

CHAPTER 4

PLAN FOR AGRICULTURE

This chapter is intended to link the Township's overall goals with specific land use policy recommendations for the long-term future of a healthy and vibrant rural economy based upon provisions for a full-range of agricultural land uses in the Township.

GOAL

The retention, stability, and conservation of agricultural activities in Freedom Township for the support of long-term agricultural use and preservation of prime agricultural soils.



BACKGROUND

A major concern in the formulation of a Master Plan for Freedom Township is the preservation of the Township's agricultural character. Freedom Township is an active and productive agricultural community and all efforts should be made to encourage its continuance. Conflicts between urban and rural uses should be avoided wherever possible.

Prime agricultural land is a vital natural resource that has to be accurately identified and protected from non-agricultural land uses. It has to be recognized that good agricultural land is irreplaceable and that once this land is developed into housing, commercial, or industrial uses, it is lost to farm use forever.

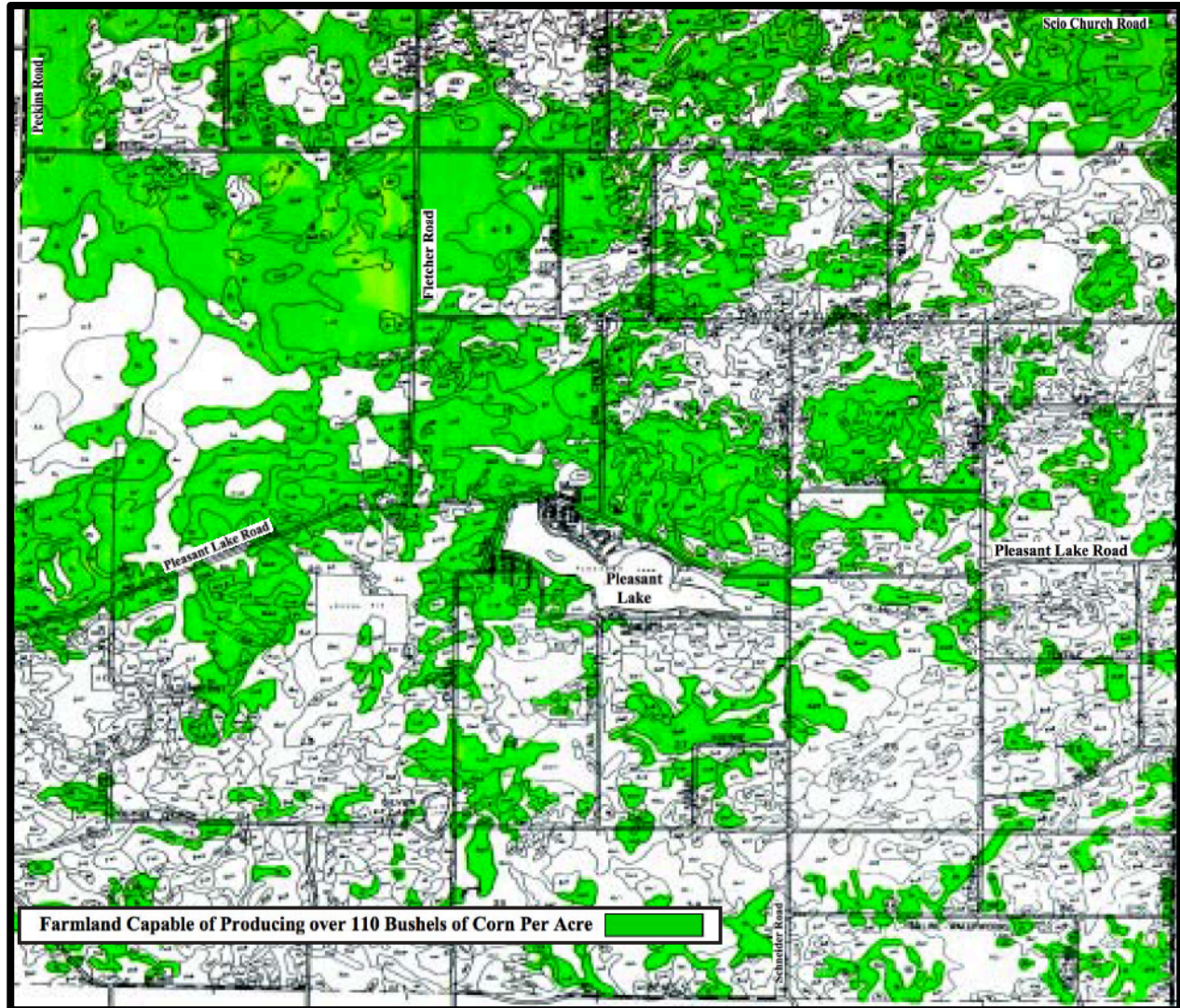
Virtually all sections within the Township are orientated toward agricultural activities. The following characteristics are common:

- The quality of soils supports the existing agricultural activities.
- Few non- agricultural land use infringements have taken place.
- The area has remained stable with few parcel splits taking place.
- Parcel sizes are generally large enough to support long-term agricultural operations.

As seen in Table 1, Percentage of Total Land Use (page 1-5), agriculture comprised over 65% of the land use within Freedom Township. Stable and cohesive agricultural areas exist throughout the Township and in the surrounding region, creating the ability to maintain a healthy rural economy to support farming operations. The Township's agricultural lands have been relatively free from intrusion by incompatible land uses.

Map 6 below depicts agricultural lands that are capable of producing over 110 bushels of corn per acre. These lands are considered the best agricultural lands within Freedom Township for agricultural production.

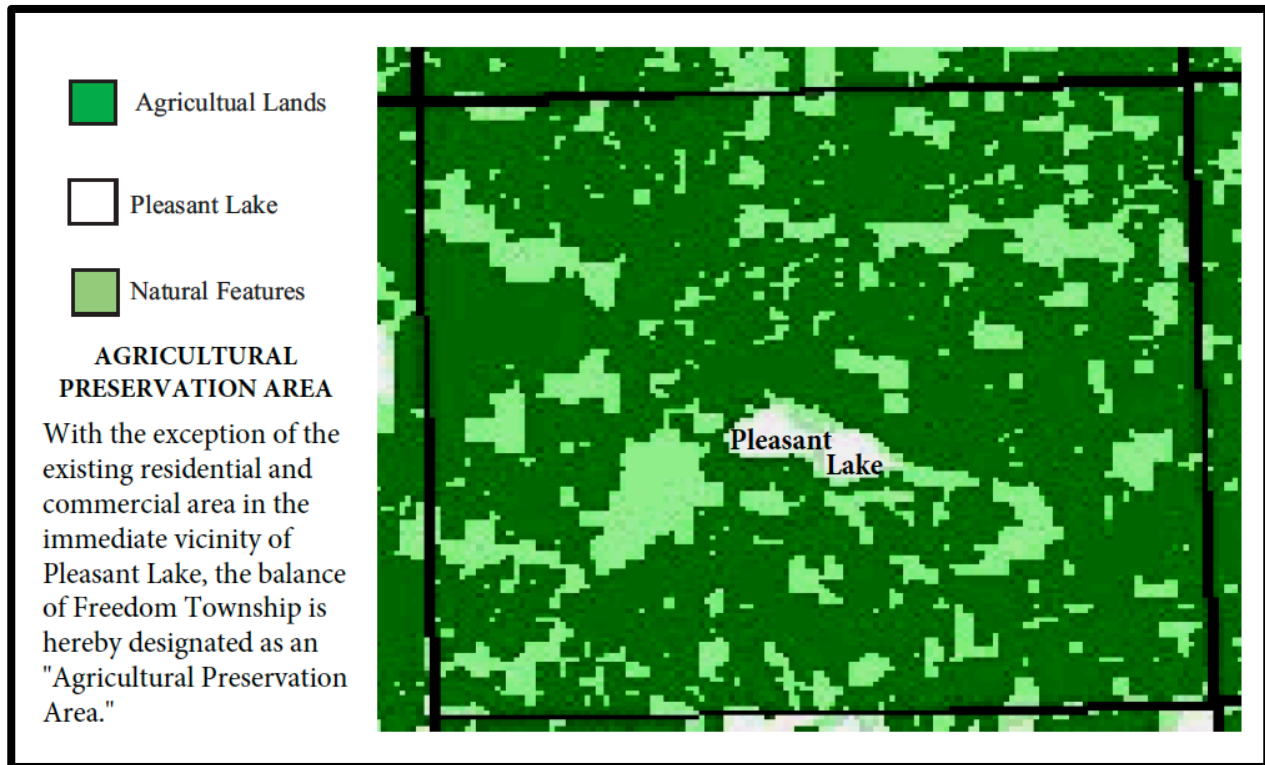
Map 6 – Farmland Capable of Producing over 110 Bushels of Corn Per Acre



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

AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION AREA

Consistent with the agricultural goals of this Master Plan, the Township hereby establishes an agricultural preservation area, which shall consist of the entire Township land area minus the existing residential and commercial area in the immediate vicinity of Pleasant Lake (see Map 7):

Map 7 – Agricultural Preservation Area

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

PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS (PDR) POLICIES

In recognition of the Freedom Township's agricultural heritage, the Agriculture Preservation Area depicted on Map 7 above was selected in a manner:

1. To be non-exclusionary for potential interest by landowners in a PDR option;
2. Where the township demographics indicate the lands contained inside the preservation overlay district provide the most potential for on-going or new agriculture activities;
3. To recognize that lands contained within the preservation overlay district are highly sought-after tracts for development; and
4. To underscore continuity with adjoining communities which have also designated "agriculture preservation" goals.

NON-FARM RURAL RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Freedom Township contains land that is suitable for long-term agricultural uses. Agricultural service activities and establishments, such as farm equipment sales and services, grain storage, and feed and fertilizer sales as well as the production of various crops, livestock, and dairy products are anticipated agricultural uses.

It is understood, however, that a limited number of rural dwellings could be permitted in the agricultural areas under the following criteria:

1. As farmsteads, one dwelling per farm for occupancy by the family of the owner or the manager.
2. As tenant dwellings for families of tenant workers on the farm.
3. According to the “sliding scale” system of allocating land divisions contained in the Township Zoning Ordinance.
4. Subject to rezoning to a rural residential district and the following criteria:
 - The land should be located on an existing public road.
 - The land should not have been farmed in recent years.
 - The land, if developed with rural residences, should not interfere with the continuity of agricultural operations in the area.

Residential use should not be considered a principal land use within agricultural area because it will undermine the stability of long-term agricultural production.

OTHER AGRICULTURAL LAND USE POLICIES

To accomplish the agricultural goals as presented within this Master Plan for the preservation of agricultural activities within Freedom Township, the following additional policies are set forth.

1. Potential development within Freedom Township will be directed away from areas designated for agricultural use.
2. Zoning changes in the areas designated as Agricultural lands should not be approved except in the case of requests to cover existing concentrations of rural dwellings, to fill in vacant parcels within such concentrations, or to permit expansion of such areas necessary to reach reasonable, natural boundaries so long as such expansion does not interfere with agricultural production. The criteria set forth above could be applied. A specific zoning district (cluster concept) designed for rural dwelling units in such situations should be encouraged.
3. Agricultural land should be preserved primarily by means of zoning controls, (sliding scale, cluster concepts) supplemented by the Township’s capital improvement decisions and Act 116 approvals. While there are serious limitations to the effectiveness of this approach, these are the only reasonable available means until the State or Federal governments develop additional policies and programs for preserving agricultural land.
4. Encourage the use of assessment policies that reflect the agricultural value of land in agricultural use by designating farmed parcels in the agricultural land classification.

5. Act 116 applications for lands within the designated Agricultural Preservation Areas (see Map 7 on page 4-3) should be approved with any purchase of development rights (PDR), planned unit development (PUD) or other open space preservation options.
6. Allow agri-business activities (such as agricultural processing, hobby farms, u-pick business, direct marketing of farm products to local restaurants, etc.) in agricultural zoning districts to add value to the products generated within the Township, subject to reasonable standards and limitations contained in the Township Zoning Ordinance.
7. In new development areas adjacent to agricultural lands, a buffer of land and landscaping should be provided on the non-agricultural lands, along the common boundary. Existing natural features, such as fencerows on development land could be used to provide the needed buffering. Also buffering along highways should be stressed to enhance the visual character of rural areas.
8. Consider the creation of a farm incubator program or other cooperative effort to help young farmers get started in agriculture, and encourage seasoned farming experts in the Township to serve as mentors to young men and women interested in agriculture.
9. Invite Township property owners of agricultural land to work with private nonprofit land trusts and conservancies with the power to buy development rights and establish private conservation easements.
10. In consideration of the significant potential for noise, odor, and other adverse impacts, development of farm-based ethanol production facilities in the Township shall be discouraged.

CHAPTER 5

PLAN FOR RESIDENTIAL

This chapter is intended to link the Township’s overall goals with specific land use policy recommendations for the future development of residential land uses in a manner that preserves open space and enhances the rural environment and appearance of Freedom Township.

GOAL

Residential development will be provided and located within desirable residential settings that are sensitive to the environment, to ensure a maximum choice of dwelling units within the Township.



BACKGROUND

Future residential development under this Master Plan includes the “lake residential” area of existing single-family residential lots clustered around portions of Pleasant Lake, plus one (1) category of low-density future rural residential development. The areas shown for these land uses on Map 11-2 (Future Land Use Map – Pleasant Lake Area Detail) are anticipated to have adequate soil percolation capability to support required on-site sewage treatment facilities.

The Township has more than adequate land area available for future residential development needs. Conversion of other areas of the Township not addressed by this chapter for more intensive residential development would not be consistent with the goals and policies of this Master Plan.

LIMITED RESIDENTIAL POTENTIAL OF RECLAIMED EXTRACTION SITES

In addition to the future residential designations depicted on the maps in Chapter 11, Future Land Use Maps, the following areas of the Township are anticipated to be developed in the long-term for a mixture of agricultural land uses and single-family residential uses of a rural residential character. These areas comprise:

1. Approximately 420 acres of land clustered around Pleasant Lake and along Schneider Road south of Pleasant Lake Road.
2. The ~~Barrett Industries~~/Stoneco (former Barrett Industries) land holdings located south of Pleasant Lake Road and west of Pleasant Lake that are currently (as of 2014-2015) being used for extraction operations.

3. The Stoneco and American Aggregates land holdings located east of Kothe Road and south of Pleasant Lake Road that are currently (as of 2014-2015) being used for extraction operations.
4. [The Stoneco land holdings on Esch Road south of Pleasant Lake Road, which have not yet been used for extraction purposes.](#)

The reasons for the potential location of additional low-density, future rural residential development in these areas are:

- The soils are of sufficient capability to support year round on-site sewage systems.
- The location of existing development in the Pleasant Lake area.
- The long-range development plans for the Barrett/Stoneco lands, which are designated for single family residential.

However, these sites are anticipated to remain occupied by existing agricultural and mineral extraction activities well beyond the planning period for this Master Plan (see Chapter 10, Extraction Area Plan).

MANUFACTURED HOUSING PARK RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

The R-6 (Manufactured Housing Park District) is included in the Township Zoning Ordinance's list of zoning classifications, but a separate designation for manufactured housing park development has not been provided for in this Master Plan. Additional policies related to this R-6 zoned land can be found in Chapter 9, Pleasant Lake Area Plan. Consistent with the residential goals as presented within this Master Plan, the Township has made the following findings and established the following land use and development policies with regards to manufactured housing park residential land uses and development:

1. The Township has provided, both in this plan and in the Township Zoning Ordinance, for a variety of housing types to serve the needs of current and future Township residents.
2. As noted above, adequate land area for future residential development is envisioned by this plan.
3. Because of the design limitations imposed by the Michigan Manufactured Housing Commission's General Rules, a manufactured housing park development would not be compatible with the intended rural character and development pattern of the Township.
4. There is already an existing manufactured housing park development in Freedom Township, plus additional developments of this type in nearby communities, including Lodi Township, Scio Township, the Village of Manchester, and the City of Saline.
5. As noted in Chapter 1, Introduction, the Southeastern Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) has projected modest population growth trend for Freedom Township through the year 2040.

Based on these findings, the Township has determined that there is no demonstrated need for additional manufactured housing park development sites in the Township, and that the existing supply of such dwelling units in the Township and surrounding communities is more than adequate to accommodate the anticipated need for this type of dwelling unit, based on population projections.

The Township has also determined that maintaining the current R-6 zoning district classification for the existing manufactured housing park development is in the interests of Freedom Township; and that the owners of this development should be encouraged to upgrade and modernize the park's amenities, infrastructure, and housing units for the benefit of the Township residents that live there. For improvement projects that may require site plan approval from the Planning Commission, Section 7.08 (Nonconforming Sites) of the Zoning Ordinance would permit review of proposed improvements "without a complete upgrade of all site elements," provided that public safety deficiencies are addressed and several conditions are satisfied.

This issue should be re-examined at least every five (5) years as part of the plan review required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended), and this policy adjusted if determined necessary by the Township at that time.

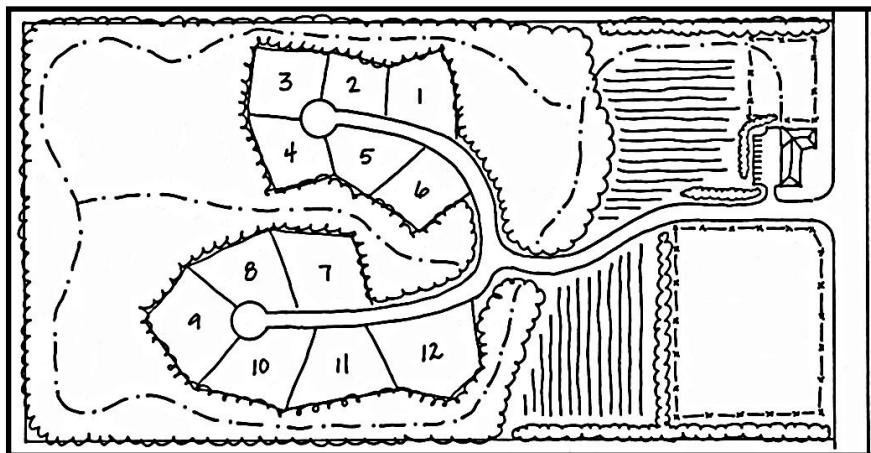
OTHER RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

To accomplish the residential goals as presented within this Master Plan, the following additional policies are set forth. These policies refer to all residential growth, including concentrated developments, such as subdivisions and site condominiums. The policies referencing new development are not intended to apply to very low density, rural non-farm or farm housing in the areas designated on Map 11-1 (Freedom Township Future Land Use Map) for agricultural land uses.

1. Density within the areas identified by this Master Plan for future "rural residential" development shall not be greater than a net density of one (1) dwelling unit per acre, except where approved as a planned unit development (PUD) consistent with the goals of this plan. Density within areas identified for "lake residential" land uses on Map 11-2 (Future Land Use Map – Pleasant Lake Area Detail) shall not be greater than a net density of one (1) dwelling unit per acre, except where the existing subdivision lots previously platted adjacent to Pleasant Lake are determined to have adequate soil percolation capability to support required on-site sewage treatment facilities for a single-family home.
2. Newly developed residential areas shall take the form of subdivision cluster development with internal neighborhood road networks that are integrated with and interconnected with existing and planned roads. This will increase the economical use of land and minimize hazardous curb cuts along the primary public roadways. Adequate rights-of-way should be provided for such internal neighborhood roads to insure sufficient space for public utilities and road maintenance.
3. A variety of housing types are located within desirable residential settings, to ensure a maximum choice of dwelling units and a mix of population within the Township.
4. Residential development shall be directed away from the Township agricultural lands. The Township's sliding scale land division requirements should be maintained to ensure long-term agricultural use without residential infiltration.

5. Land capacities shall be considered when determining the appropriate density of development. The density shall be established at a level that will neither damage environmental features nor intrude upon agricultural lands.
6. Residential development shall be organized around natural features or recreational amenities, and site and architectural design that will create neighborhoods of lasting value and stability shall be encouraged.
7. Dwelling units shall be placed on portions of the site most suited to development in order to preserve natural features. Measures that protect the environment during and after development shall be instituted and implemented.
8. New residential development shall be compatible in density and character with existing residences and neighborhoods in the immediate area.
9. In order to emphasize the rural character of Freedom Township and to permit property owners to utilize the allotted residential density, clustering of dwelling units on small parcels will be encouraged. The remaining land in the total parcel would be held in common ownership; it could remain as open space or be used for agricultural purposes. Clustering of rural residences will be permitted in accordance with the following (see Figure 5 on the next page):
 - Clustering shall maintain an overall site density in order to provide permanent open space for recreational or environmental conservation use. Each lot for each dwelling unit should have at least one lot line that abuts the commonly owned open space or agricultural land;
 - Comprehensive pedestrian circulation systems shall be included;
 - Residential development shall be organized around focal points such as open spaces, lakes, or village greens; and
 - Open space buffers shall be required from adjacent suburban, rural, or agricultural land uses.

Figure 5 – Example of an Open Space Preservation or Cluster Development



Source: Consultant

10. Residential development should be organized away from primary public roads, with no direct dwelling unit access to such roads.
11. A high quality of site and architectural design should be encouraged in every residential development to create residential areas of lasting value and stability.
12. Residential areas are designated in terms of density. In terms of calculating density for specific parcels, the following shall be excluded from the total acreage used in calculating the density of dwelling units:
 - Existing rights-of-way and easements.
 - Rights-of-way or easements of proposed local and collector streets.
 - Flood plains, swamps, and other wetlands, and stream corridors.
 - Lands to be purchased for public use.
13. Developers considering residential projects in the Township should be encouraged to:
 - Participate in pre-application meetings with the Planning Commission and/or the Township Planner to discuss ordinance requirements, Master Plan policies, and available development options; and
 - Use the Planned Unit Development option and incentives for clustering of new residential development in the Township Zoning Ordinance.
14. To protect the quality of existing housing stock, the Township's ordinance enforcement officer should be asked to keep a list of and periodically review abandoned, bank-owned, and similar distressed properties for blight conditions or ordinance violations.
15. Low income homeowners and elderly residents in need of assistance with necessary home or property maintenance issues that would otherwise result in ordinance violations should be encouraged to dial "211" to access Washtenaw County's current list of non-profit organizations and volunteer agencies that may be able to provide such assistance.

Additional housing and residential development-related policy recommendations can be found in Chapter 9, Pleasant Lake Area Plan.

CHAPTER 6

PLAN FOR COMMERCIAL

This chapter is intended to link the Township's overall goals with specific land use policy recommendations for the future development of limited commercial land uses to serve the needs of Township residents in a manner that enhances the rural environment and is integrated with surrounding land uses.

GOAL

Commercial land uses in the Township consist of local uses and shall be established to serve the needs of Township residents and integrated with surrounding land uses.



Only limited amounts of commercial development will be needed for Freedom Township within the scope of this Master Plan.

BACKGROUND

As shown in the Plan, a single concentration of local commercial activity is proposed in the general proximity of Pleasant Lake Road and Lima Center Road. The primary function of this classification is to serve residential development in the general area as well as nearby rural residents.

Existing major commercial centers in adjacent communities provide the primary commercial services to Township residents. It is not likely that significant commercial development within the Township could challenge the market dominance of existing adjacent commercial developments. It is for these reasons that large-scale commercial development should be placed in adjacent communities.

The location of local commercial activity provides an important element in strengthening the neighborhood community center concepts in Freedom Township. Residents of existing and planned residential units in the area have ease of access to stores that meet their daily needs. Further, a high degree of interaction is attained between schools, commercial services, public services, public facilities and residents of the area. The Plan indicates that commercial activities are to be discouraged from locating elsewhere in the Township.

BIG BOX AND LARGE-SCALE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

At the present time there is no demonstrated need for any general commercial development, large-scale comparison retail or highway-oriented commercial uses within Freedom Township. The need for more intensive, general and highway commercial land uses is being amply met by existing commercial developments and centers in the vicinity of the Township; located in and around the cities of Ann Arbor and Saline, and the Village of Manchester.

Similarly, the need for general commercial development to serve the needs of future residential development in the Township over the next five years can also be amply met by existing commercial centers in these nearby communities. It is also not likely that significant general commercial development in the Township could challenge the market dominance of these existing commercial centers. It is not sound regional planning policy to encourage duplication of services that can result in vacant office and retail space, as well as unnecessary expansion of expensive infrastructure.

This issue should be re-examined at least every five (5) years as part of the plan review required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended), and this policy adjusted if determined necessary by the Township at that time.

OTHER COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

To accomplish the commercial goals as presented within this Master Plan, the following additional policies are set forth:

1. Commercial shall be organized into compact, unified centers that complement the scale and character of existing development or that promote the desired character for areas where new development is planned. The intensity of commercial growth shall remain local in scale, because of the regional dominance of large-scale commercial development.
2. Piecemeal or scattered development shall be avoided and uncoordinated commercial strip development shall be prohibited. Where individual parcels of land are to be developed for commercial uses, coordination with adjacent properties, including common parking and driveways, shall be encouraged in order to reduce the number of access points onto Pleasant Lake Road.
3. Commercial uses shall be landscaped and, where necessary, should be screened by landscaping from adjacent residential areas to reduce heat and glare from pavement areas, to partially screen parking areas from view, to control noise, and to increase the attractiveness of such centers.
4. Exterior lighting shall be located and maintained to prevent the reflection and glare of light in a manner that creates a nuisance or safety hazard to operators of motor vehicles, pedestrians, and neighboring land uses. This provision is not intended to apply to public street lighting.

5. Commercial land uses are intended to reflect the character of and are integrated with adjoining residential areas.
6. Where appropriate, commercial, office, and residential components should be coordinated within a planned unit development (PUD) project, so as to create a diverse, pedestrian oriented environment.

Additional commercial development-related policy recommendations can be found in Chapter 9, Pleasant Land Area Plan.

CHAPTER 7

PLAN FOR INDUSTRIAL

This chapter is intended to link the Township's overall goals with specific land use policy recommendations for the future development of limited industrial land uses in a manner that protects natural resources, agricultural lands, and the residents of the Township from the potential impacts from this type of development.

GOAL

Specific areas in Freedom Township should be utilized as industrial centers that can be integrated with surrounding land uses and not create hazards for the Township's environment, nor create adverse impacts on existing or proposed residential or agricultural uses.



BACKGROUND

The Township has two existing industrial areas, one of which is located immediately west of Pleasant Lake, while the other is located at the intersection of Ellsworth Road and Fletcher Road. Both are locations of utility complexes.

Industrial needs of Township residents area currently adequately served by the existing industrial centers within the Township and by centers in surrounding communities. No general industrial or large-scale manufacturing facilities or processing operations should be permitted in the Township.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

To accomplish the industrial goals as presented within this Master Plan, the following policies are set forth:

1. Natural features located on industrial lands shall be preserved and shall be integrated into the site design.
2. Industrial land uses shall be located only in areas of the Township where adverse impacts on existing or proposed residential or agricultural areas will be avoided. Where

permitted, such uses shall be light industrial or research and development in character, such as warehouse/office or testing facility. General industrial or large-scale manufacturing facilities or processing operations shall be prohibited.

3. Exterior lighting shall be located and maintained to prevent the reflection and glare of light in a manner that creates a nuisance or safety hazard to operators of motor vehicles, pedestrians, and neighboring land uses. This provision is not intended to apply to public street lighting.
4. Expansion of industrial centers should have a campus-type setting, a low density of development with large open spaces and extensive landscaping. Existing natural features should be preserved and incorporated into development plans.
5. It is the intent of the Township to allow the two existing industrial areas/utility complexes to exist and expand moderately, while discouraging other industrial activities from locating elsewhere in the Township.

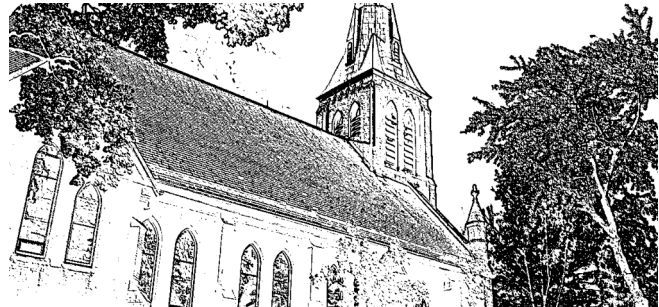
CHAPTER 8

PLAN FOR COMMUNITY FACILITIES

This chapter is intended to link the Township’s overall goals with specific land use policy recommendations for the future development of community facilities to serve the needs of Township residents in a manner that enhances the rural environment and is integrated with surrounding land uses.

GOAL

Allow various types of community facilities and infrastructure that are necessary to support various types of development and land uses, and to adequately serve the needs of the residents of Freedom Township.



BACKGROUND

There are certain community facilities and land uses of a public or quasi-public character, such as churches and other religious institutions, government buildings, schools, and similar public or quasi-public facilities that are not otherwise addressed on the Future Land Use Map. As used in this plan, the term “quasi-public” refers to land uses that are not government or publicly-owned or dedicated to public use, but that provide a substantial and enduring public service, are institutional in character, or include public assembly or similar gathering space as part of their operation. The term “community facilities” includes these land uses, as well as public parks, indoor or outdoor public recreation facilities, the county nature preserves, multi-use recreational trails and bike lanes, utility infrastructure and similar improvements.

The Township Hall is available for community gatherings and events. The Township does not currently (2014-2015) own or maintain any public parks or recreation facilities.

It is the intent of this Master Plan to allow community facilities and land uses of a public or quasi-public character to be appropriately located in areas of the Township that may be designated by this Master Plan for other land uses, subject to the policies of this chapter.

PRIVATE COMMUNITY SANITARY SEWAGE SYSTEM POLICIES

Private community sanitary sewage treatment systems shall not be permitted within the Township, except as part of a planned unit development (PUD) project as approved by the Township consistent with the policies of this Master Plan, including the following:

1. The development shall consist of a single land use type, as categorized by the Washtenaw County Environmental Health Department.

2. The development shall include significant preservation of important wetlands, natural features, open spaces or agricultural lands in the Township; including, at a minimum, permanent conservation of fifty percent (50%) of the land proposed for development.
3. Adequate replacement reserve shall be provided should the community wastewater system fail or improperly function; including a financial contingency sufficient to provide for future operation and maintenance, reservation of additional land area(s) for replacement facilities, and provision of adequate reserve capacity.
4. Extensive buffering and a substantial separation distance shall be provided from all abutting properties to minimize noise, light, and odor impacts from system operation.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM POLICIES

To accomplish the community facility-related goals as presented within this Master Plan, the following policies are set forth regarding development of drainage facilities:

1. Storm drainage shall be included when evaluating the suitability of a site for development and when determining the appropriate density of development.
2. On-site drainage facilities shall be adequate to deliver surface water runoff to established drainage courses.
3. Drainage systems shall be located and designed to prevent sediments and pollutants in surface runoff from entering watercourses and groundwater aquifers.
4. Drainage districts should be established as part of each development to ensure proper long-range maintenance of drainage facilities.
5. Generally, impervious surfaces should not be connected to drainage systems. Run-off should be routed over grassy swales or similar areas that help to filter run-off.
6. Open and natural drainage courses should be utilized as part of the drainage system where possible, and where the natural drainage course will not be adversely affected.
7. Open courses should be landscaped to enhance the open space or landscape scheme of the site or area, or be designed to function as natural wetlands.
8. Existing wetlands should not be incorporated into site drainage systems, unless it can be adequately proven that the wetlands shall be protected from any adverse impacts. Extensive clearing of vegetation that buffers the wetlands from erosion and filters sediments and pollution from run-off shall be prohibited.
9. Stormwater run-off from any development area should not exceed that which existed under undeveloped, natural conditions, in terms of volume and velocity. Run-off under existing undeveloped conditions that causes problems should be altered to acceptable rates and amounts by drainage improvements as part of individual developments or drainage districts.

10. Stormwater retention should be provided on private property as part of a site development plan, or as part of area-wide drainage systems, or as a combination of on-site and area-wide facilities. Retention basins should be used to control the volume, quality, and rate of stormwater run-off and to recharge the groundwater supply. Retention basin design, construction, and maintenance shall satisfy the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner's applicable standards and requirements.

POLICIES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL USES

To accomplish the community facility-related goals as presented within this Master Plan, the following additional policies are set forth regarding the location and development of churches, schools, public buildings, and other institutional uses in all sections of the Township. Such facilities may be located on land designated by this plan for other land uses, subject to the following:

1. The location for development of such facilities shall include sufficient land area to support the intended use, including adequate soil conditions for a private septic system, and shall be served by existing utility infrastructure with adequate capacity for the intended occupancy of the facility.
2. The location shall have direct frontage on and access to one or more public roads that can safely and efficiently accommodate the expected traffic generated by the facility. Locating public or quasi-public facilities on local roads or unpaved roads should be discouraged.
3. Such facilities should not be located on land designated for future agricultural uses, unless the soil conditions of a specific site make it otherwise unsuitable for farming or other agricultural operations.
4. The location and planned land uses shall be compatible with the surrounding area and adjacent land uses in terms of traffic, noise, scale, and intensity of planned activities.

POLICIES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE

Improvements in broadband Internet access, cellular telephone service, and other communications infrastructure serving the Township would enhance the quality of life for Township residents and create new opportunities for home-based businesses that rely on the Internet. In particular, collocation of wireless Internet antennae on the existing MCI tower located west of Schneider Road in the southeast quarter of section 27 has the potential, because of the tower's unusual height, to expand availability of broadband Internet service to the large majority of Township residents.

To accomplish the community facility-related goals as presented within this Master Plan, the following additional policies are set forth regarding the location and development of communications-related facilities and infrastructure in all sections of the Township:

1. All opportunities for collocation of additional wireless Internet and upgraded cellular telephone antennae on existing towers serving the Township shall be explored before construction of any new towers are permitted in the Township.
2. Any new wireless communications tower construction shall be located in a manner that substantially reduces or eliminates existing cellular telephone “dead zones” in the Township. New towers shall be constructed in strict accordance to the Township Zoning Ordinance’s limitations and standards for such facilities.
3. The Township should consider initiating a project to identify, map, and compile publicly-available data regarding capacity, ownership, and function of all existing fiber optic communications infrastructure in the Township, using available right-of-way records from the Washtenaw County Road Commission and other sources.
4. The Township should consider development and implementation of a community advocacy program to organize a targeted outreach effort by Township officials and residents to one or more broadband Internet service providers serving nearby areas of Washtenaw County, with the goal of encouraging the provider(s) to extend high capacity cable or fiber optic lines and infrastructure into and throughout Freedom Township.
5. The Township should undertake an active effort to work with the owner/operator of the existing MCI tower on Schneider Road in section 27 to allow for collocation of wireless Internet antennae at this location, which may include:
 - An ongoing outreach to the tower owner/operator from Township officials to encourage initiation of an active discussion of options for potential future collocation of wireless Internet antennae at this location;
 - Identification of technology options and antennae designs that minimize any potential for interference with existing operations and equipment on this tower;
 - Partnership with county and state officials, if necessary, to help facilitate the development of a plan for collocation of wireless Internet antennae on this tower; and
 - Consideration of a collaborative effort between the Township, the tower owner/operator, and potential data service providers, if determined necessary to be able to provide broadband Internet as a community resource.

OTHER COMMUNITY FACILITY-RELATED POLICIES

To accomplish the community facility-related goals as presented within this Master Plan, the following additional policies are set forth:

1. The Township should encourage the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission to:
 - Consider Township input and direction for prudent use of Natural Areas Preservation program (NAPP) resources in Freedom Township;
 - Provide for regular patrol and maintenance of the county’s established nature preserves; and

- Ensure that future county nature preserves do not become an attractive nuisance or adversely impact Township residents.
- 2. The Township should consider working with area churches, regional agencies, and other service providers to ensure adequate support services are available to senior and elderly Township residents, including exercise programs and senior center activities.
- 3. If there is future interest in the development of parks or recreation facilities to serve the needs of Township residents, a separate Parks and Recreation Master Plan should be prepared to allow the Township to become eligible for matching grants from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) and other sources.

CHAPTER 9 PLEASANT LAKE AREA PLAN

This chapter is intended to link the Township's overall goals with specific land use policy recommendations for the future development of the Fredonia/Pleasant Lake area.

GOAL

The primary purposes of this Area Plan are to preserve the water quality of the lake and the distinctive character of the Fredonia/Pleasant Lake Area as any future development takes place.



BACKGROUND

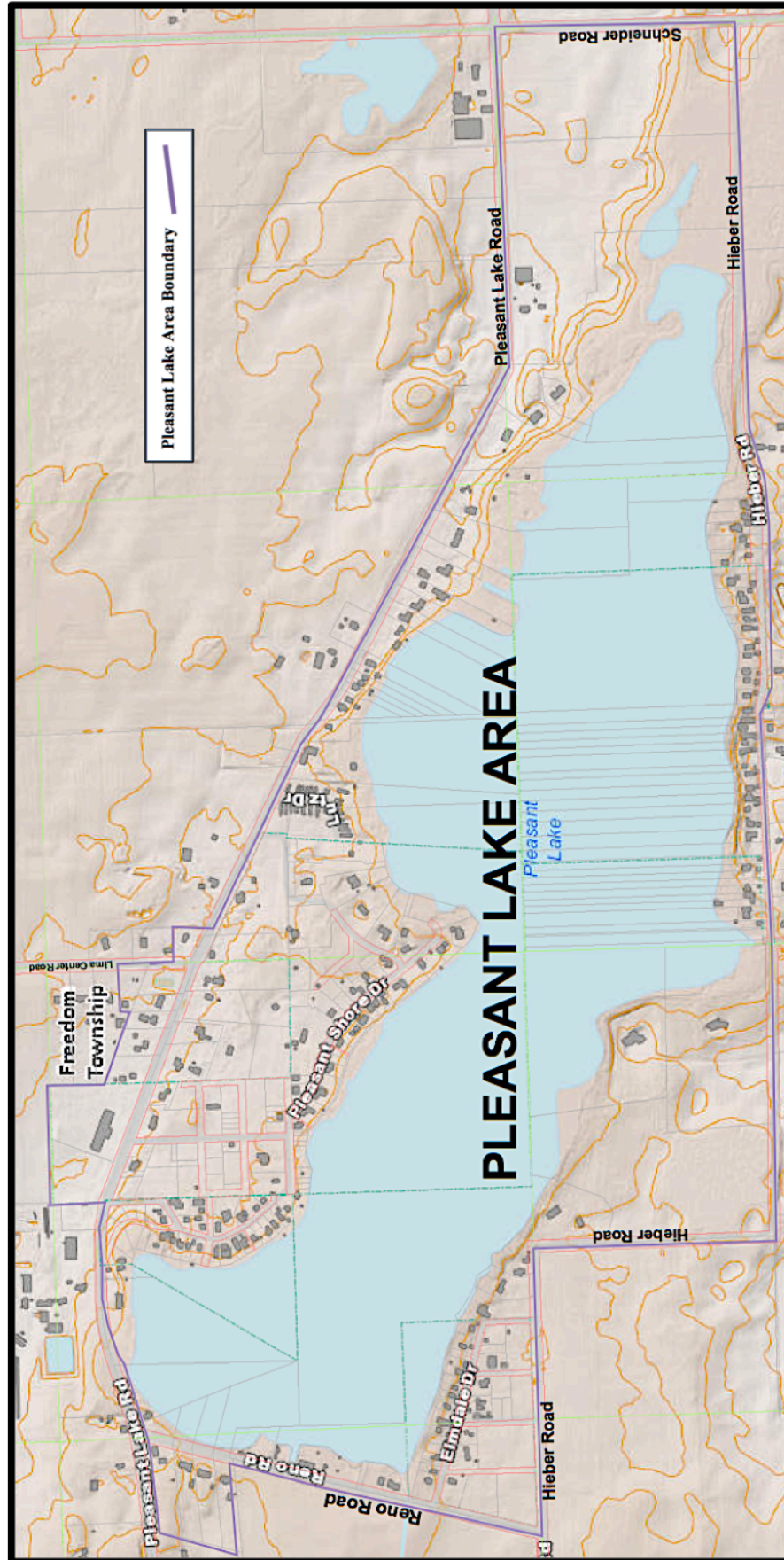
This Pleasant Lake Area Plan is established in recognition of the historic development of Fredonia as a rural hamlet around Pleasant Lake, which is the symbolic and geographic center of Freedom Township. Non-residential land uses in this area include the Township Hall, a small general store, veterinary clinic and the Pleasant Lake Inn. The schools, hardware store, gas station, bank, post office, and sawmill remain only as historical footnotes. Connected to the Pleasant Lake Inn are an apartment building and a manufactured housing park. This, along with residential dwellings, many of which were once used as seasonal cabins or weekend destinations but now serve as year-around homes, give this area a variety of living options. Agricultural activities also continue to be an important part of the Pleasant Lake Area.

The Pleasant Lake Area remains the focal point of Freedom Township and contains the highest density of residential land uses in the Township. This plan recognizes the importance of the 210-acre lake, which serves the residential community with its scenic beauty and recreational opportunities, and as a source of water. The high residential density benefits from the lake, but is also a major threat to water quality from septic field leaching, storm water degradation, sediment discharge, and shoreline erosion.

SUSTAINABILITY

The combination of sustainable land uses in the Pleasant Lake Area is key to the long-term protection of the lake and the community. A balance will have to be achieved by allowing densities and land uses that do not put additional pressure on water quality and the natural environment of the lake's watershed. Accordingly, the basic residential density for the Pleasant Lake Area shall be limited to Low Density Residential. Residential development should be contained to lake frontage and compliant with regulations controlling septic, well, and stormwater.

Map 8 – Pleasant Lake Area, Defined



Source: Washtenaw County and Consultant

SPECIAL PLANNING AREA NO. 1: PLEASANT LAKE SCHOOL

The former Pleasant Lake School building and grounds on the north side of Pleasant Lake Road east of Reno Road have been identified on Map 11-2 (Future Land Use Map – Pleasant Lake Area Detail) as “Special Planning Area No. 1” for purposes of this Master Plan. The existing brick building was constructed in 1953, following a historic 1952 vote of Township residents to consolidate six of the original “one-room schoolhouse” districts into a new “Pleasant Lake School District – Consolidated Freedom No. 1. As noted in The Early Days: Celebrating our 175th Anniversary, a history of Freedom Township edited by Raymond M. Berg, *“The building was looked upon at the time as not only a new consolidated school for Freedom Township’s future, but (also as) a community center for the Pleasant Lake Area.”*

Pressure for further consolidation in the 1950s moved the building under the control of the Manchester Community School District in 1956. The site continued to be used as an elementary school into the 1980s, and then for vocational training programs. The final school use for the site was Manchester’s Alternative Education Program, which occupied the building until 2002. The district later sold the property to a private property owner.

As noted above, this building was constructed in part to serve as a community resource for the Pleasant Lake Area. It remains a very prominent site within the community. The sale of the property into private ownership and resulting loss of this facility as a public resource represents a significant loss to the community.

The site is currently zoned for commercial purposes, but has remained largely unoccupied. The existing building and site are well suited for use as a school, but it is the Township’s understanding that the school district may have imposed a deed restriction restricting future use of the site as a school as part of the sale (this was reported by the owner, but not verified).

To accomplish the various goals as presented within this Master Plan, the following policies are set forth for Special Planning Area No. 1:

1. This underutilized site has the potential to create blight and nuisance challenges for the Township. The Township’s ordinance enforcement officials should monitor the building and site regularly, and should work with the property owner to ensure that regular maintenance is performed and the building remains weathertight and in a functional condition for potential occupation.
2. The Township Board should consider collaborating with the current property owner and the leadership of the Manchester Community School District to remove any legal or other impediment to the future use of this building and site as a school. Much has changed in the education marketplace since this property first came under the control of the Manchester district. The building and site are very well suited for use by a private school or public charter academy, and could once again provide a unique schooling option for families in the Township.
3. Should the need arise to protect the character of the Pleasant Lake Area and ensure that this site remains available to serve as a community resource, the Township Board should consider developing contingency plans for the possible public purchase of this property.

4. For land use planning and zoning purposes, this site shall be designated for future use and redevelopment in accordance with the following:
 - The building and site should be redeveloped and used as a community facility consistent with the goals and policies of this chapter and Chapter 8, Plan for Community Facilities; and applicable Zoning Ordinance requirements.
 - The building and site may also be redeveloped and used for commercial purposes consistent with the goals and policies of this chapter and Chapter 6, Plan for Commercial; and applicable Zoning Ordinance requirements.
 - Redevelopment of the site involving demolition of the existing facilities should follow the planned unit development (PUD) process in the Zoning Ordinance.

SPECIAL PLANNING AREA NO. 2: EAST END REDEVELOPMENT SITE

The former site of the historic Pleasant Lake Inn on the south side of Pleasant Lake Road between Lima Center Road and Schneider Road has also been identified as a special planning area for purposes of this Master Plan. Also included in this special planning area, as depicted on Map 11-2 (Future Land Use Map – Pleasant Lake Area Detail), are the existing mobile home park on the south side of the road west of the Pleasant Lake Inn site, and the vacant property on the north side of the road that was used for parking for the Inn.

The following is excerpted with permission from page 119 of The Early Days: Celebrating our 175th Anniversary, a history of Freedom Township edited by Raymond M. Berg:

The Pleasant Lake Inn began as a two-story house dating to the 1880 German immigrant Jacob Lutz. The front part of the house became a saloon and grocery store, and he rented upstairs rooms to travelers. The next owner, David Schneider, added a dance hall upstairs. In the early 1920s, when guests began arriving by automobile, he dismantled the barn and used the wood to build a bigger dance hall, with a high-beamed ceiling, down by the lake. The hall boasted a hardwood floor, a loft where bands played, tall windows to let in light, and two wood stoves in opposite corners for heat. Manny Sodt bought the inn in 1925 and moved the dance hall next to the house.

The Pleasant Lake Inn site and associated parking area are currently zoned for commercial purposes. Most recently, the property has been used as a bar and rental apartments. On February 8, 2015, the building suffered a catastrophic fire that caused no injuries but left the property uninhabitable.

The existing mobile home park is zoned R-6 (Manufactured Housing Park District), and is occupied by about two dozen older mobile home units; most of which have been on the property for decades.



Source: Consultant, February 9, 2015

To accomplish the various goals as presented within this Master Plan, the following policies are set forth for this special planning area:

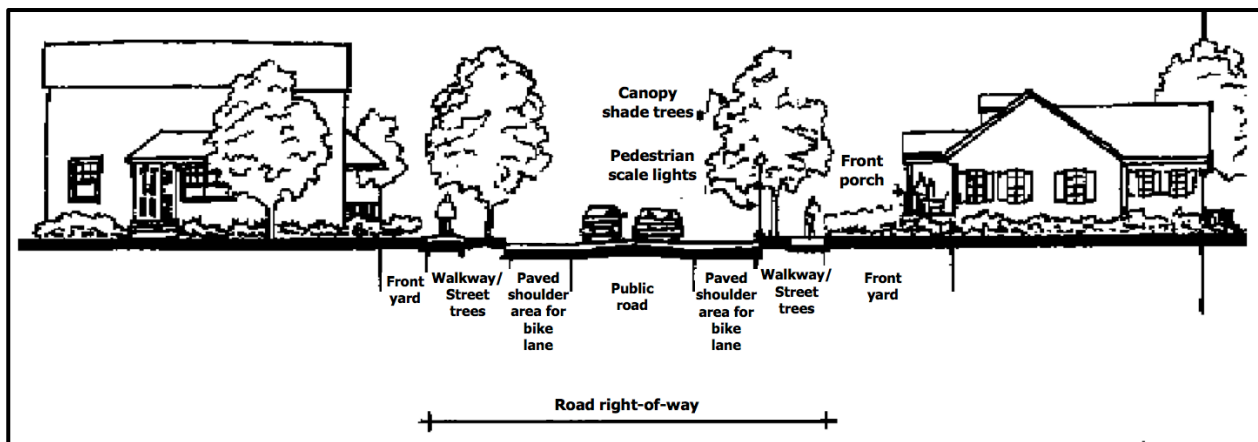
1. The Township’s ordinance enforcement officials should monitor the former Pleasant Lake Inn site regularly, and should work with the property owner to ensure that it is secured against unauthorized entry and does not become a nuisance until the process of recovery from the fire and any future redevelopment has been completed.
2. For land use planning and zoning purposes, former Pleasant Lake Inn site and associated parking area shall be designated for future use and redevelopment in accordance with the following:
 - The former Pleasant Lake Inn building and site should be redeveloped and used for a lakefront restaurant, bed and breakfast inn or small hotel, or a compatible mixture of similar commercial activities combined with a residential component of limited density. All such activities should be consistent with the goals and policies of this chapter and Chapter 6, Plan for Commercial; and applicable Zoning Ordinance requirements.
 - Because of the limited land area for parking south of Pleasant Lake Road, the former Pleasant Lake Inn’s parking area on the north side of the road should remain planned for future off-street parking activities associated with the lakefront property. All such activities should be consistent with the goals and policies of this chapter and Chapter 6, Plan for Commercial; and applicable Zoning Ordinance requirements.
3. As noted in the subsection of Chapter 5, Plan for Residential, entitled “Manufactured Housing Park Residential Development Policies,” it is recognized that maintaining the existing manufactured housing park zoning classification is in the Township’s interest, and that the owner/operator of the mobile home park should be encouraged to upgrade and modernize the park’s amenities, infrastructure, and housing units for the benefit of the Township residents that live there.
- ~~3.4.~~ For land use planning and zoning purposes, the existing mobile home park site shall be designated for future use and redevelopment in accordance with the following:
 - The site should be maintained as a mobile home park consistent with the goals and policies of this chapter and Chapter 5, Plan for Residential, as long as the land use is viable and does not become a nuisance to the Township.
 - The site may also be redeveloped and used for commercial purposes in conjunction with an overall plan for redevelopment of this entire special planning area, consistent with the goals and policies of this chapter and Chapter 6, Plan for Commercial; and applicable Zoning Ordinance requirements.
 - The site may also be redeveloped and used for low density, single-family residential purposes consistent with the goals and policies of this chapter and Chapter 5, Plan for Residential; and applicable Zoning Ordinance requirements.
4. Redevelopment of land within this special planning area should follow the planned unit development (PUD) process in the Zoning Ordinance.

LAKE AREA DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

To accomplish the various goals as presented within this Master Plan, the following policies are set forth for development in the Pleasant Lake Area:

1. Land use patterns and new development in the Pleasant Lake Area shall be designed to limit potential adverse impact on water quality, including minimizing grading and filling of land; preventing bio-chemical pollution; protecting existing vegetative buffers; and reducing impervious surfaces and separating them from surface waters by vegetated buffers.
2. Erosion shall be controlled during construction and after construction by limiting stripping of vegetation, soil removal, and re-grading; minimizing the duration of exposure of disturbed areas; and requiring establishment of permanent vegetation or other techniques to prevent erosion.
3. The Township should promote the voluntary use of natural vegetative buffers along the shoreline of Pleasant Lake to minimize fertilizer runoff into the lake.
4. New development in the Pleasant Lake Area should be clustered on less-sensitive land areas from an environmental and water quality perspective.
5. New development along Pleasant Lake Road in this area shall be designed to maintain the historical identity of the area as a rural hamlet.
6. New roads and road improvements in this area shall incorporate a village road cross-section, rather than the county's standard rural two-lane cross-section, and shall be designed for low-speed travel (see Figure 6 below).

Figure 6 – Example of a Village Road Cross-Section



Source: Consultant

7. Each development proposal should be reviewed in terms of its relationship to the entire Pleasant Lake Area, in addition to existing site conditions and adjacent land uses. Existing land uses should be adequately screened from more intensive new development on adjacent land.

8. No public marina, public boat ramp or waterfront public park should be developed on Pleasant Lake.
9. “Keyhole development” in which a group of non-lakefront residents are granted lake access through a small area of waterfront land should be prohibited on Pleasant Lake.

LAKE AREA ZONING PLAN POLICIES

In addition to the policies outlined in chapter 14, Zoning Plan, the following zoning-related policies are hereby established for the Pleasant Lake Area:

1. The new (2014) Lake (LK) District in the Township Zoning Ordinance may require additional refinements of standards for yard setbacks, lot coverage, fencing, accessory structures, parking, and other dimensional requirements to allow reasonable development and use of existing platted lots, and to minimize the need for variance applications from Pleasant Lake Area residents.
2. It is the preference of the Township that any future multi-lot residential or large-scale non-residential development within the Pleasant Lake Area shall be presented as part of a proposed planned unit development (PUD) project. Such regulations will ensure that the environmental concerns of the lake community, desired scale, and planned land use densities are addressed by the developer in a manner that provides long-term benefits to the Pleasant Lake Area and the Township as a whole.
3. Commercial rezoning and new commercial development within the Pleasant Lake area shall be focused along Pleasant Lake Road, and shall not be on lands with lake access. The development of new commercial land uses should be limited to match the character and scale of the existing land uses within the Pleasant Lake area. Rezoning of additional land for commercial development beyond the existing commercial zoning depicted on the Township’s Official Zoning Map should generally be limited to non-waterfront parcels directly adjacent to existing commercial zoning districts.

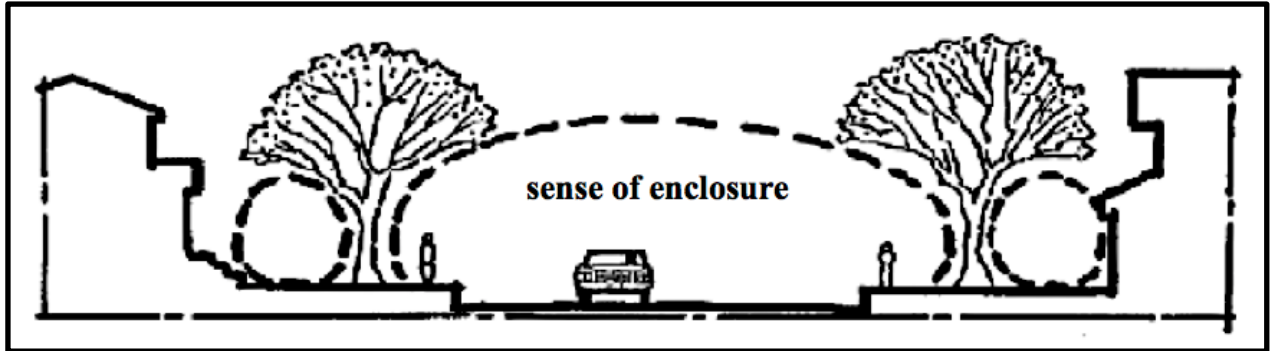
PLEASANT LAKE AREA TRANSPORTATION PLAN

In addition to the policies outlined in chapter 12, Transportation Plan, the following transportation-related policies are hereby established for the Pleasant Lake Area:

1. Currently, residences and other land uses along Pleasant Lake Road in this area are impacted by high-speed gravel truck traffic, with its associated noise and safety hazards. Road design will be a key element in the successful reduction of speeds within the Hamlet. The visual prospective of this road should be of a village scale and character with a cross-section that respects a human-scale and creates a “sense of enclosure” for motorists and pedestrians (see Figure 7 below).
2. Future improvements to Pleasant Lake Road in this area should include sufficient road width and clearance for safe passage of modern farm equipment, while also including some or all of the following traffic calming elements:

- A two-lane road configuration, with the addition of tree plantings along the edge of the right-of-way or other visual cues to alert motorists that they have entered a low-speed zone.
- A reduced speed limit of 25 – 35 miles per hour is recommended for this portion of Pleasant Lake Road.

Figure 7 – Sense of Enclosure in Road Design



Source: Consultant

2. Another key to traffic calming is the installation of gateway signage on Pleasant Lake Road at the east and west entrances into the Pleasant Lake Area. Such signage would serve as a visual element for motorists that they are entering an area of reduced speed, and could be combined with landscaping and other architectural features characteristic of a rural hamlet. Additional easement area may be required for the installation of such signage.