

FREEDOM TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

PREPARED BY THE
FREEDOM TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION

The Township Planning Commission originally adopted this Master Plan in 2009. In 2014, the Planning Commission determined that updates were needed for several existing elements of the plan.

REVISED DRAFT DATE: April 27, 2015

2014 – 2015 UPDATE MILESTONES:

Planning Commission Public Hearing.....

Adopted by the Planning Commission.....

Final Approval by the Township Board.....

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Dale Weidmayer, Supervisor

Valisa Bristle, Clerk

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INSERT
RESOLUTION FOR ADOPTION OF THE
FREEDOM TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN 2015

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The character of the rural township is changing rapidly throughout southeast Michigan. Greater mobility has created developmental pressures in areas which previously were primarily held in agricultural or vacant land uses. Places long enjoyed by only a few have now taken on new dimensions. Physical amenities such as water bodies, rolling countryside, and major wooded areas have recreational potential never before realized, and are also becoming prime centers for residential development where recreation and home life may be combined.

With these and other trends in mind, Freedom Township has undertaken a planning process to prepare for these developmental pressures and, in turn, plan for that development in a manner that would most equitably benefit their community.

AUTHORITY TO PLAN UNDER STATE STATUTES

Michigan Planning Enabling Act

On March 13, 2008, the Governor signed into law Public Act 33, which is the new Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA). This Act replaced the former Township Planning Act (as well as the municipal and county planning acts) and became effective September 1, 2008. The new MPEA consolidated and updated planning provisions from all three existing Michigan planning enabling acts.

Michigan Zoning Enabling Act

In addition to serving as the Master Plan for the Township, this is also intended to be the plan referred to in the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (Public Act 110 of 2006, as amended) as the basis for and foundation of the Freedom Township Zoning Ordinance. The required zoning plan elements are found in the “Zoning Plan” chapter of the Master Plan, and the following separate special plan elements and sub-area plans are also part of this plan:

- Pleasant Lake Area Plan
- Extraction Area Plan

WHY HAVE A MASTER PLAN FOR THE TOWNSHIP?

The Master Plan is a comprehensive long-range statement of policy for future growth and preservation of natural resources. It considers those elements necessary to promote public health, safety, and general welfare, and encourages the use of resources in accordance with their character and adaptability. This plan is intended to direct development in a coordinated and harmonious manner and related to current and future needs and desires of the Township. The plan is long-range and comprehensive in scope, firm in concept, yet flexible and adaptive to changing conditions.

Planning Act Requirements

Per Section 7 of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, the purpose of the Master Plan is to guide decision-making of the Planning Commission and Township Board related to land use, community development, and capital improvement projects, and to help create a land use pattern that:

- Is coordinated, adjusted, harmonious, efficient, and economical.
- Considers the character of the Township and its suitability for particular uses in light of past and current trends and activities, in order to:
 - Preserve the agricultural character, natural resources, and sensitive lands of Freedom Township;
 - Limit unwarranted use of Freedom Township's natural resources; and
 - Avoid overcrowding of land.
- Will, in accordance with present and future needs, best promote public health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare.
- Includes, among other things, promotion of one or more of the following elements:
 - System of transportation to lessen congestion on public roads;
 - Safety from fire and other dangers;
 - Light, air, and recreation opportunities;
 - Healthful and convenient distribution of population;
 - Good civic design, and wise and efficient expenditure of public funds; and
 - The use of resources in accordance with their character and adaptability.

Consistent with the state act, this plan is intended to be a comprehensive document, long-range in its view, and intended to guide development in the Township over the next ten to twenty years. The plan identifies the Township's desired goals and objectives, and establishes specific public policy recommendations regarding land use and future growth. The information and concepts presented in the Master Plan are intended to guide local decisions on both public and private uses of land, as well as the provision of public facilities.

Relationship Between the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance

The Master Plan should be distinguished from the Township Zoning Ordinance and Official Zoning Map. The Plan represents the Township's long-range policy (10 to 20 years) regarding future growth, whereas the Zoning Ordinance and Map are legal documents that utilize property lines to depict short-range (1 to 5 years) legal designations of land use. The Plan should serve as a foundation upon which zoning decisions are made and provide major input to the decision-making process regarding future development proposals.

It is not the intent of this plan to entitle a property owner to a zoning change consistent with a future land use designation in this plan, especially where the infrastructure or public services necessary for such development are not present. Such decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis at the time the question arises, and within the context of this plan, applicable zoning ordinance provisions, and other applicable regulations (see Chapter 13, Zoning Plan).

Relationship to Past Plans and Changing Conditions

This Master Plan builds on the foundations of previous Township plans, including the “growth management plan” adopted in 2002, and the most recent master plan adopted in 2009. Much of the 2009 Plan remains pertinent today, and has been retained.

The Planning Commission recognizes that the future remains uncertain, and that current perceptions of future conditions will change. The major issues of concern raised in this plan may also change over time, requiring strategies and policies appropriate to respond to them to be modified or replaced. The Commission intends to review this plan regularly, and to refine, add to or otherwise modify the Master Plan as necessary to meet changing conditions in the future.

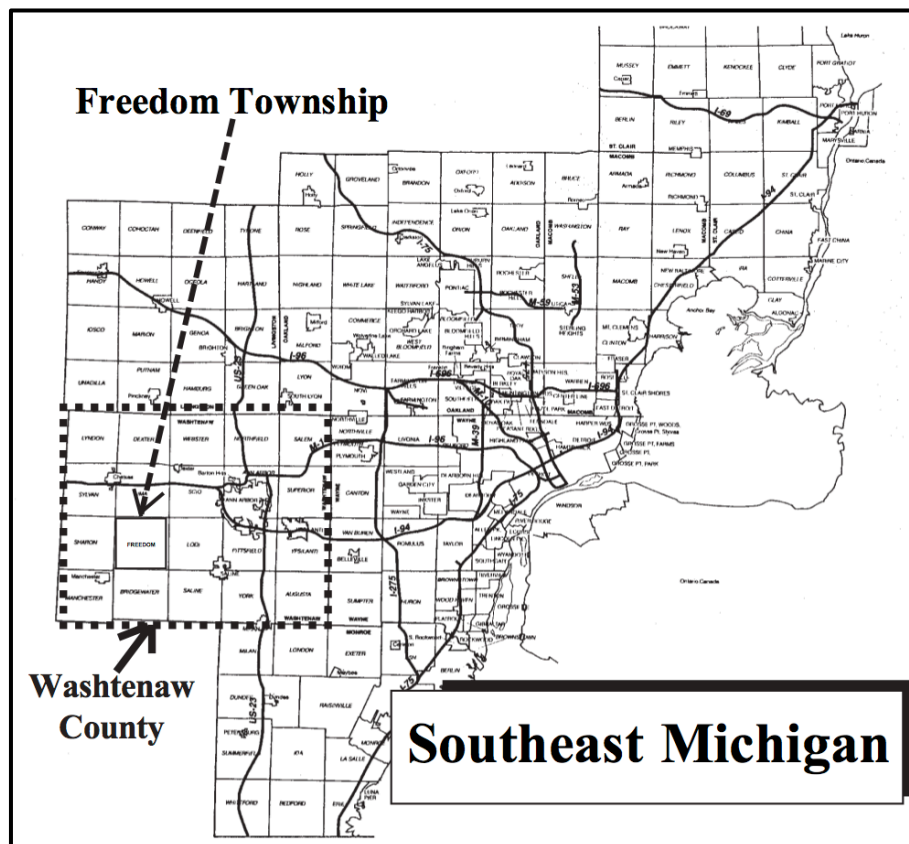
PLANNING AREA

Township Setting

Freedom Township is 35.5 square miles in area, and is located in the southwest quadrant of Washtenaw County approximately eight miles southwest of the City of Ann Arbor. The Township boundaries are only two miles from the Village of Manchester and five miles from the Village of Chelsea. (see Map 1). Freedom Township shares boundaries with eight other jurisdictions in Washtenaw County, and pledges to coordinate with and cooperate with neighboring jurisdictions and other outside agencies with jurisdiction in the preparation and updating of this Master Plan, and in the review and comment on draft plans of other jurisdictions.

Map 1 – Location of Freedom Township and Adjacent Communities

Note: Map is representative and not to scale



Regional Influence

In recent years Washtenaw County has experienced considerable growth, particularly in the Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti urbanized area. This growth has not been totally dependent upon the effect of the outward growth of the Detroit Metropolitan area; however future expansion of this large metropolitan area is expected to have an increasingly significant impact on growth trends in the County in years to come. While the growth pressure Freedom Township will experience will be significant from the Township's perspective, it is not expected to be of a significant nature in terms of population or developed area. Access to the Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti urbanized area is limited due to lack of direct access to I-94 which is located approximately three (3) miles to the north of Freedom Township.

Freedom Township is uniquely situated within the productive agricultural belt of Washtenaw County. At least two thirds of Freedom Township lands were identified in previous plans as being agriculturally active. These areas remain vital to the open space rural character long established in this area of the County. Agriculture in Washtenaw County produces a vast diversity of crops, and live- stock including, but not limited to corn, soybeans, hay, straw, fruits, and other vegetables; as well as hogs, dairy and beef cattle, sheep, equestrian activities. The Township's relative location to the regional transportation network, giving arterial access to the Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti urban area, and rural character, are significant locational attributes of the Township, which will make it increasingly attractive for residential development. Also the Township's pertinent location to the City of Chelsea and Manchester Village is advantageous for residents living within the Township. This attraction must not be at the expense of the agricultural, rural character established within the community.

TOWNSHIP CHARACTER

A unique rural character is seen throughout Freedom Township. This character is made up by stable agricultural enterprises, significant natural resource areas consisting of woodlands and wetlands, and rolling topography with notable topographic features. This uniqueness has predominated over the years with little adjacent urban influence from urban areas within the region. Some of the Township's attributes, however, may begin to serve as catalysts for accelerated growth. The close proximity to urban centers, quick access to regional transportation systems, the desirability of the rural lifestyle, and unique physical characteristics found within Freedom Township are becoming increasingly desired by homeowners.

Public Perceptions of the Township

Through meetings and discussions with Township residents in the compilation of this and previous master plans, public comments received by the Township have consistently focused on desirable Township attributes such as:

- High quality farms throughout the Township.
- Rural atmosphere, peace and quiet.
- Presence of natural resources including forests, marsh lands, and wildlife.
- Roads not stripped with houses.
- Availability of various types of sports including hunting, fishing, bike riding, skiing, and hiking.

EXISTING LAND USES AND LAND COVER

The evaluation of a community's physical characteristics and land use patterns, including natural resources, land cover patterns, and percentage of active agricultural lands, forms the foundation upon which this land use planning program is based. Recognizing the unique physical features of the community and the roles they play in the environment and land use patterns is the first step in formulating land use and development policies by which significant natural resources can be protected and enhanced. When these resources are left unprotected, misuse or total destruction can take place. Once destroyed, many of these resources can never be replaced.

Tables 1 and 2 below provide some additional details about existing land uses and land cover:

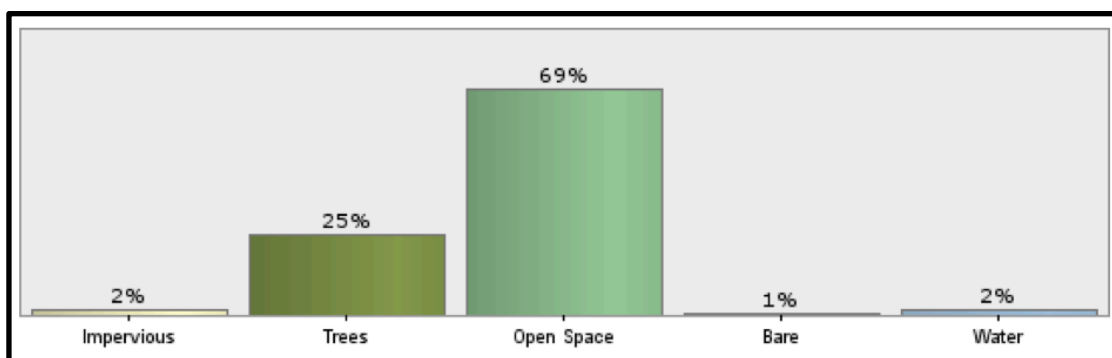
Table 1 – Percent of Total Land Use, 2008

Land Use Category	Total Area (acres)	Percentage of Total Land Area (%)
Agricultural	14,972	65.3%
Single Family Residential	4,987	21.7%
Multiple Family Residential	3	< 1%
Commercial	19	< 1%
Industrial	1,579	6.9%
Public & Quasi Public	139	< 1%
Parks, Recreation, and Open Space	657	2.9%
Transportation, Communication, and Utility	319	1.4%
Water	266	1.2%
TOTAL	22,941	100%

Source: Southeastern Michigan Council of Governments

The rural character of the Township is particularly evident in Figure 1 below, which depicts the results of an analysis of 2010 “off-leaf” aerial photography. Approximately 2% of the Township's land is covered by structures, roads, and other impervious surfaces, as compared to 37% in the City of Ann Arbor and 18% in the Village of Manchester.

Figure 1 – Land Cover (2010)



Source: Southeastern Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG).

Table 2 – Land Cover, 2010

Land Use Category		Total Area (acres)	Percentage of Total Land Area (%)
Impervious	(structures, roads, driveways, parking lots)	455	2.0%
Trees	(woody vegetation, trees)	5,768	25.3%
Open Space	(agricultural fields, grasslands, turfgrass)	15,802	69.4%
Bare	(soil, aggregate piles, unplanted fields)	257	1.1%
Water	(rivers, lakes, drains, ponds)	491	2.2%
TOTAL		22,773	100%

Source: Southeastern Michigan Council of Governments

HISTORY OF FREEDOM TOWNSHIP

Township History

The following is excerpted with permission from pages 55-57 of Manchester's First Hundred Years (1867-1967), by Marie A. Schneider:

In June 1831, the first settler, James W. Hill, located in a part of section 29 and later purchased land in section 32, owned by John M. Allen. ... By 1834-'7 the tide of immigration flowed along the valley of the Washtenong until by the close of 1837 every (homestead) acre was claimed.

James W. Hill...established the first school in his own house. He was the first district school teacher. A Dr. Porter traveled to the township as early as 1831.

Miss Angeline Rouse was married in 1833. The second wedding was that of Eldred Spencer and Miss Emeline Adams in December, 1834.

When the first election was held there were 38 votes cast. At the meeting to organize the town, a dispute arose as to the name; finally they agreed to compromise. Someone thought that a good deal of FREEDOM should be exercised. At that Samuel S. Peckens said that he thought that was the best name proposed. It was adopted.

H.M. Griffin was the first supervisor, and Roswell Preston was appointed a Justice of the Peace, March 8, 1834, by Gov. Porter.

B.F. Burnett, a Methodist, held the first religious meeting at the home of James W. Wills. But Arunah Bennett was the first ordained preacher to hold services.

James W. Hill built the first log house, raised the first barn, and planted the first wheat in the county in 1831. Richard Preston raised the second barn, without the aid of whiskey, according to the Washtenaw County History.

Americans settled the township, but German immigrants came in and by 1881 it was a German community.

German pioneers are remembered in the names of all but five of the roads in the township.

History of Cemeteries

The following is excerpted with permission from pages 113-114 of The Early Days: Celebrating our 175th Anniversary, a history of Freedom Township edited by Raymond M. Berg:

Freedom Township has several historic cemeteries, both those still actively associated with a host church and those maintained by the township or private parties. In addition, there are a host of unmarked pioneer graveyards on private land, which can often be determined by title searches, which reveal surveyed, set-aside areas as graveyards.

The Freedom Township History Archives has several cemetery listings available for review. These cemetery listings are also available through organizations such as Genealogical Society of Washtenaw County website and library in Saline, or directly from the host church.

We provide a listing of the known cemeteries within the township:

1. **The Bethel Church Cemetery.** It is situated in the churchyard of the Bethel Church of Christ, at the southeast corner of the intersection of Bethel Church and Schneider Roads, in the northwest corner of Section 35. The address of the church is 10425 Bethel Church Road.
2. **The Fletcher Road Cemetery.** This is a small overgrown cemetery on the west side of Fletcher Road in the northeast quarter of Section 17. It is 1.3 miles south of Waters Road.
3. **The Freedom Evangelical or Koebbe Cemetery.** Association owned. It is situated in Section 9 at the intersection of Lima Center and Ellsworth Roads. It is a well kept cemetery, which was established in 1847.
4. **The Rogers Corners Cemetery.** It is situated at the northwest corner of Fletcher and Waters Roads, in the southeast quarter of Section 5. It is in the churchyard of the original Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church. An addition to the original cemetery lies 0.4 mile west on the north side of Waters Road.
5. **The Mt. Hope or St. John's Cemetery.** Association owned. It is situated on the north side of Ellsworth Road one-half mile east of Fletcher Road, in the south half of Section 9.
6. **Original Catholic Cemetery (original St. Francis, or Freedom Catholic).** This is a small cemetery on the west side of Schneider Road, 0.2 mile south of Pleasant Lake Road, at the southwest corner of Schneider and Hieber Roads, in the southeast quarter of Section 22.
7. **St. Francis de Borgia Cemetery.** It is situated on Bethel Church Road at the intersection of Koebbe Road. It is in the north half of Section 34.

8. **The St. Thomas Lutheran Cemetery.** It is situated in the churchyard of the St. Thomas Lutheran Church, at the intersection of Haab and Ellsworth Roads, in Section 11.
9. **Waters Road Cemetery.** This is a small cemetery on the south side of Waters Road in Section 10. It is about 1.5 miles east of Fletcher Road. It is sometimes called “the cemetery of the unchurched.”

History of Churches

The following is excerpted with permission from pages 55-57 of Manchester’s First Hundred Years (1867-1967), by Marie A. Schneider:

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Freedom was organized in 1842 with the Rev. Mr. Friedrich Schmid as pastor. The church was built in 1881 and 106 were listed as parishioners. Two other Lutheran churches were in the township in 1881 according to the Washtenaw County History.

The Methodist Episcopal Church (in 1881) had Rev. Edward Weiss as the pastor and the congregation “was large” (no figure given).

A cross and cornerstone in the Catholic cemetery at Bethel Church and Koebbe Roads mark the site of Washtenaw County’s second Catholic church (*St. Francis de Borgia Catholic Church*), which was dedicated in 1858...with a congregation of 200. The rectory of brick (which still stands) was built in 1873 at a cost of \$2,000. The church building was razed in 1933.

There are four “country churches” in Freedom Township today. They are:

1. **Bethel United Church of Christ.** 10425 Bethel Church Road, west of Schneider Road. The original frame church was built and dedicated in 1857. The current stone building was dedicated on December 19, 1909 after 16 months of construction.
2. **St. John's United Church of Christ.** 12376 Waters Road, west of S. Fletcher Road. The organizing constitution of the “*Evangelische St. Johannes Gemeinde of Freedom Township*” was approved in 1891, and a 30-foot by 46-foot church building was dedicated in November, 1892.
3. **St. Thomas Lutheran Church.** 10001 Ellsworth Road, at the intersection of Haab and Ellsworth Roads. The original log church at this location was built at some point prior to 1844. The main portion of the current church building was constructed in 1873, with later additions to the front and rear.
4. **Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church.** 3050 Fletcher Road, at the intersection with Waters Road. The historic brick church building (1867) is located on the north side of Waters Road, along with a more modern church facility on the south side of the road.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population History and Projections

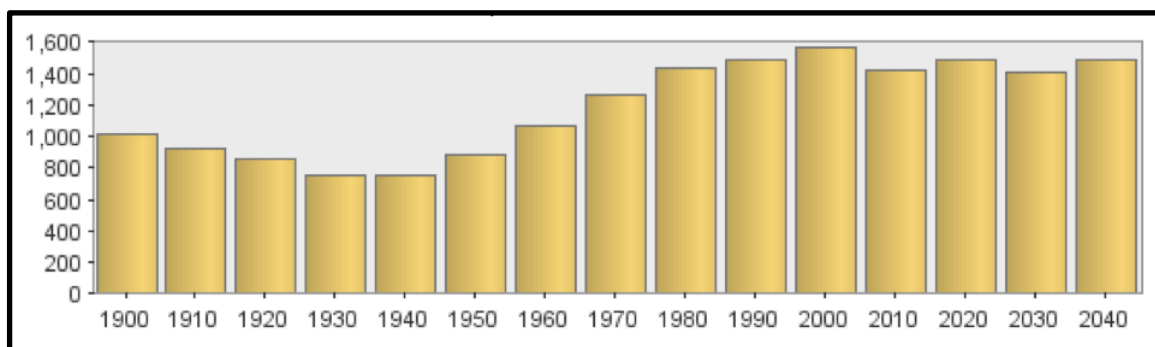
From the turn of the 20th century until World War Two, Freedom Township experienced a gradual population decline (see Figure 2 below). This reflects the general pattern experienced by many rural communities in the United States during these decades, as more people moved from rural into more urban areas. The post-World War Two baby boom in the U.S. is also reflected in Figure 2, as the number of residents increased from a modern low of 753 in 1940 to a peak of 1,562 in 2000. Between 1940 and 1980, the Township experienced double-digit percentage increases in population, with the highest percentage increases coming between 1950 and 1970.

However, from the population peak at the turn of the 21st century, the Township has experienced a generally flat to slightly declining population trend, which is projected to continue over the next several decades. This reflects two significant national trends currently impacting communities across the United States: an aging population and a declining birth rate (see Figure 3). These trends will affect local land use and community facility planning for many years to come.

Table 3 – Population History and Projections (1900 -2040)

1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030	2040
1,013	924	859	758	753	890	1,065	1,267	1,436	1,486	1,562	1,428	1,482	1,412	1,482

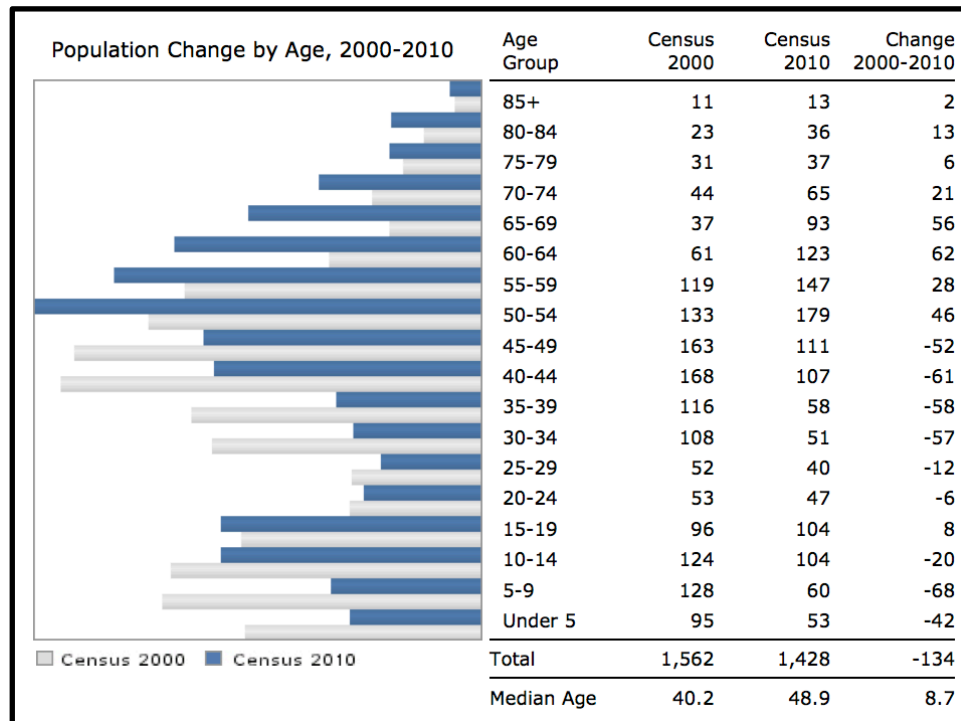
Figure 2 – Population Projections (1900 – 2040)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Southeastern Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG).

Age Distribution and Trends

The population of Freedom Township is aging, reflecting national trends of Americans living longer and the “Baby Boomer” generation moving into their retirement years. Overall, the population of adults 65 years and older increased 67% between 2000 and 2010, raising the median age of the Township’s population from 40.2 in 2000 to 48.9 in 2010. During this same period, the population of young adults and families in their child-bearing years in the Township suffered a more than 40% decline, and the population of school-age children also declined by nearly 30%. In demographic terms, the changes reflected in Figure 3 below are fairly dramatic shifts for a ten-year period.

Figure 3 – Population Change by Age (2000 – 2010)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Southeastern Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG).

Education

The people of Freedom Township are well educated. Based on the 2010 Census, 38% of Township residents 25 years or older have a bachelor's degree or higher, and another 36% have a two-year college degree or have attended "some college." Less than 3% of those in this age group reported not graduating from high school.

Household Characteristics

The average household in Freedom Township consisted on 2.42 persons, according to the 2010 United States Census. This is similar to numbers reported for the county and state. 52% of households consisted of a couple without children under 18 years old in the home, according to the 2010 Census. Another 27.0% of households consisted of couples with children in the home. 21% of Township households were reported as one-person living alone.

Median Household Income

From 2000 to 2010, the median household income in Freedom Township declined slightly, while the overall county's median household income rose 14.9% (see Table 4 below).

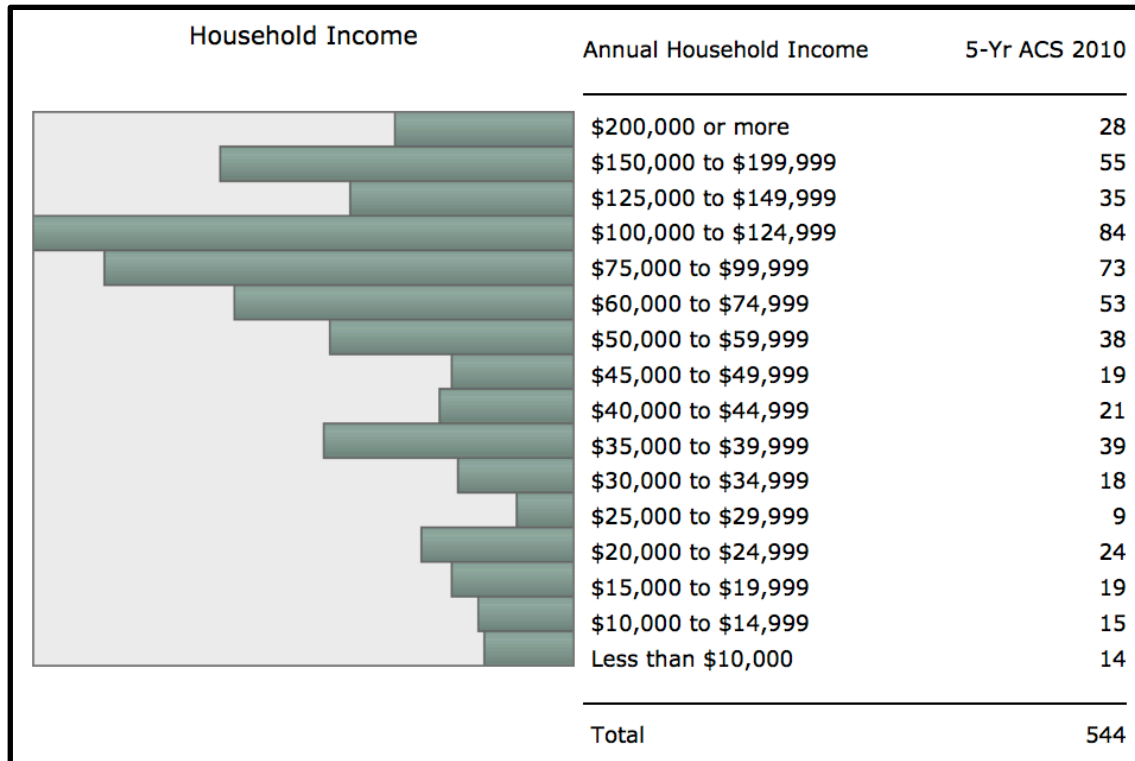
Table 4 – Median Household Income (2000 – 2010)

Jurisdiction	2000	2010	Total Change 2000-2010	Percent Change
State of Michigan	\$44,667	\$48,669	\$4,002	8.9%
Washtenaw County	\$51,990	\$59,737	\$7,747	14.9%
Freedom Township	\$81,569	\$78,750	- \$2,819	- 3.5%

Sources: 2000 United States Census and 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

7.7% of Township households lived below the federal poverty level in 2010, which represents a slight increase over the 2000 Census figure (see Figure 4 below).

Figure 4 – Household Income Distribution (2010)



Source: Southeastern Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG).

FREEDOM TOWNSHIP'S FUTURE

The history of Freedom Township helps us to understand where we are and how we got here. We can use our knowledge of the Township's past to help determine what characteristics we would like to protect and enhance, and to help evaluate the probability of success in doing so. In addition, we can, with some degree of confidence, state the following conclusions regarding our future prospects:

- Decisions made in Lansing and Ann Arbor, as well as in adjacent communities, will continue to have an impact on Freedom Township. This emphasizes the need for inter-jurisdictional cooperation.
- Freedom Township is fortunate to have many outstanding natural features that enhance our community and can continue to do so with proper protective measures and planning.
- Development activity in the region may put pressure on farmers to sell land for rural residential development.
- An aging population of farmers may cause locally-owned family farms to transition into a corporate farming model as agricultural land is consolidated into large corporate land holdings ultimately managed by outside entities that are less reliant on agricultural

support services in the local area.

- However, agriculturally productive soils and large undivided landholdings in the Township, along with access to nearby agricultural support services, ensure that commercial agriculture and its associated rural economy will remain an important part of the community.

CHAPTER 2

GENERAL GOALS AND PLAN ELEMENTS

This chapter presents the overall planning concept and general goals that have been developed to provide a strong and coherent direction for the future of Freedom Township. Goals are typically general statements about the quality and character of the community, which form the basis for measurable land use and development-related policy recommendations that can be prioritized and implemented by Township officials. The goals and policy recommendations contained in this plan reflect a balance between the public purposes inherent in planning for the long-term future of the Township with the rights of private property owners to develop an appropriate use of their land, and are intended over time to result in a specific quality and character for the community.

PRINCIPAL FEATURES OF THE PLAN

The Master Plan is a strategy/policy type plan that describes the Planning Commission's strategies, and policy statements regarding future growth, development, and the preservation of natural resources within the Township. The strategies are aimed at the fundamental (strategic) issues, which the Planning Commission expects the Township to face during the foreseeable future. These basic issues are those which will have enduring effects on the Township, and which will influence the physical, social, or economic character of the Township in the years ahead. The plan is focused upon a limited number of issues so as to concentrate the Township's attention and efforts on those issues, which can truly make a difference in the Township's future.

Since the plan concentrates on strategies and policies it is general in nature. That is, the plan shows how the Planning Commission will respond to various issues and the approaches that will be followed. On the other hand, the plan does not prescribe or predict uses of specific parcels of land; it describes the intended use of general areas. The plan does not provide a picture or a blueprint of the Township 20 years hence and should not be interpreted in this fashion. Similarly, the plan does not state that a certain action will be taken at a future time. To give the plan either of these two characteristics would require that the Planning Commission make decisions today concerning future events, something which is impossible to do successfully and, if attempted, gives a plan an unworkable rigidity.

The plan provides guidelines for the Planning Commission and Township Board to make decisions or recommendations for individual parcels of land, specific public improvements, and similar questions that might arise at various times in the future. For example, the plan will provide the framework for Planning Commission recommendations on rezoning petitions and subdivision plats to the Township Board and for Planning Commission decisions on site plans. It is not the intent of the plan that the designation of any area for a specific use entitles a property owner within that area to an immediate zoning change consistent with the use designation. Neither does it mean that certain supporting uses are not to be permitted in any particular area. In both cases, the decision will be made on a case-by-case basis at the time the question arises and within the context of the plan. The plan will be amended if the analysis involved in the decision indicates that a change is appropriate.

The plan is an overall guide for decisions, and is based on the fact that the future is uncertain and cannot be predicted; that current perceptions of future conditions will change. The major issues will change over time, and strategies and policies appropriate to respond to them will have to be modified or replaced with new ones. As such, the Planning Commission intends to periodically refine, add to, or otherwise modify the plan as events unfold. Refinement may be in the form of restating, deleting, or adding to the issues, strategies, goals, or policies set forth in this plan. It may also be in the form of detailed policies for specific areas of the Township. These changes might result from analysis of a specific development proposal (such as a rezoning petition), a capital improvement proposal by the Township or other government, a periodic review of the plan by the Planning Commission, or from a detailed study of a part of the Township by the Planning Commission. This approach can be viewed as a series of successive attempts to adapt the plan as well as the planning process to changing conditions.

OVERALL CONCEPT

Even though Freedom Township is primarily rural, it has a community focus point around Pleasant Lake. In addition to considerable residential development, this area also has local commercial uses and public uses such as the Township Hall. The concept behind the preparation of the Freedom Township Master Plan is to emphasize this area and center controlled growth within this area. The basic policy throughout the Master Plan is to discourage scattered growth from occurring elsewhere within the Township. In essence this plan creates a single neighborhood for the non-farm residents that also provides for local commercial and public uses required by other Township residents.

PLAN ELEMENTS

The Master Plan for Freedom Township contains five (5) land use classifications:

- Agricultural;
- Low-Density Residential;
- Commercial;
- Industrial; and
- Community Facilities.

The following sub-area plans are also included as separate elements:

- Pleasant Lake Area Plan
- Extraction Area Plan

Each element within the Master Plan is based upon a series of goals and policies for the physical development of the Township that relates to sound planning principles and strives towards the creation of a balanced and stable living environment.

Using the Master Plan as a statement of Township policy, development can take place in an organized and constructive fashion even though no rigid timetable has been established within which staging of such development should take place. Therefore, this plan establishes where and how such developmental activity should occur and the way in which they relate to one another.

GENERAL MASTER PLAN GOALS

The intent of a Master Plan is to insure that the community develops in a manner consistent with the desires of its residents, thus it is necessary to prepare a list of goals and policies that define the Township requisites. In addition to the general goals, specific policies are expressed in the Master Plan that are also discussed herein.

The following goals were used as a guide in the preparation of this Master Plan:

1. Protect and promote the health, safety, comfort, convenience and general welfare of the general public.
2. Create an environment, which maintains a more meaningful life, protects the interests of the individual and the total community.
3. Maintain the rural, natural, and scenic qualities of the Township by preserving farmland and significant open lands, promoting healthful surroundings for family life, while also providing for the needs of recreation, residence, commerce, and industry in future growth.
4. Establish guidelines for realistic and orderly development for those living and working in the Township, recognizing the character of the Township, the needs and desires of its citizens, the capabilities of its natural resources, and the anticipated pressures of its population growth and land development.
5. Provide a sound basis for public and private decision-making regarding the Township's development.
6. Plan for a transportation network, which provides safe, efficient and convenient movement of private and commercial traffic throughout the Township.
7. Encourage the efficient use of land and water resources in accordance with their character and ability, the preservation and enhancement of scenic and aesthetic features of the Township, and the prohibition of any developments that seriously contaminate, pollute or erode the natural resources of the Township.
8. Define a land use pattern which recognizes the compatibility between and balance among land use activities, anticipates the future demand and amount of land needed for each land use activity, identifies the most desirable location for each type of land use activity which permits efficient operations and future expansion, and enhances the environmental quality as well as the tax base of the community.

9. Identify an implementation plan that allows the day-to-day attainment of goals, through milestones or policy statements, that address the long-range strategies set forth by this plan.
10. Define a plan monitoring program, which insures the continual maintenance needed to ensure compliance with the long-range vision for the Township.

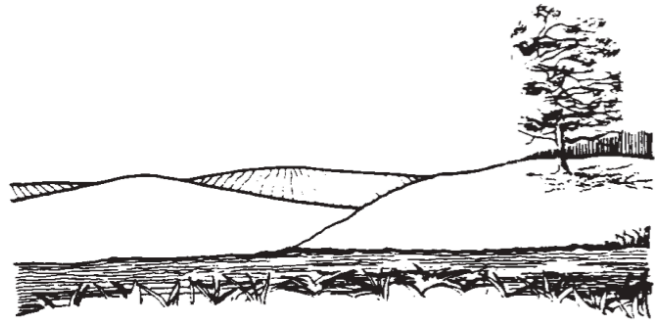
CHAPTER 3

PLAN FOR NATURAL RESOURCES

This chapter is intended to link the Township's overall goals with specific land use policy recommendations for the future protection and enhancement of the Township's natural resources.

GOAL

The preservation of existing natural features including wetlands, flood plains, woodlands, and topographic features; and the protection of the quality of surface and ground water for the enhancement of the quality of the natural environment.



BACKGROUND

Freedom Township is distinguished by varied natural features throughout the Township. From its woodlands, wetlands, and topographic features, it offers diversity that can be appreciated within the rural setting. Natural features such as lakes, wooded area, marshland and significant topographical features play an important role in determining the character of Freedom Township. As one of the major elements of the Master Plan, the recreation and open space system identifies and establishes the proper use of these areas and strengthens the total Plan concept.

The natural resources described in this plan as open space areas are intended only to illustrate the concept of the open space or natural resource systems in the Township. These areas are not intended to be specific for any one site. The actual extent, location, and relationship to existing and proposed development will be determined at the time of development review when detailed information will be available.

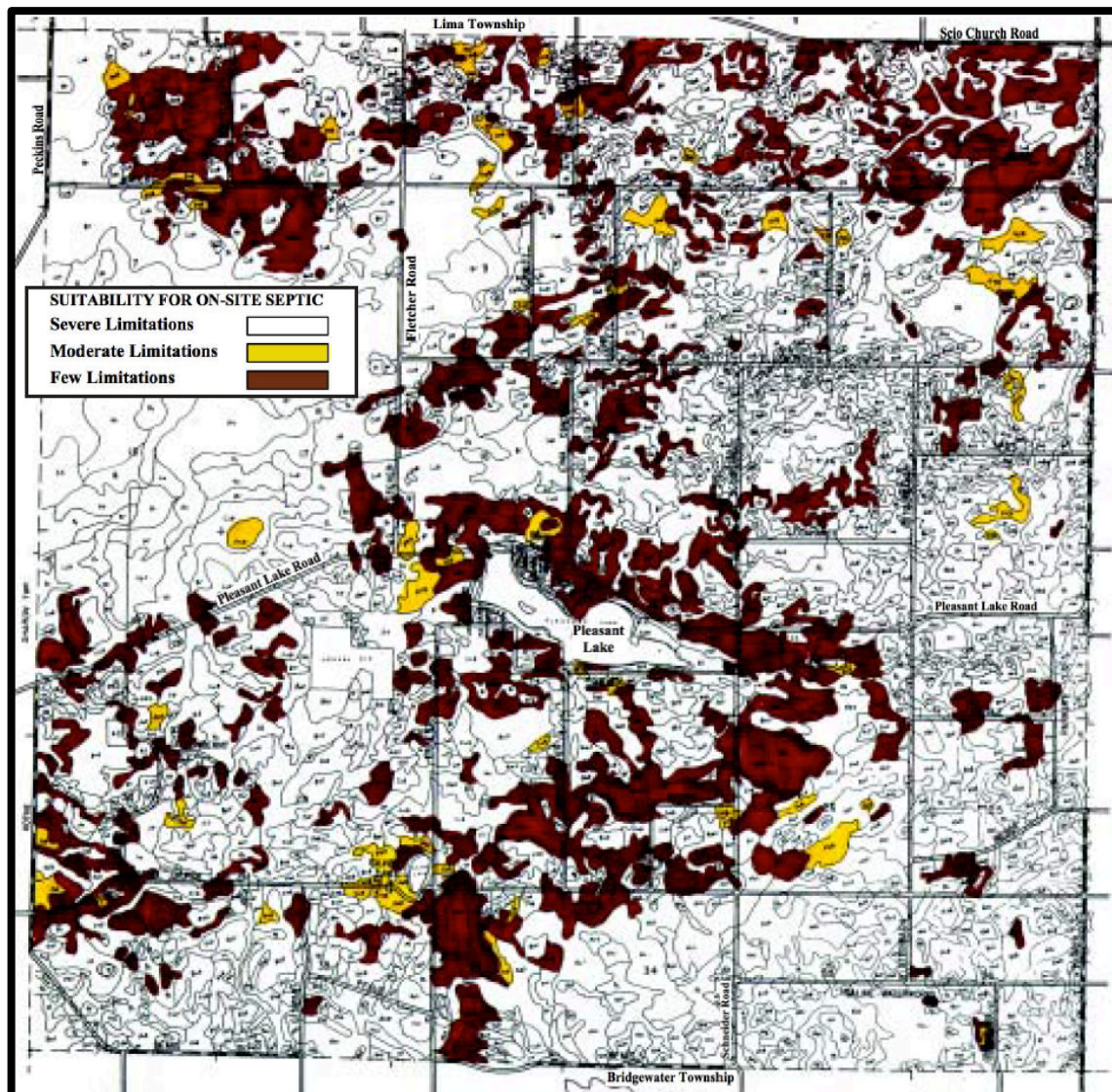
The elements of this plan relate to a natural resource system that has been developed around significant natural features, major wooded areas, soils with severe limitations for residential development, and a network of existing county drains. Natural resource areas, therefore, are of extreme importance to a growing community and serve as a reminder of man's relationship to his natural environment. Following is the location, extent, and characteristics of these and other natural features:

NATURAL FEATURES AND SOIL PATTERNS

Freedom Township is fortunate to have considerable rolling countryside much of which is wooded. Pleasant Lake, with its 210 acres of water surface, is the central focus for the Township. The eastern portion of Pleasant Lake is a marshy lowland that derives its character through drainage to Pleasant Lake from the surrounding area.

Freedom Township is located in an area without accessibility to existing public sewer and water facilities; therefore, it was critical in the formulation of the Township's Master Plan to thoroughly investigate existing soil conditions. Using the most current soil survey of the Township, conducted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service (SCS), as a base, an analysis of agricultural and residential capability was conducted. It should be noted that the SCS survey is based on a sample taken to a depth of approximately five (5) feet, and thus does not reflect the soil conditions below this depth. However, it may be used with confidence in determining agriculture capability and as a general indication of soils capable of supporting on-site sewerage systems. An outcome of that analysis indicates that a substantial portion of the soil in the Township depicts severe or very severe limitations for residential development. The soil pattern is scattered with the major areas of soils with few or moderate limitations for residential development being located in three general areas. These areas are located in the northern portion of the Township, the area surrounding Pleasant Lake and extending south toward Bridgewater Township, and an area in the Township's southwest quadrant (see map).

Map 2 – Soil Suitability for On-Site Septic Systems



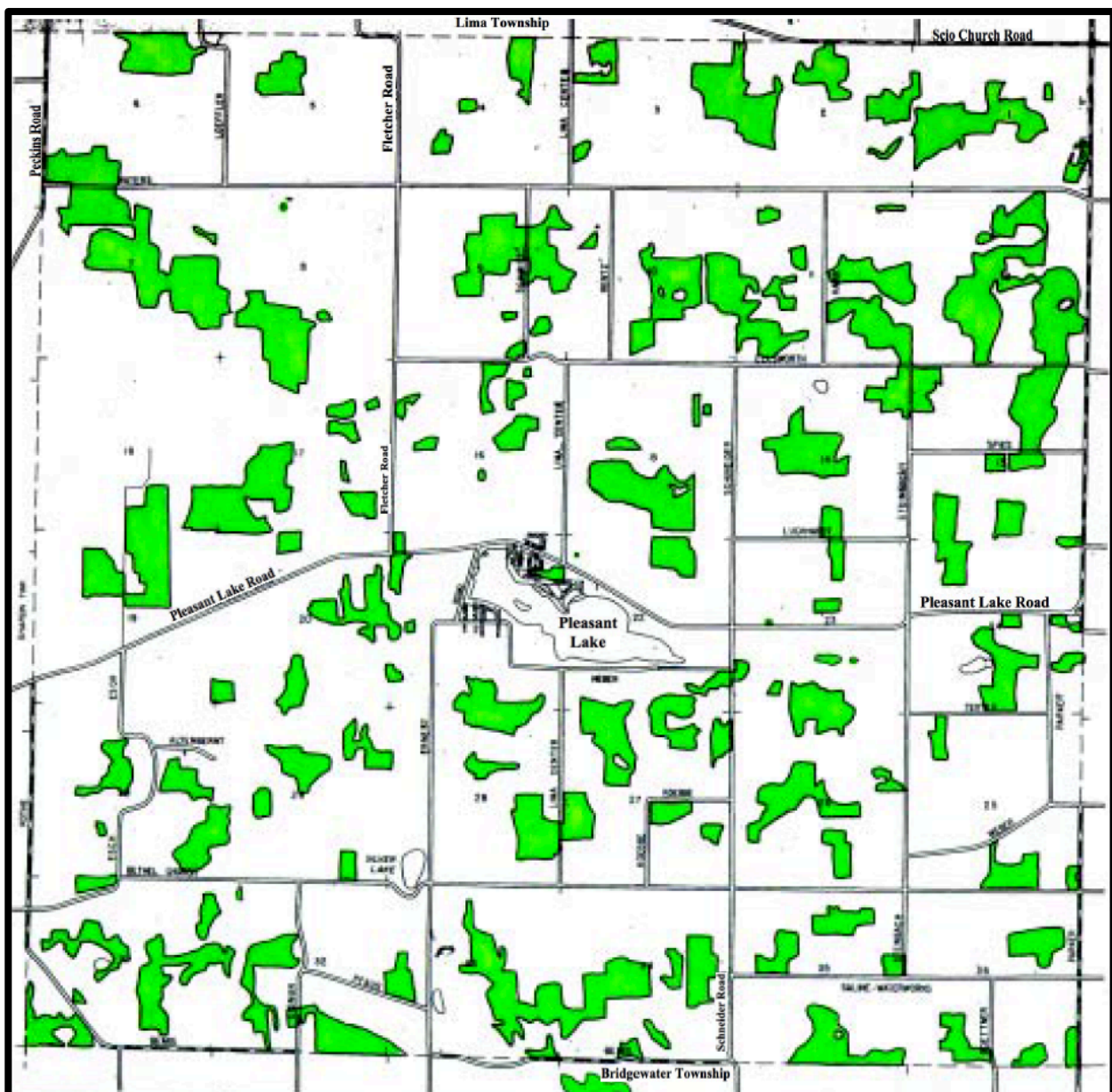
Source: Washtenaw County and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service

WOODLANDS

Approximately 14% (22,659 acres) of Freedom Township's total land area is presently woodland. There are a total of 78 separate woodlots within the Township. Nine of these woodlands are 5-10 acres in size, two are 11-40 acres in size and 27 have 40 or more acres. Areas defined as woodlands refer to lands that are at least 10% stocked by trees capable of producing timber or other wood products. The majority of the woodlots are 40 acres or more in size. Woodlots of this size can support various types of wildlife and can act as a community within themselves.

Significant woodlands are dispersed throughout the Township (see map).

Map 3 – Woodlands Map



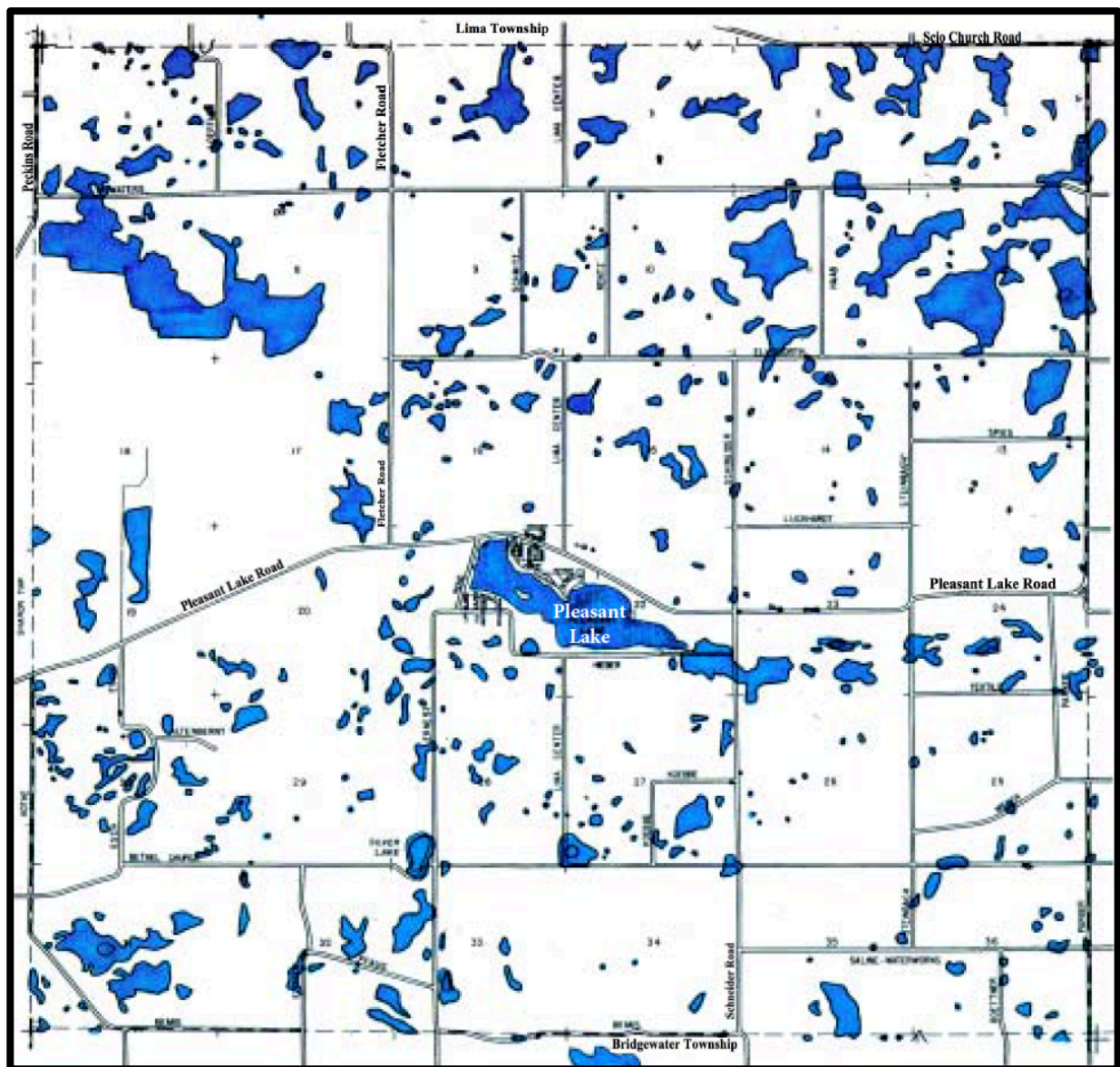
Source: Washtenaw County

WETLANDS

Wetlands were mapped using U.S. Geological Survey quadrangles and then compared with aerial photographs, using a generalized classification system previously developed by Washtenaw County. The most important wetlands were those that are contiguous to lakes, rivers, and streams, and that are important for stormwater storage. These wetlands, designated as first priority by Washtenaw County, are in various locations throughout Freedom Township. Significant concentrations of “first priority” wetlands are located in the northeast and southwestern portions of the Township, as well as directly to the east of Pleasant Lake.

These generalized wetland areas are depicted on the following map:

Map 4 – Wetlands Map



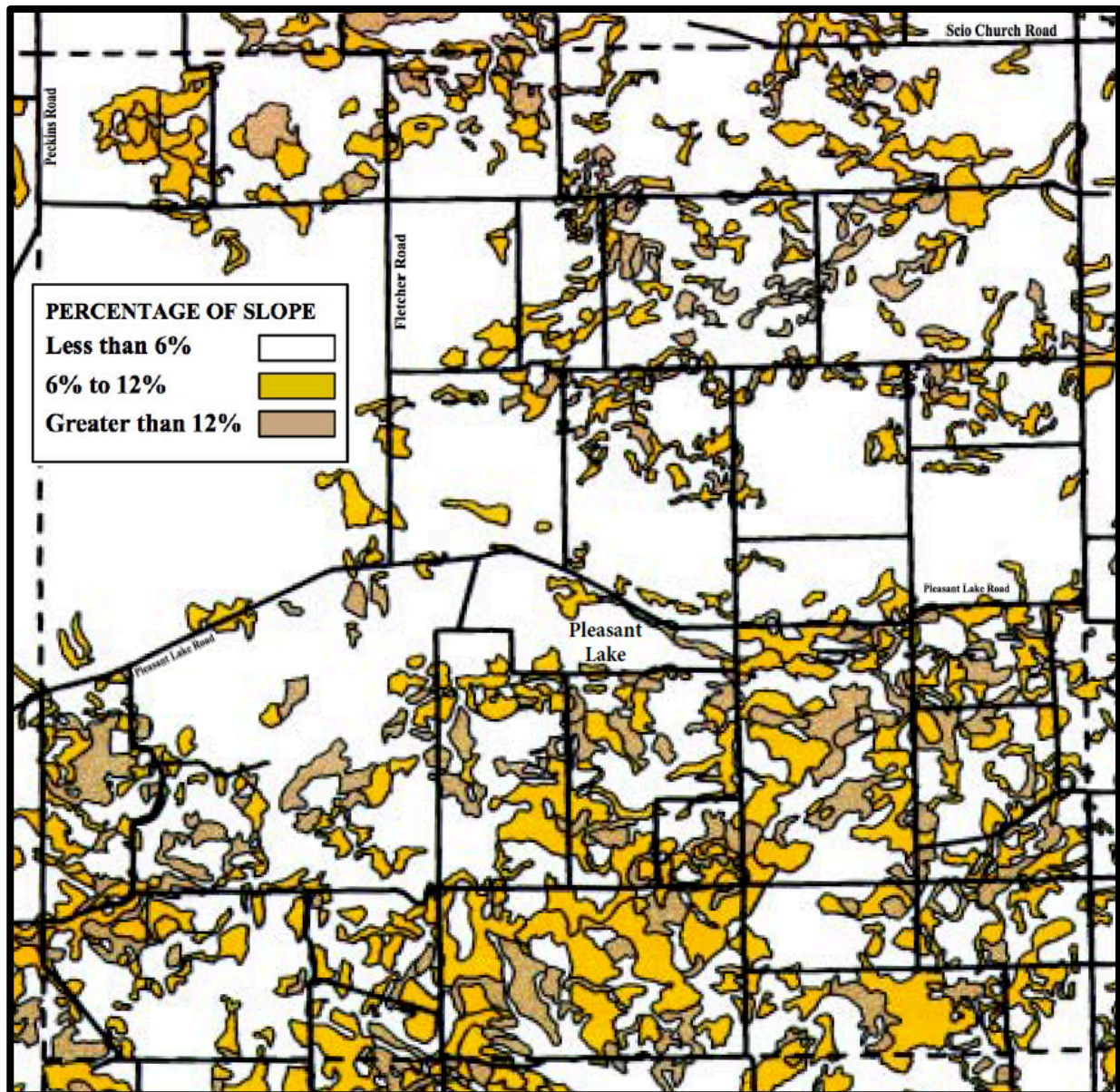
Source: Washtenaw County

TOPOGRAPHY

Within Freedom Township, slopes range from relatively flat to gently rolling hills and to areas that exceed 18% slope. As can be seen from the accompanying map, slopes ranging from 6 to 12 percent predominate the southeastern portion of the Township and are also scattered throughout the northeastern portion of the Township. Land in the northwest and central areas of the Township are relatively flat and have significant ongoing agricultural activities. Slopes ranging from 12 to 18 percent are in the southwest and northeast parts of the Township and are also shown on accompanying map. Steeper slopes of over 18% are generally found in the southwest portions of the Township.

These generalized areas of steep slopes are depicted on the following map:

Map 5 – Steep Slopes



Source: Washtenaw County

NATURAL RESOURCE PRESERVATION POLICIES

To maintain the rural, natural and scenic qualities of the Township, potential development should be regulated to promote the preservation of natural features. Significant wildlife habitats, sensitive environmental lands and scenic vistas are to be protected. The significant natural resources within Freedom Township including stream corridors, wetlands (including wet and organic soils), ground water recharge areas, floodplains, watersheds, woodlands, and slopes (primarily steep slope areas, in the range of 12% - 18% and over), are to be reviewed according to the following policies:

To accomplish the preservation of natural features within Freedom Township, the following policies are set forth for future development.

1. The natural features described in the document as open space areas are intended only to illustrate the concept of the open space or natural feature systems and to indicate the general location of such features in the Township. These areas are not intended to be specific for any one site. The actual extent, location, and relationship to existing and proposed development will be determined at the time of development review when detailed information will be available.
2. It is the intent of the Township to achieve continuity of the Township's natural features and to maintain interconnected systems of open space. This will be accomplished by utilizing proximity as well as contiguity of natural features, as in a stream corridor, in order to achieve a true system. Such an open space system may be any combination of natural features.
3. Streams, water bodies, and wetlands should be used as part of the storm drainage systems of the Township. These features should be protected from disturbance by construction and from pollutants and sediments that might be carried by runoff from developing or developed areas. It is the intent of this plan to protect surface water, stream corridors, and wetlands in their natural condition.
4. Natural features should be used to create boundaries of use areas or to separate development areas from agricultural areas.
5. To provide for the protection of Freedom Township's potable fresh water supplies from the dangers of drought, overdraft, contamination or mismanagement.
6. Attractive natural streetscapes along all Township roads and streets shall be maintained to continue to promote the rural visual character of Freedom Township.
7. The use of planned unit development (PUD) and cluster development options in the Zoning Ordinance shall be encouraged to establish permanent easements for open space or agricultural use on common lands and to protect designated natural features within environmentally sensitive areas.
8. Use new data and community input to prioritize these resources and designate areas of special concern, which are subject to more stringent development regulations.

9. Partner with local land trusts and other organizations to acquire conservation easements to protect sensitive natural features.
10. A natural feature setback shall be established for new developments to minimize the encroachment danger to sensitive natural resources identified by Freedom Township, Washtenaw County, or the State of Michigan.

