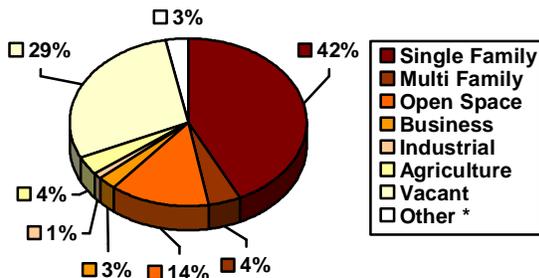
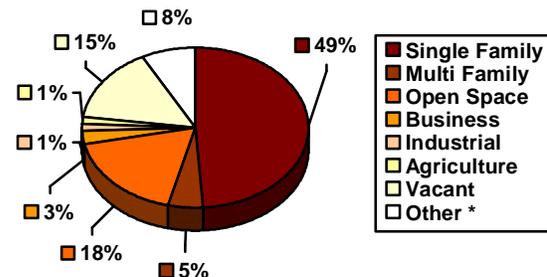


Chart 3.4 Land Use 2004



Other * (Churches, Cemeteries, Schools, Utility, and Nursing Homes)

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**Table 3.1 Land Use in Avon
1968-2004**

Land Use	1968		1979		1989		2004	
	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%
Single-Family	2,927	20.3%	4,353	30.1%	6,167	42.7%	7,063	48.9%
Multi-Family	16	0.1%	321	2.2%	650	4.5%	710	4.9%
Total Open Space	936	6.5%	1,729	12.0%	1,965	13.6%	2,504	18.0%
Business	45	0.3%	177	1.2%	366	2.5%	399	2.8%
Industrial	140	1.0%	156	1.1%	191	1.3%	191	1.4%
Agriculture	575	4.0%	517	3.6%	527	3.6%	210	1.4%
Churches/Cemeteries	102	0.7%	102	0.7%	133	0.9%	135	0.9%
Schools, Public & Private	114	0.8%	131	0.9%	131	0.9%	323	5.7%
Utility	34	0.2%	140	1.0%	171	1.2%	138	0.9%
Nursing Homes/Assisted Living	12	0.1%	12	0.1%	12	0.2%	29	0.2%
Vacant	8,553	66.0%	6,816	47.1%	4,151	28.6%	2,152	14.9%
Total Acres	14,454	100.0%	14,454	100.0%	14,454	100.0%	14,454	100.0%

Source: Avon Planning Department, Avon Engineering Department, and Fuse & O'Neill

Residential

Residential uses were divided into two categories, single-family and multi-family. Single-family is defined as a detached dwelling for occupancy by one family. Multi-family is defined as attached dwelling units for occupancy by more than one family.

Residential land is the largest single user of land in Avon accounting for 7,063 acres or 48.9% of the total land area. The Town presently has just over 7,000 residential dwelling units which results in an overall density of 1 unit per acre.

Business

Business uses are defined as retail stores, services, restaurants, automotive uses, financial institutions, funeral homes and offices. Business use occupies 399 acres or 2.8% of the land area of Avon.

Industry

Industrial uses are those devoted to manufacturing, assembly, storage, processing, extraction, etc. These uses account for 191 acres or 1.4% of the land area in Avon.

Agricultural

Agricultural uses are those devoted to the commercial production of crops, nursery stock and the raising of livestock. Today it accounts for 210 acres of land or 1.4 % of the total land area. In 2002, the Town purchased the 317 acre Fisher Farm on Tillotson Road. A partial reimbursement from the State requires that all of this land with the exception of 20 acres be subject to a permanent conservation easement. For purposes of **Table 3.1**, this land has been categorized as open space. At the present time, the Town leases the property for 1 dollar per year to a farmer. For purposes of this report,

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this land was categorized as open space. It should be noted that this gives the appearance of a significant decrease in agricultural land, which is not the case.



Fisher Farm

Churches and Cemeteries

Churches and cemeteries occupy about 135 acres, or 0.9% of the land uses.

Government

This category includes all state and municipal land uses. A total of 164 acres or 1.1% of the land is used for these purposes.

Open Space

Open space includes Town-owned, passive recreation areas; town parks; State-owned parks and forests; the Governor’s Horse Guard land on West Avon Road; privately held recreation and open space land such as golf courses, and swim and tennis clubs; and quasi-public land such as that owned by the Avon Land Trust.

Open space accounts for 2,604 acres or 18 % of the total land area. Open space has increased by 639 acres over the past 15 years. Acquisitions have taken place through direct purchase by the Town; as part of open space contributions through the subdivision approval process; or through donations. The largest recent acquisition has been the Fisher Family Farm on Tillotson Road (317 acres). In addition to the 2,604 acres listed above, the Avon Land Trust maintains a permanent conservation easement over an additional 70 acres. Through the review of various development applications by the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission over the past 20 years, an additional 229 acres have been protected by requiring permanent conservation restrictions. This land is in private ownership but is permanently protected.



Fields at Fisher Farms

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Utilities

Utilities include substations, gas and power transmission lines, telecommunications towers, and telephone switching offices. This category accounts for 138 acres or 0.9 % of the land in Avon.

Schools, Public and Private

Public and private schools account for 773 acres of land in Avon. Several new public schools have been built in Avon since the last Plan of Development. Avon Old Farms School, a private school has over 600 acres within its entire campus. This is one of the largest parcels of land in Avon. The school campus utilizes only a relatively small portion of its land holdings, the remainder of which could theoretically be developed in the future. For purposes of **Table 3.1**, this land, including the forested portions, has been categorized as school.

Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities

There has been an increase in the amount of land devoted to these uses since 1989. These uses account for 29 acres, or 0.2 % of all land area. This represents an increase of 17 acres since 1989.



Brightview Convalescent Home

Vacant Land

Vacant land is all land not placed in one of the preceding categories. There is a total of 2,152 acres of vacant land. This accounts for 14.9 % of the total land area of Avon, representing a decrease of 1,999 acres since 1989. Of the 1,999 acres, about 1,500 acres have been developed into residential and other uses. The remaining 400 acre change is due to the way in which the Avon Old Farms School has been categorized and the purchase by the Town of the 317 acre Fisher Farm and the way in which this has been classified.