

# FREEDOM TOWNSHIP

WASHTENAW COUNTY,  
MICHIGAN

# MASTER PLAN



# FREEDOM TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

PREPARED BY THE  
FREEDOM TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION

Planning Commission Public Hearing..... December 1, 2015  
Adopted by the Planning Commission ..... December 1, 2015  
Final Approval by the Township Board ..... December 8, 2015



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**Dale Weidmayer, Supervisor**

**Valisa Bristle, Clerk**

**Rudy Layher, Treasurer**

**Dennis Huehl, Trustee**

**Dan Schaible, Trustee**

## PLANNING COMMISSION

**Larry Lindemann, Chair**

**Matt Little, Vice-Chair**

**Carol Ann Huehl, Secretary**

**Dan Schaible, Township Board Representative**

**Susan Ochs**

## CONSULTANTS

**Donald N. Pennington**

**Rodney C. Nanney, AICP**





**FREEDOM TOWNSHIP  
WASHTENAW COUNTY, MICHIGAN**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP BOARD TO  
ADOPT THE NEW FREEDOM TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN**

The following preamble and resolution were offered by Trustee Dennis Huehl and supported by Clerk Valisa Bristle.

**Whereas**, the Township initiated a process to prepare an updated Master Plan, and has provided all required notices consistent with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Public Act 33 of 2008 as amended); and

**Whereas**, on December 1, 2015 the Planning Commission adopted the updated Master Plan, and referred the Plan to the Township Board for consideration and final approval in accordance with Section 43(3) of the enabling act.

**Now, therefore, be it resolved** that the Township Board of Trustees concurs with the Planning Commission, and hereby adopts in the whole the updated Freedom Township Master Plan.

**Be it further resolved** that the Township Board hereby directs that copies of the adopted Master Plan be forwarded to Washtenaw County, all local units of government contiguous to the Township, and other entities as required by Section 43(5) of the MPEA.

**Roll Call Vote:**

**Ayes:** Huehl, Schaible, Layher, Weidmayer, Bristle

**Nays:** none

**Absent:** none

**Abstain:** none

**RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
/s/  
The Honorable Dale Weidmayer, Supervisor  
Freedom Township

\_\_\_\_\_  
/s/  
The Honorable Valisa Bristle, Clerk  
Freedom Township

Dated: December 8, 2015

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## 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.

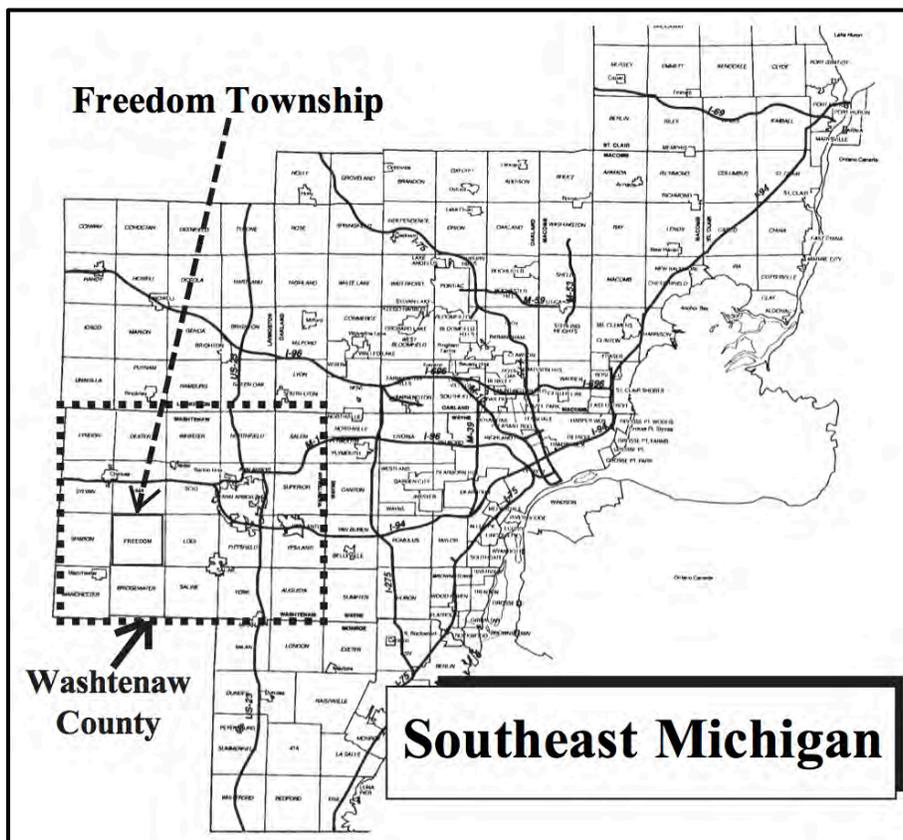
**PLANNING AREA**

**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, lakes, 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:

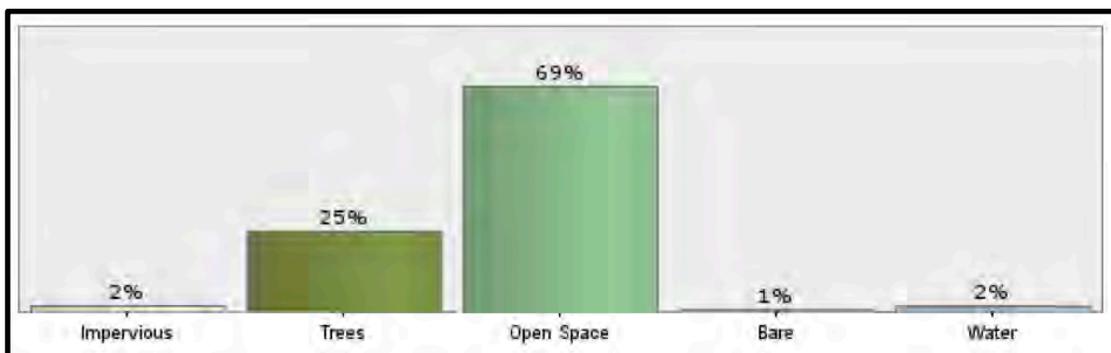
**Table 1 – Percent of Total Land Use, 2008**

Land Use Category	Total Area (acres)	Percentage of Total Land Area (%)
<b>Agricultural</b>	14,972	65.3%
<b>Single Family Residential</b>	4,987	21.7%
<b>Multiple Family Residential</b>	3	< 1%
<b>Commercial</b>	19	< 1%
<b>Industrial</b>	1,579	6.9%
<b>Public &amp; Quasi Public</b>	139	< 1%
<b>Parks, Recreation, and Open Space</b>	657	2.9%
<b>Transportation, Communication, and Utility</b>	319	1.4%
<b>Water</b>	266	1.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	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 (%)
<b>Impervious</b>	(structures, roads, driveways, parking lots)	455	2.0%
<b>Trees</b>	(woody vegetation, trees)	5,768	25.3%
<b>Open Space</b>	(agricultural fields, grasslands, turfgrass)	15,802	69.4%
<b>Bare</b>	(soil, aggregate piles, unplanted fields)	257	1.1%
<b>Water</b>	(rivers, lakes, drains, ponds)	491	2.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>22,773</b>	<b>100%</b>

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 fist 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 175<sup>th</sup> 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**

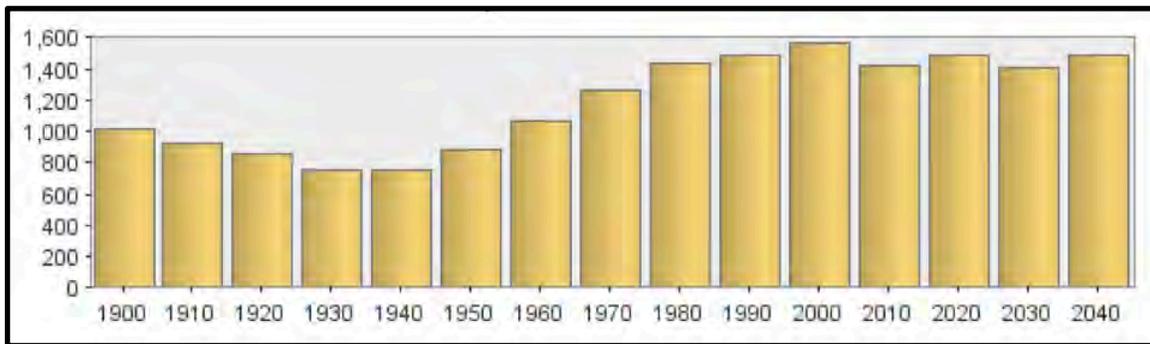
From the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century until World War Two, Freedom Township experienced a gradual population decline (see Figure 2 below). This reflects the general pattern experienced by many rural communities in the United States during these decades, as more people moved from rural into more 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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)**

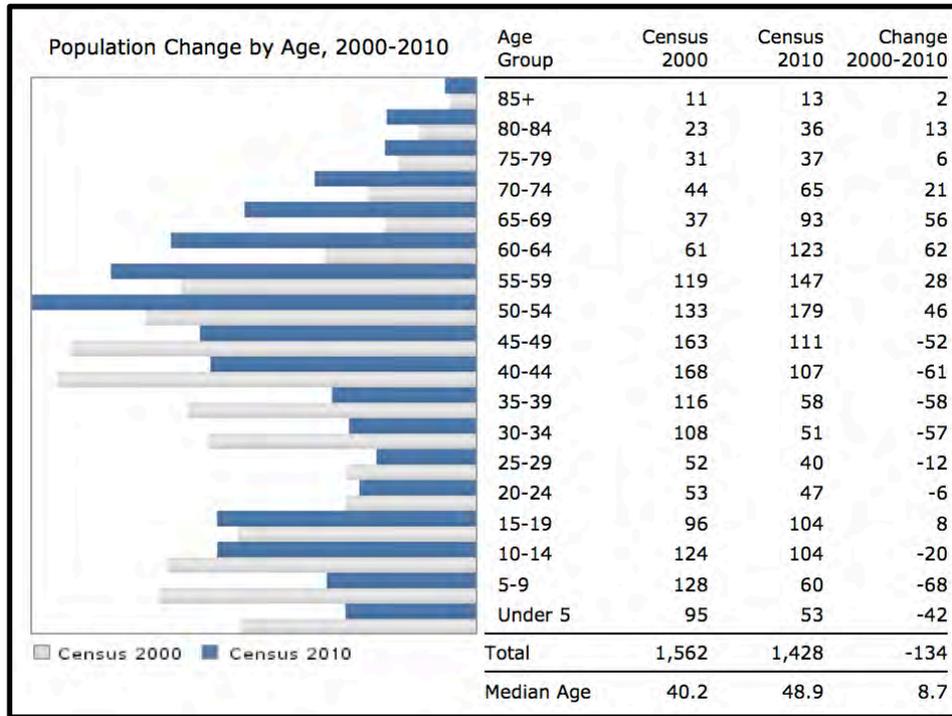


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Southeastern Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG).

**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).

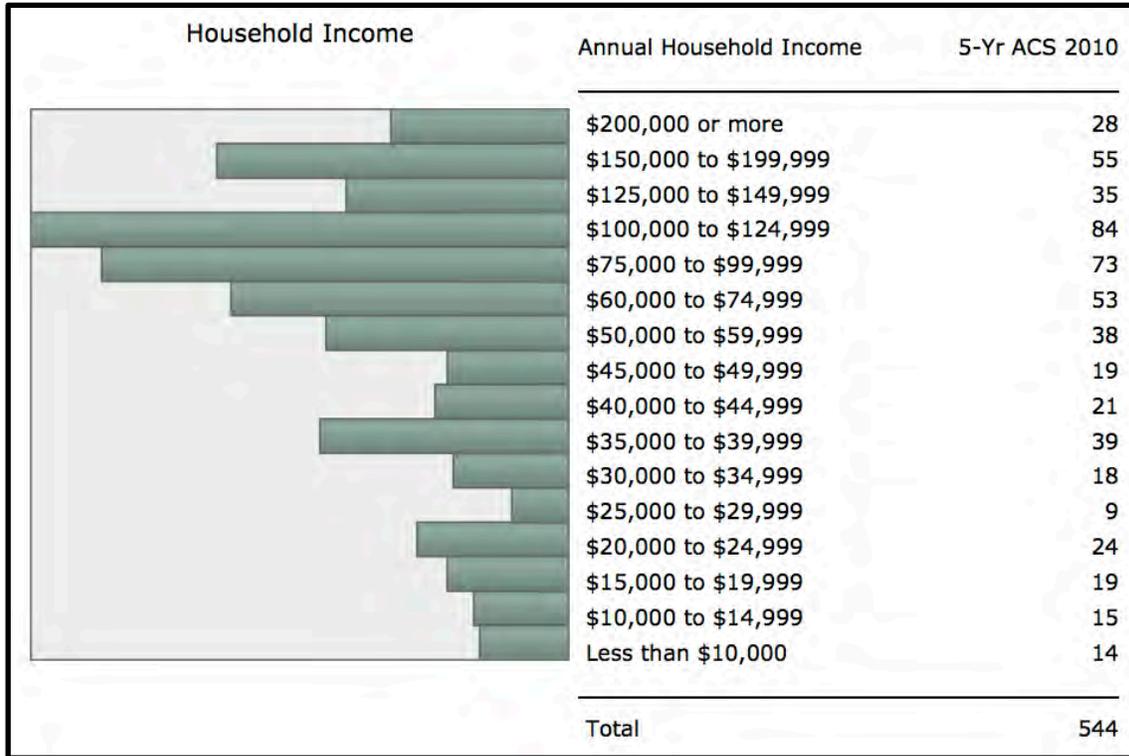
**Table 4 – Median Household Income (2000 – 2010)**

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%
<b>Freedom Township</b>	<b>\$81,569</b>	<b>\$78,750</b>	<b>-\$2,819</b>	<b>- 3.5%</b>

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.

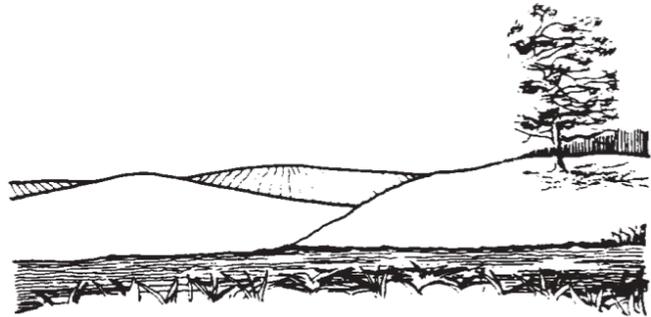
## CHAPTER 3

### 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.

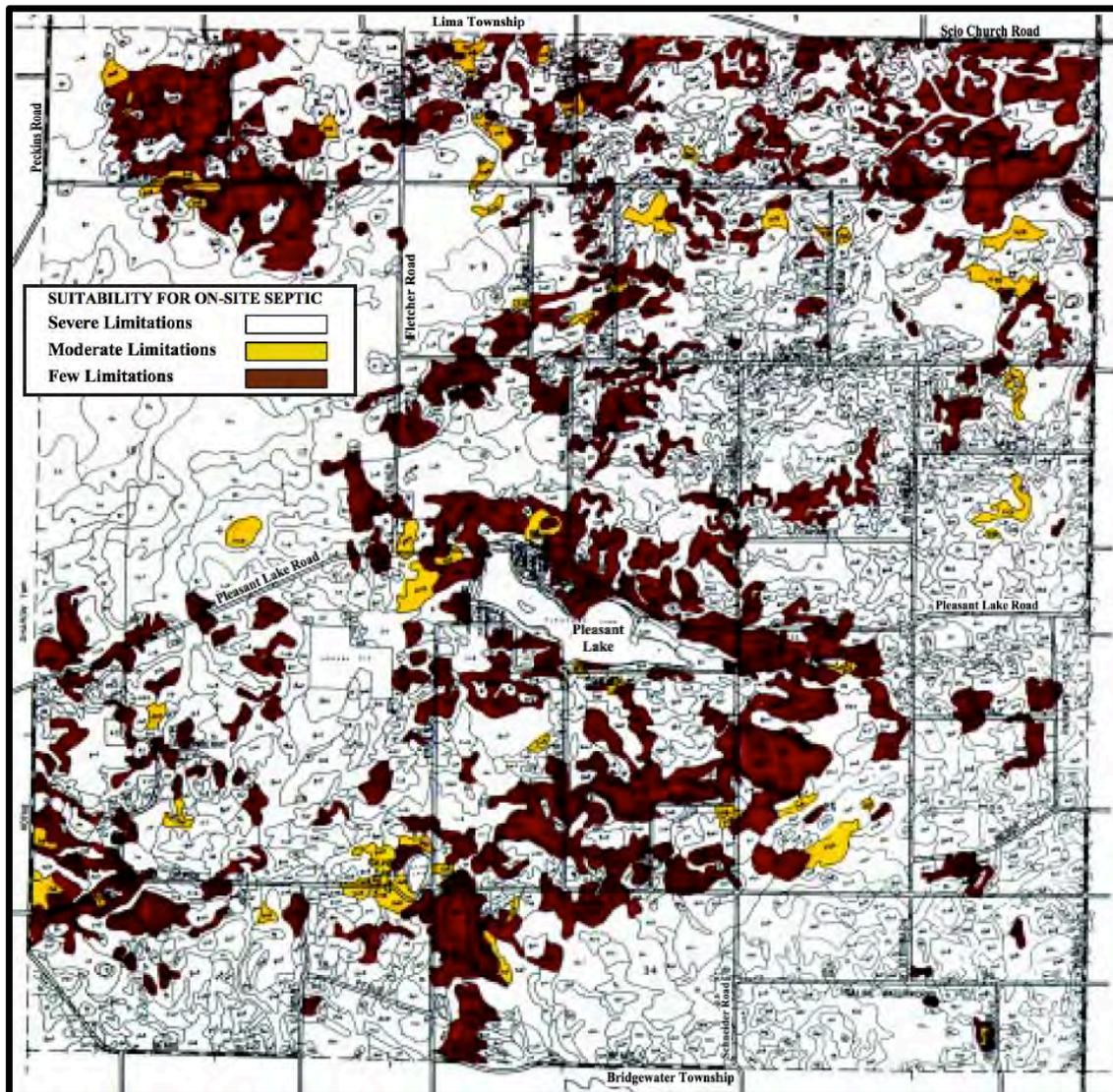
The elements of this plan relate to a natural resource system that has been developed around significant natural features, major wooded areas, soils with severe limitations for residential development, and a network of existing county drains. Natural resource areas, therefore, are of extreme importance 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



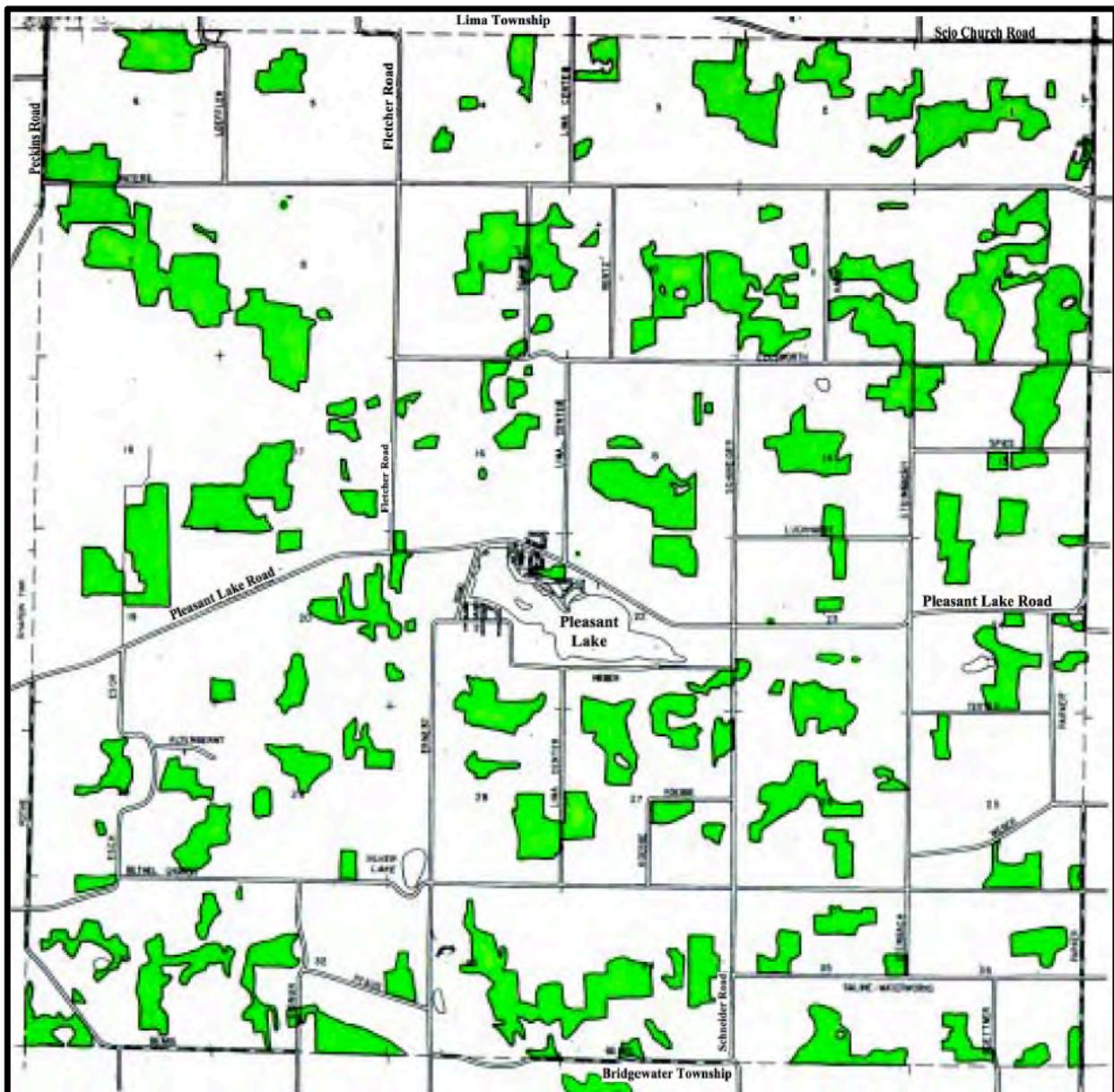
Source: Washtenaw County and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service

**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**



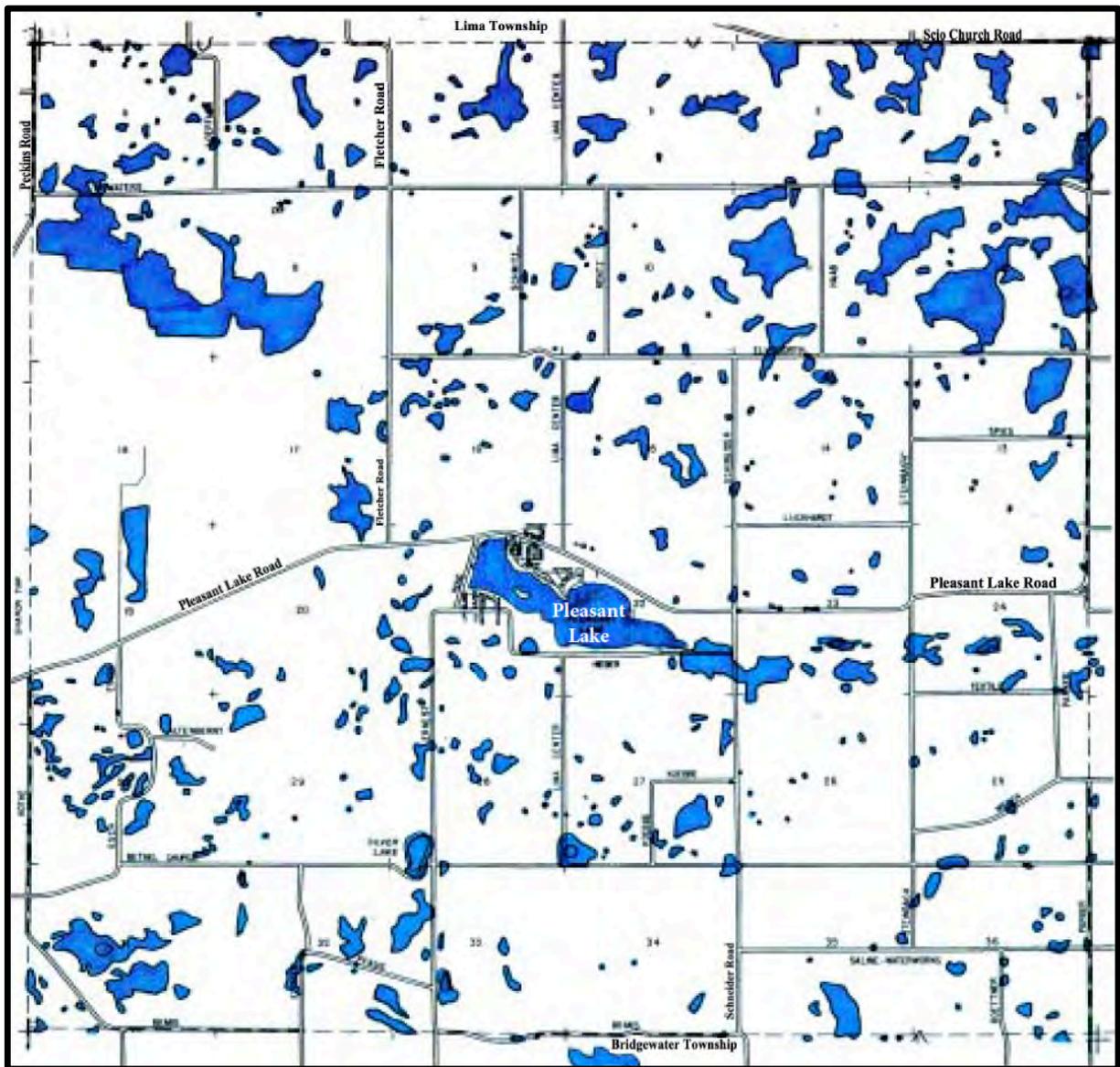
Source: Washtenaw County

**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**



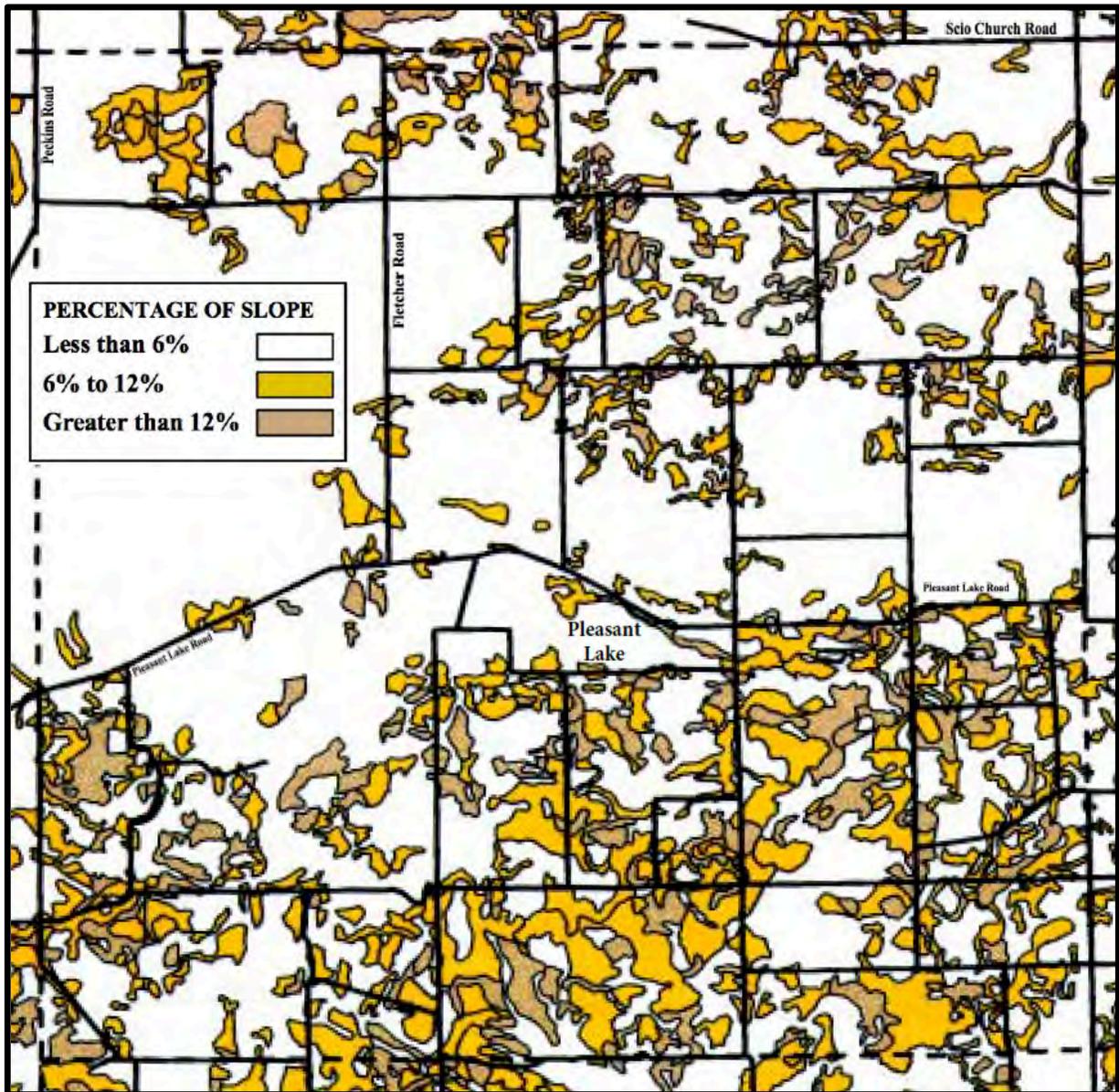
Source: Washtenaw County

**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.



## 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.

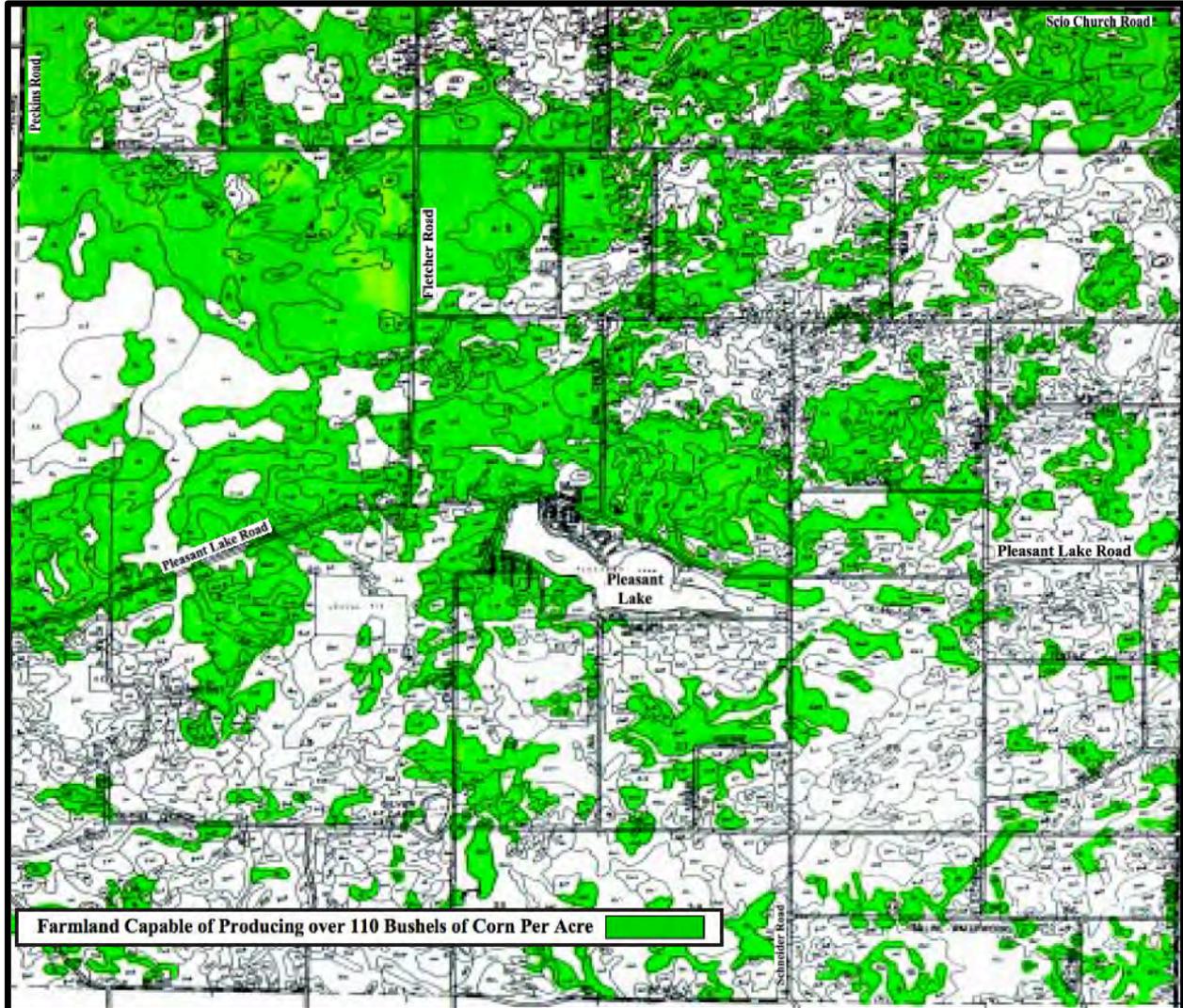
Virtually all sections within the Township are orientated toward agricultural activities. The following characteristics are common:

- 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**

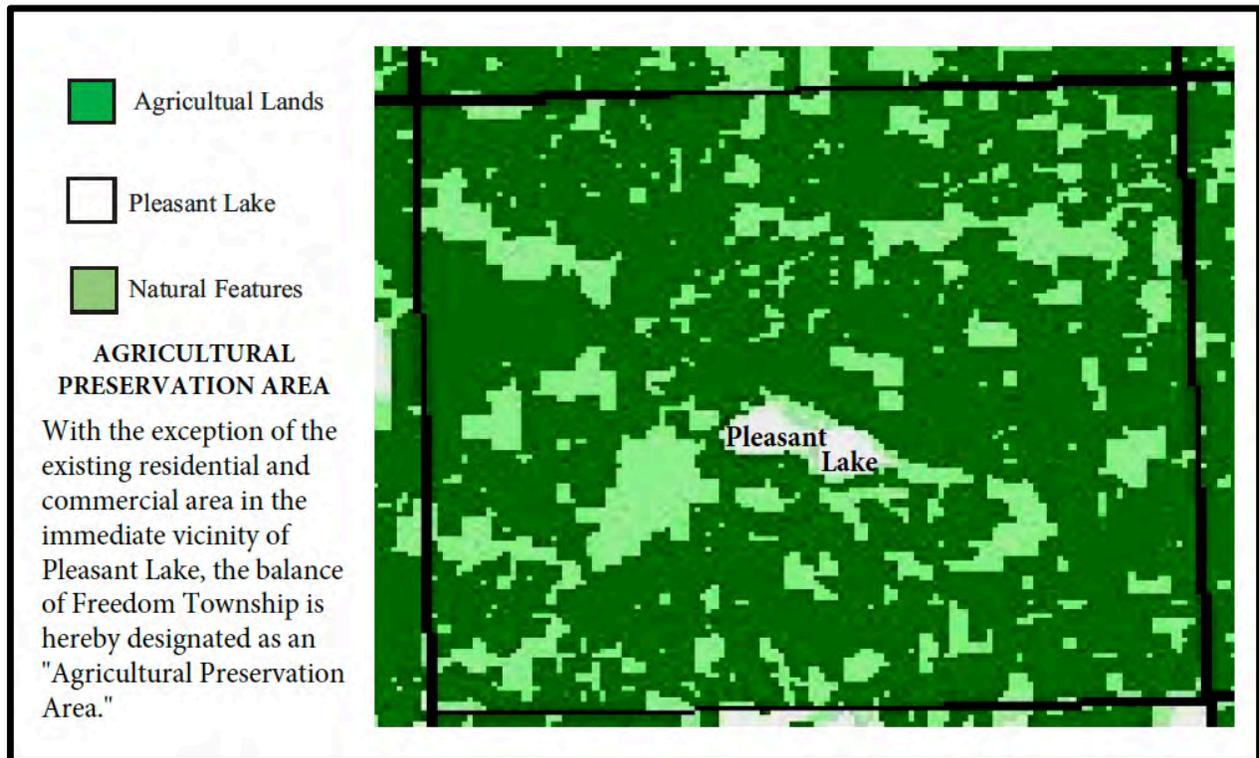


Source: Washtenaw County and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service

**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 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.

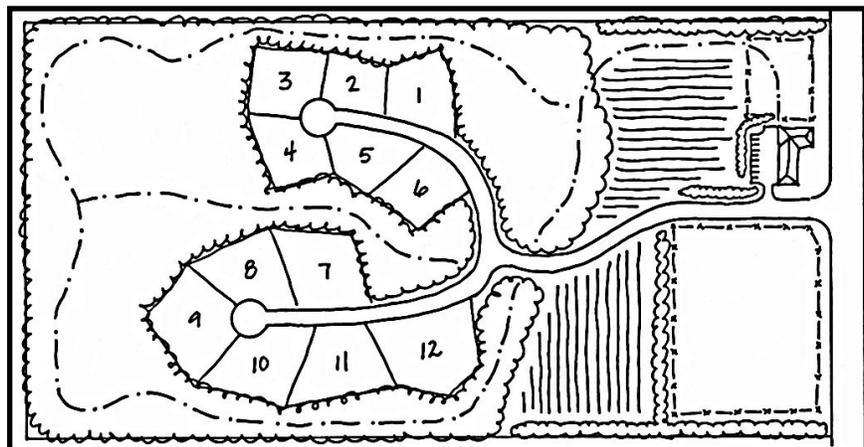
### OTHER RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

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.

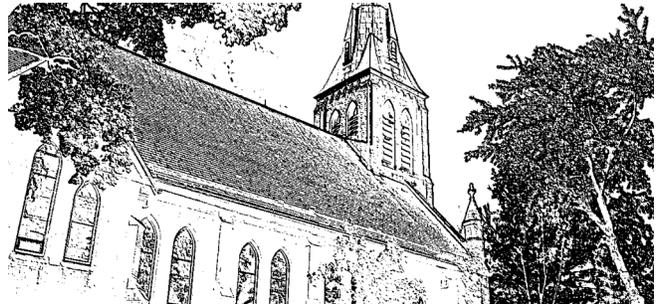
# CHAPTER 8

## 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 shall be 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 175<sup>th</sup> 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 175<sup>th</sup> 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 had 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 owner subsequently demolished the remaining portion of the building.

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:

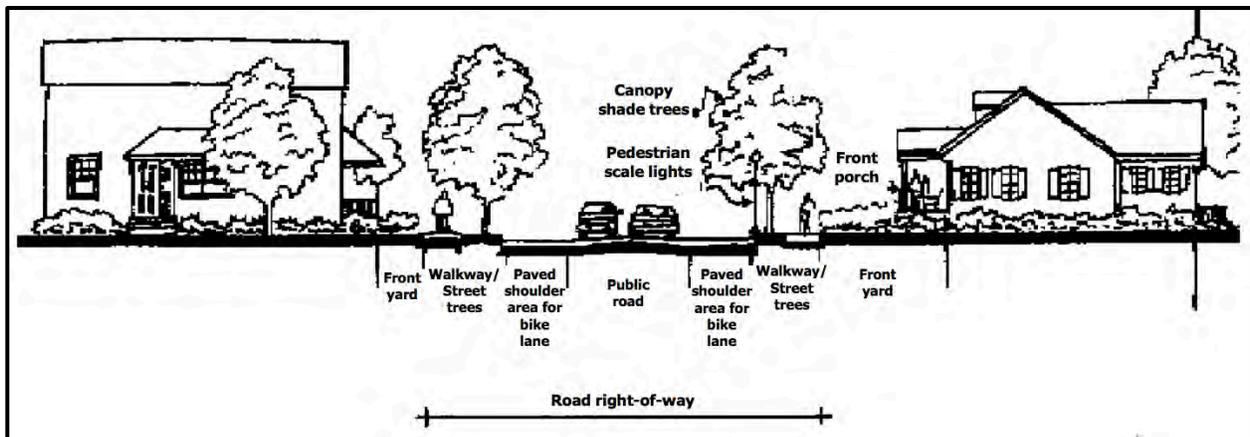
1. The Township’s ordinance enforcement officials should monitor the former Pleasant Lake Inn site regularly, and should work with the property owner to ensure that it is secured against unauthorized entry and does not become a nuisance until the process of recovery from the fire and any future redevelopment 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 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.
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 because it is a private lake with ownership by lakefront landowners generally extending to the center of the 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.

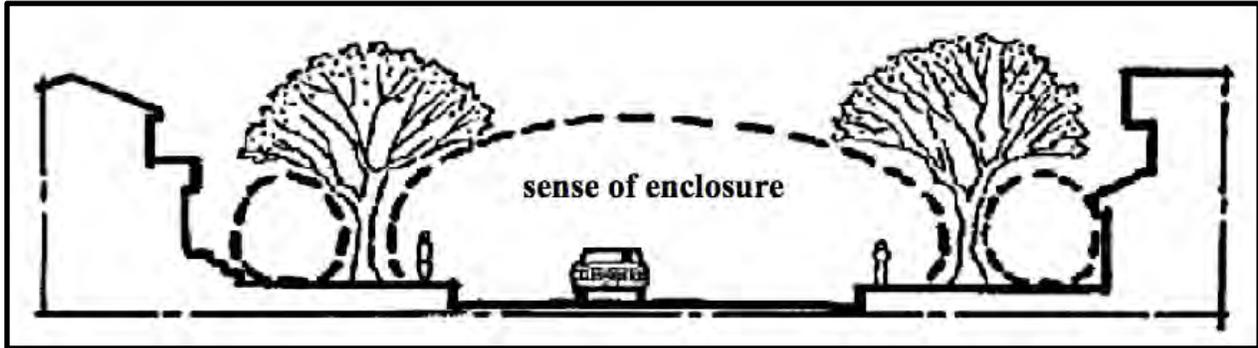
### PLEASANT LAKE AREA TRANSPORTATION PLAN

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.

## CHAPTER 10 EXTRACTION AREA PLAN

This chapter is intended to link the Township’s overall goals with specific land use policy recommendations for the control of sand and gravel extraction-related land uses within the Township’s scope of authority under applicable state laws.

### GOAL

**Control the extraction of sand and gravel resources within Freedom Township to ensure that they do not disrupt the environment, impair the water supplies, cause noise nuisances, dust nuisances, damage the roads and create conditions that are dangerous to Township residents.**



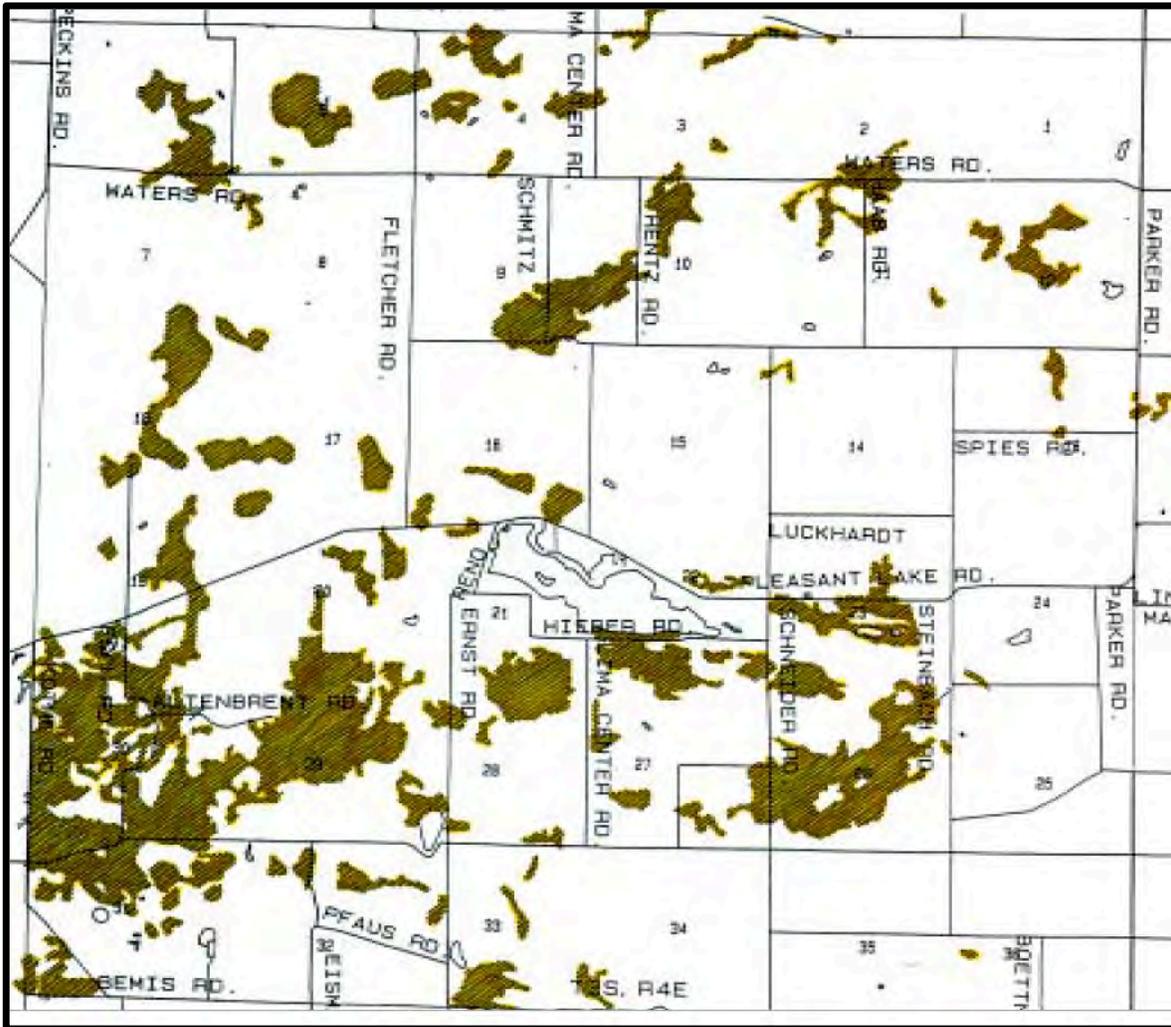
### BACKGROUND

Freedom Township contains significant deposits of sand and gravel. Major extraction companies are currently mining sand and gravel from several sites within the Township. These companies currently own over 1,500 acres of land in the Township, which is more than 5% of the Township’s total land area. Approximately 25% of this area has been or is currently being mined. The amount mined varies significantly from year to year, from under 1,000,000 tons to over 2,000,000 tons annually. During the peak construction season in more active years, the Township has experienced as many as 500 truck trips by sand and gravel haulers on a given day.

It is recognized that sand, gravel and other earthen deposits within the Township’s land area are nonrenewable natural resources necessary and beneficial to the welfare of its inhabitants and the surrounding regional area. The Master Plan attempts to provide for the utilization of these resources in a manner compatible with nearby residential areas; to protect human health and the environment; and to ensure complete reclamation for another land use at the conclusion of the extraction process. The Master Plan addresses these resources because mining operations and the related activities can cause unique and substantial impacts upon the environment and the welfare of adjacent properties and the community.

Environmental goals and policies contained within the Master Plan are directed toward preserving the natural environment and ensuring proper use of surface and ground water supplies. Secondary impacts of extraction operations including noise nuisances, dust nuisances, damage to roads, increased truck traffic, and other conditions that are hazardous to Township residents are also of concern and are addressed by the Freedom Township Extraction Ordinance.

Map 9 – Potential Sand Deposits in Freedom Township



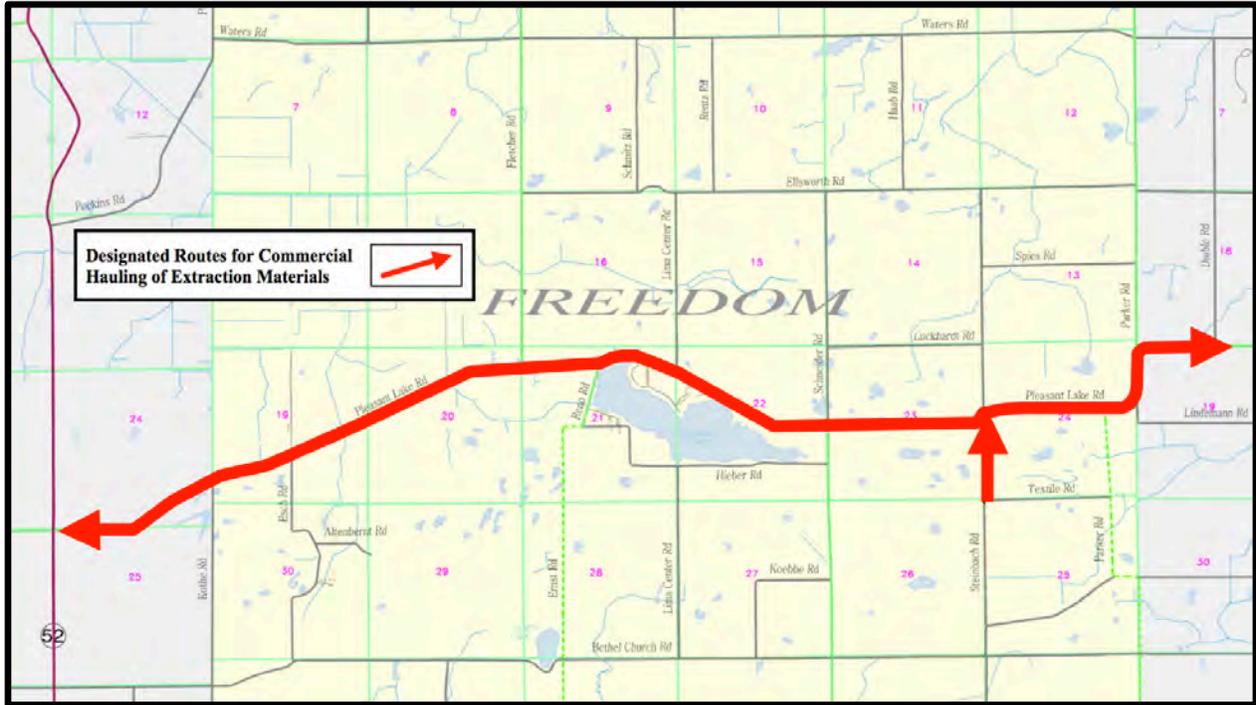
Source: Washtenaw County

**EXTRACTION HAUL ROUTE POLICIES**

To minimize the off-site impacts of truck traffic from mining activities on residents, roads, and other land uses in Freedom Township, only Class “A” paved county primary roads that are designated as haul routes for commercial hauling of extraction materials shall be utilized by sand and gravel trucks to haul mined materials out of Freedom Township. The designated routes for commercial hauling of extraction materials within Freedom Township shall be limited to only the paved portions of Pleasant Lake Road and Steinbach Road (see Map 10).

Fletcher Road shall not be used for commercial hauling of extraction materials because of inadequate road infrastructure and connectivity to the north in Lima Township.

Map 10 – Designated Routes for Commercial Hauling of Extraction Materials



Source: Washtenaw County Road Commission

**OTHER EXTRACTION-RELATED POLICIES**

To ensure that mining activities and associated off-site impacts are not out of proportion and within prospective as they relate to existing residents, natural resources, and other land uses taking place within Freedom Township, the following additional policies are set forth:

1. All land to be utilized for extraction purposes shall have a permit as required within the Township’s Extraction Ordinance. Due to the various impacts of trucks that haul commercial extraction materials on the Township’s roadways, removal of extraction materials from approved extraction operations may be allowed at the rate of one truck per two acres per day of land that has been approved for such extraction purposes. At no time shall any approved extraction operation exceed 350 trucks per day for hauling extraction materials on the Township’s roadways.
2. The cumulative acreage of active extractions shall be allowed to operate only by compliance with Freedom Township Extraction Permit Process.
3. To protect the public health, safety, and welfare of Township residents, the following limits are hereby established on sand and gravel extraction operations in Freedom Township:
  - No more than 3,000,000 tons of cumulative extraction materials shall be mined within any given year within Freedom Township.
  - At no time shall more that 700 acres of total Township acreage be designated or used for extraction purposes.

4. All extraction operations permitted by the Township shall submit an annual reclamation plan. This plan will ensure that the future sustainable land uses can be developed without detrimental impact to the resources of Freedom Township.

# CHAPTER 11 FUTURE LAND USE MAPS

This chapter illustrates the arrangement of planned future land uses in Freedom Township, based upon the Township’s overall goals and the specific land use policies defined in chapters 4 – 9.

## BACKGROUND

The recommendations of this land use plan also have a long-range planning horizon and do not necessarily imply that a particular near-term rezoning is appropriate. Phasing in of any changes to the Township’s Official Zoning Map should be consistent with the land use and development related goals, objectives, and policy recommendations contained in this Master Plan, as well as the implementation and phasing guidelines contained in Chapter 14, Zoning Plan and the Freedom Township Zoning Ordinance. Land uses in the Pleasant Lake Area are further subject to the policies of Chapter 9, Pleasant Lake Area Plan.

The future land use maps in this chapter are intended to show generalized land use, and are not intended to indicate precise size, shape or dimension. The boundaries of various future land use designations on Maps 11-1 and 11-2 generally correspond to existing lot boundaries, section lines, the centerline of existing road rights-of-way, and other physical or geographic features of the Township.

Table 5 lists the land use classifications designated on Maps 11-1 and 11-2 of this chapter, and the references to the chapter(s) of this Master Plan where more specific land use policies are found.

**Table 5 – Land Use Classifications**

Classification	Description
<b>Agricultural Preservation Area</b>	See Chapter 4, Plan for Agriculture
<b>Rural Residential</b>	See Chapter 5, Plan for Residential
<b>Lake Residential</b>	See Chapter 5, Plan for Residential; and Chapter 9, Pleasant Lake Area Plan
<b>Commercial</b>	See Chapter 6, Plan for Commercial; and Chapter 9, Pleasant Lake Area Plan
<b>Industrial</b>	See Chapter 7, Plan for Industrial
<b>Community Facilities</b>	See Chapter 8, Plan for Community Facilities
<b>Special Planning Area No. 1</b>	See Chapter 9, Pleasant Lake Area Plan
<b>Special Planning Area No. 2</b>	See Chapter 9, Pleasant Lake Area Plan

# Map 11-1 Future Land Use Map - Freedom Township



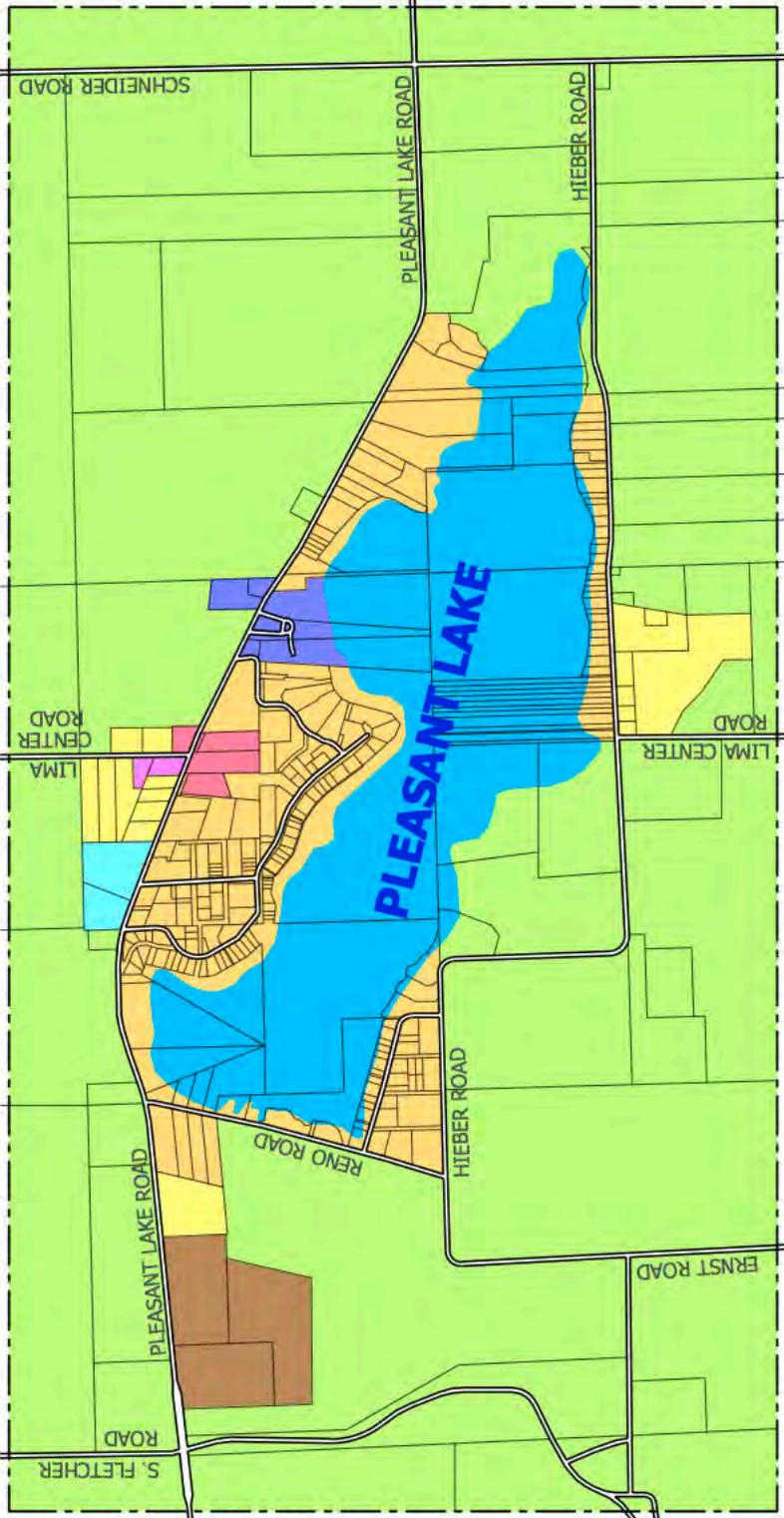
**LEGEND:**

	LAKE RESIDENTIAL
	RURAL RESIDENTIAL
	COMMERCIAL
	COMMUNITY FACILITIES
	INDUSTRIAL
	AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION AREA
	SPECIAL PLANNING AREA #1
	SPECIAL PLANNING AREA #2

Map prepared by:



# Map 11-2 Future Land Use Map - Pleasant Lake Area Detail



**LEGEND:**

[Light Blue Box]	LAKE RESIDENTIAL
[Light Green Box]	RURAL RESIDENTIAL
[Light Yellow Box]	COMMERCIAL
[Light Orange Box]	COMMUNITY FACILITIES
[Light Purple Box]	INDUSTRIAL
[Light Cyan Box]	AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION AREA
[Light Red Box]	SPECIAL PLANNING AREA #1
[Light Blue Box]	SPECIAL PLANNING AREA #2

Map prepared by:  
**constructive thinking**  
INC.



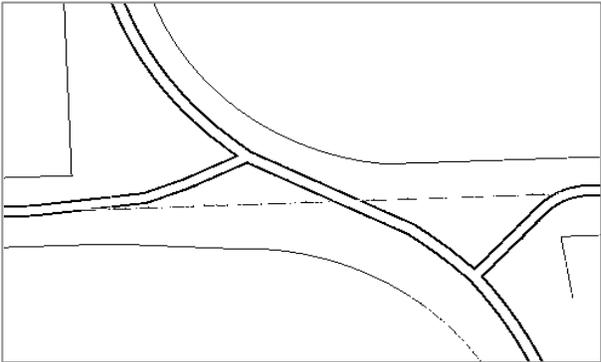


# CHAPTER 12 TRANSPORTATION PLAN

This chapter is intended to link the Township’s overall goals with specific policy recommendations for the future improvements to the Township’s transportation networks.

## GOAL

**To establish and maintain a road network and transportation system that facilitates safe, convenient, and efficient movement of people from place-to-place within and through Freedom Township, while preserving the rural character of the Township.**



## BACKGROUND

A well-designed and maintained road network is needed to provide access to property, mobility for citizens, and conduits for local economic activity. However, the pattern of land uses and number and type of access points onto roads impact the function of the road system. The function of the road system and its ability to move traffic in an efficient and convenient manner has a significant impact on the viability of land uses and the overall quality of life in a community. An examination of the local transportation network is an important part of a Master Plan, as land uses and the means of transporting goods and people are interdependent elements of a successful community. The implementation of a functional transportation network depends upon adherence to sound planning principles and an effective collaboration between Township, county and state officials and private landowners.

## COMPLETE STREETS IN THE TOWNSHIP

Public Acts 134 and 135 of 2010 established new project planning and coordination responsibilities for county and state transportation agencies in Michigan, as related to implementation of the “Complete Streets” policies defined by this package of laws.

These laws included amendments to the Act 51 program, which governs the funding and prioritization of road projects across the state. County and

**Complete Streets.** A comprehensive approach to transportation networks, which integrates all facilities in the road right-of-way (travel lanes, shoulders, sidewalks and non-motorized pathways, driveway access, etc.) to abutting buildings and land uses to create a connected network.

The intent of the “complete streets” approach to transportation planning is to ensure that all users (motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, etc.) are safely accommodated as part of transportation improvements along a road corridor.

state road authorities are now under obligation to consider all users of the road right-of-way as part of the planning of future road projects.

**Why should the Township be concerned with “complete streets” laws when the county and state are responsible for the road network?**

These public acts help to establish the Township Master Plan, and in particular this transportation planning element, as a powerful tool to influence decision-making by county and state road authorities.

In the absence of written and adopted road policies, the default county or state standard would apply to any future road improvements, with little regard as to whether a particular road width or design is best for Township residents or the character of the Township.

For example, the intent of the road-related policies and recommendations contained in the Pleasant Lake Area Plan (Chapter 9) are to encourage the county road commission to consider the unique character of this area, and to incorporate context-sensitive design elements into any future Pleasant Lake Road improvements.

For the Township, these public acts also included amendments to the Michigan Planning Enabling Act to ensure that county and state road agencies better coordinate road improvements with the Township, and that they will cooperate with the Township in an effort to implement transportation elements included in this Master Plan as part of future road improvement projects.

This transportation plan is intended to conform to the requirements of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, and to establish Township priorities for improvements to the road network.

**NATURAL BEAUTY ROAD POLICIES**

Many of the Township’s roadways offer beautiful views of natural features and vegetation. Natural vegetation along these roads should be maintained, provided safety concerns are addressed. Under the state Natural Beauty Road Act (Public Act 451 of 1994), the Washtenaw County Road Commission (WCRC) can, upon request by Township residents and a public hearing, designate a county public road having “unusual or outstanding natural beauty” as a “natural beauty road.” All residents along the road must be notified of the hearing, and property owners representing more than fifty-one percent (51%) of the road frontage can prevent the road from being designated this way.

As of 2013, there are nine natural beauty roads designated in the county. Freedom Township’s rural roads should be evaluated by the Planning Commission and Township Board for potential nomination as natural beauty roads, based upon the criteria established by the Washtenaw County Road Commission.

**Benefits of a Natural Beauty Road Designation**

Once designated, normal maintenance activities are carried out with more sensitivity to the special character of the road, as summarized below from the WCRC website (2014):

- Mowing should be limited to one swath (maximum of five feet) on either side except at public road intersections.
- Grading should continue as normally provided and be kept to a minimum to avoid disturbance of vegetation. Grading should be pulled back to avoid trees or unusual sites which have been designated.

- Under no circumstances will herbicides be used to control or eliminate roadside vegetation.
- Natural beauty roads will be identified with signage at key entrances.
- Tree and shrub trimming and removal, where necessary for safety or visibility reasons, should be done judiciously and with proper tools so as not to leave unsightly scars.

Designation as a natural beauty road does not preclude the WCRC from implementing necessary safety improvements, including those affecting horizontal and vertical alignment. If changes are required in road surface to improve safety, drainage, etc., consideration may be given to rescinding the natural beauty road designation where such changes would disturb or destroy the characteristics for which the road was originally designated.

## ACCESS MANAGEMENT POLICIES

The access management techniques described below primarily apply to more intensive, non-residential land uses. However, the standards for shared access driveways are appropriate for individual residential home sites. Access management is usually implemented through the site plan review process, and these techniques are suggested as guidelines in that process. Each case will require an individual analysis to determine the appropriate action given the characteristics of the site and use.

### **Restricting the Number and Spacing of Access Points.**

Limiting the number of driveways permitted for each land use can help preserve the traffic movement function of a roadway. Proposed and existing land uses should provide the minimum number of driveways needed to provide access to a development site.

- If additional driveways are proposed, additional road frontage for the subject site and appropriate spacing between existing driveways should be provided consistent with Washtenaw County Road Commission (WCRC) spacing standards.
- Even if only one access point is proposed, the most appropriate location should be selected to preserve the function of the roadway and maximize public safety. Driveways located too close together are safety hazards and they can negatively impact road capacity.
- Commercial and other non-residential driveway access to parcels on opposite sides of a public road should be arranged consistent with WCRC spacing standards.

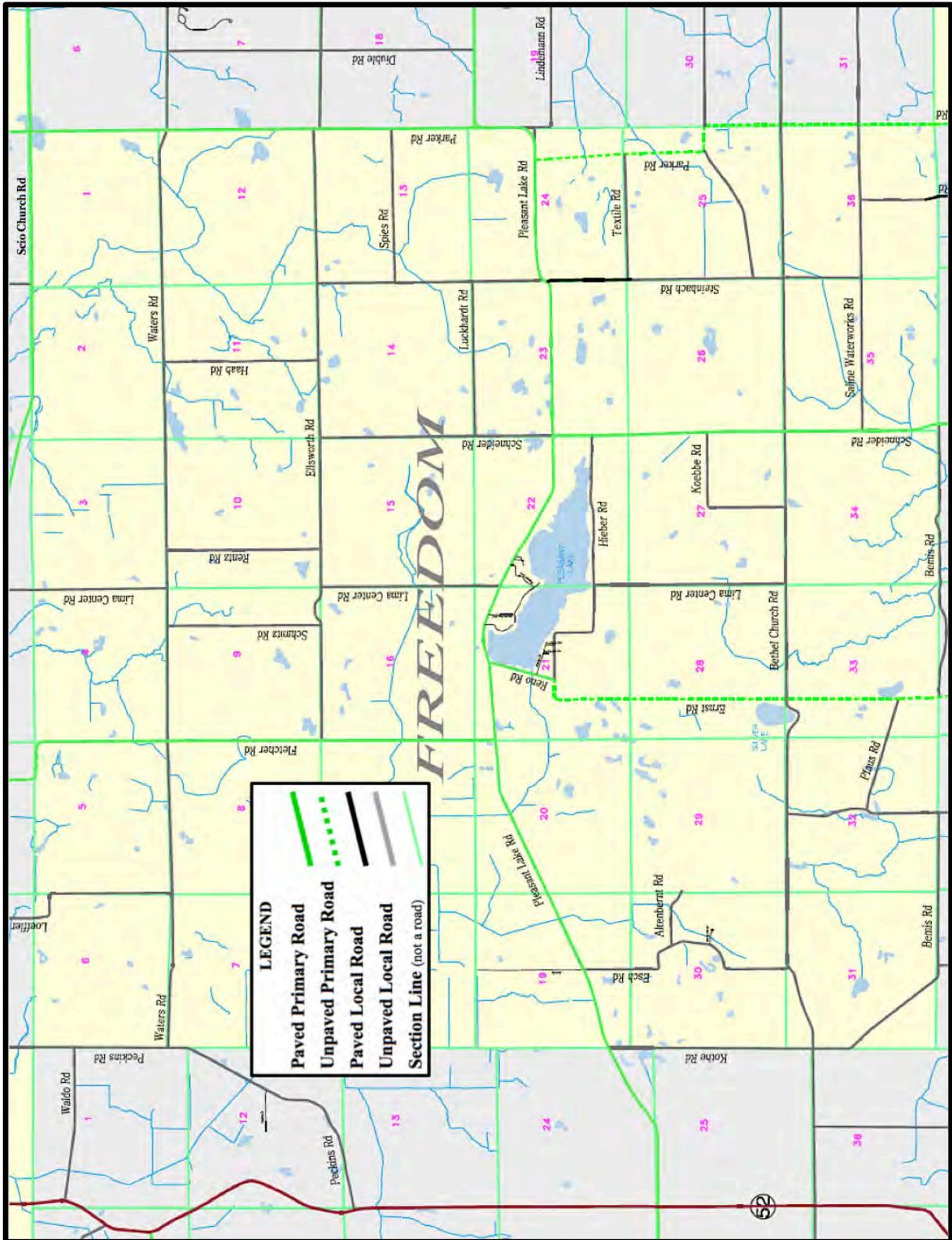
### **Encouraging Shared Access.**

Providing shared access to a site reduces the number of access points, preserves the capacity of the road, and can even help to maintain the character of the community. Shared access can be achieved through a variety of techniques including frontage roads, service roads and internal connections between sites. Such shared access alternatives to multiple individual driveways and “curb cuts” into the public road right-of-way can preserve roadway capacity and views from the road, and provide a buffer area for residences along county primary roads.

COUNTY ROAD CLASSIFICATIONS

The following map identifies the county’s classifications for public roads in Freedom Township:

Map 12 – Road Classifications, Washtenaw County Road Commission (2007)



## ROAD AND INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS PRIORITIES

The following is a summary of key road and intersection improvement priorities, based upon the transportation-related goals as presented within this Master Plan:

1. The next time the Washtenaw County Road Commission is planning for major improvements to Pleasant Lake Road, the project should include leveling of the topographic highs along the portion of this road east of the Schneider Road intersection.
2. Intersection improvements are needed at Pleasant Lake Road and Steinbach Road to improve safety and visibility for motorists, and to discourage gravel truck drivers from running the stop sign northbound into Pleasant Lake Road.
3. Safety improvements may also be needed at Pleasant Lake Road and Schneider Road.
4. Visual obstructions need to be removed from within the road rights-of-way at various intersections along the paved primary roads of the Township. The designated corner clearance zones at these intersections, as defined in the Township Zoning Ordinance, should also be kept clear of visual obstructions. Some or all of the following steps may be taken, as appropriate to the conditions at each intersection:
  - The Ordinance Enforcement Officer should ensure that all unlawful signage at these intersections are consistently removed, and that the sign owners are promptly warned and cited as necessary to avoid repetition.
  - The Township should work with farmers of land adjacent to these intersections to ensure that corn and other tall crops are not planted within road rights-of-way or corner clearance zones.
  - The Township should work with the Washtenaw County Road Commission to ensure that trees, groundcover, and overgrowth is regularly trimmed back at these intersections.
  - The Township should work with the Washtenaw County Road Commission to seek the re-grading and leveling of any high areas within the road right-of-way that impact visibility at an intersection.
5. Consider upgrading Waters Road to a county primary road.
6. Consider upgrading Bethel-Church Road to a county primary road.

## OTHER TRANSPORTATION-RELATED POLICIES

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

1. Because Freedom Township does not have direct control over the roads in the Township, it is important that the Washtenaw County Road Commission (WCRC) be kept aware of Township policy preferences. Information regarding the transportation plans of the Township, county, and state should be exchanged on a regular basis.

2. As new development and redevelopment is proposed, it should be examined with regard to impact on the road system. When a site plan for any type of use is submitted, access management techniques should be utilized, where appropriate. Provisions should be made to minimize hazardous curb cuts and other points of access to primary roads by establishing internal local street networks.
3. Where topography, vegetation, curvature of the road or other factors restrict road access or would potentially reduce the level of safety for motorists if new driveways and access points were to be constructed, new development in such areas should be encouraged to provide access via a local street, shared access drive or frontage road.
4. Plans for new development should provide for extension of roadways into new development areas where such extension is determined by the Township to be necessary for the continuity of the local road system.
5. Residential developments intended to be isolated from the rest of the community by a system of private streets and absence of street connections with adjacent parcels should be discouraged.
6. New residential developments shall be served by at least two means of regular public ingress and egress, except where natural conditions prevent such access. However, the number of new connections to the paved county primary roads should be minimized where possible.
7. Plans for new residential development should provide for new collector roads or extension of existing collector roads through the development and connecting into the Township's public road network.
8. Private roads should be limited to planned unit development (PUD) projects.
9. Private roads should not be approved unless a maintenance agreement conforming to Township ordinances has been approved, and a financing mechanism acceptable to the Township has been provided for long-term maintenance and improvement.
10. Public road rights-of-way should be of adequate width to serve all potential users, while maintaining the rural character of the Township.
11. Freedom Township considers its unpaved roads as the hallmark of the rural way of life. They contribute to a sense of place, a closer proximity to the natural environment, and a slower pace of life. Improvements to unpaved and gravel roads should generally be for safety and maintenance reasons, not to increase the speed limit or to accommodate or attract inappropriate development.
12. The Township should consider opportunities to collaborate with nearby communities other agencies with jurisdiction to help Township residents who no longer can drive themselves with access to other transportation options.
13. An increasing number of bicyclists and others are using Township roads for non-motorized transportation. The needs of all potential users of the transportation network should be adequately addressed as road improvement projects are planned and implemented. In addition, the long-term development of a safe system of multi-use

pathways (pedestrian, bicycles, snowmobiles, etc.) within existing road rights-of-way to connect areas of the Township and adjoining communities should be investigated.

14. To maintain the rural character, capacity improvements along the county’s paved primary road corridors should be limited to acceleration/deceleration lanes and left hand turn lanes where determined necessary by the Washtenaw County Road Commission. Widening to a three, four or five lane configuration should be avoided.

**See Chapter 9 (Pleasant Lake Area Plan) for additional transportation plan policies associated with the area around Pleasant Lake in sections 21 and 22 of the Township.**



## CHAPTER 13 PLAN FOR ENERGY

This chapter is intended to link the Township’s overall goals and natural resource protection policies of this Master Plan with additional policy recommendations related to energy resources.

### GOAL

**Efficient use of a safe, reliable, economical, diversified, and environmentally friendly mix of energy resources in a manner that maximizes the preservation of existing natural features and protects the quality of the natural environment.**



### BACKGROUND

Reliable energy is essential to the rural economy and quality of life in Freedom Township. Recent technological improvements in lighting, heating, and cooling systems offer the potential for more efficient use of existing energy sources. At the same time, technology associated with renewable energy options (such as solar cells, wind turbines, and geo-thermal energy production) has also improved substantially in recent years, opening up new opportunities to diversify local energy resources.

In addition to these considerations, the area’s location as a significant hub within the regional energy pipeline network creates land use and environmental protection challenges for local property owners, as well as the Township and other local governments along the pipeline routes.

While private businesses and individuals make most energy-related decisions, the Township has the authority under the Michigan Planning Enabling Act to incorporate an energy plan into the Township’s Master Plan to promote and encourage investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy resources, and protection of the Township’s natural resources and environment as part of any energy infrastructure project.

### ENERGY CONSERVATION POLICIES

To accomplish the energy-related goals as presented within this Master Plan, the following conservation-related policies are set forth:

1. Encourage the incorporation of environmentally friendly and energy efficient features, construction methods, and materials into building renovation and new building projects in the Township.
2. Encourage developers to provide a statement of energy efficiency as part of a site plan or planned unit development (PUD) application that summarizes the proposed building

design elements, construction methods materials, systems, equipment, and other features incorporated into the building for purposes of energy efficiency and resource conservation.

3. The Township should consider LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification from the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) for practical and measurable “green” building and neighborhood design elements in a development to satisfy the “public benefit” and “exemplary project design” provisions of the Township’s PUD regulations.
4. As upgrades and renovations become necessary, additional energy efficient infrastructure should be incorporated into the Township Hall.

### RENEWABLE ENERGY POLICIES

To accomplish the energy-related goals as presented within this Master Plan, the following renewable energy resource policies are set forth:

1. The Township should continue to support the installation of roof-mounted or accessory structure-mounted solar energy systems associated with individual homes, farms, and businesses in conformance to established Zoning Ordinance requirements.
2. To minimize the potential for future conflicts over access to sunlight, the mature height of existing trees, minimum building setback distances, and maximum permitted structure height on neighboring land in the zoning district should be considered in the siting of new solar energy systems.
3. The potential for unintentional reflection and/or concentration of sunlight in a manner that damages or adversely impacts neighboring property or residents should be evaluated and fully mitigated as part of any solar panel installation.
4. Freestanding solar energy production facilities should be prohibited where lands designated for agricultural production would be impacted.
5. The Township should continue to allow installation of a limited number of private, agricultural wind turbines associated with active farm operations, consistent with Zoning Ordinance requirements.
6. Wind turbine installations should be prohibited where anticipated noise or “shadow flicker” (rapid, strobe-like flickering shadows from turbine blades backlit by the sun) would adversely impact the health, safety or welfare of Township residents.
7. The Planning Commission should consider ways to educate farmers and residents in the Township about Zoning Ordinance provisions and the approval process for solar energy systems and agricultural wind turbines.

**OTHER ENERGY POLICIES**

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

1. To mitigate visual, light, noise, and other impacts, site plan approval and provision of substantial screening and buffering should be required for any future construction or alteration of permanent above-ground support or maintenance facilities associated with the regional energy pipeline networks. Such facilities and site improvements should be required to conform to the applicable site development requirements of the Zoning Ordinance.
2. The Township Board should consider collaborating with other communities along the energy pipeline routes to maintain pressure on the energy pipeline owners/operators to maximize safety through regular inspections and a robust maintenance program.
3. The Township Board should consider collaborating with other communities along the energy pipeline routes to advocate for changes in state and federal laws to allow for greater local input in the location of future energy pipeline projects.
4. Maintenance and upgrading of the existing pipeline networks in the Township should be encouraged, but no new pipeline pathways through the Township should be authorized by the state and federal governments.



# CHAPTER 14 ZONING PLAN

The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act requires that a zoning plan be prepared as the basis for the Zoning Ordinance. This chapter is intended, along with the rest of the relevant parts of this Master Plan, to serve as the plan required by the Act. It functions as a link between the Master Plan and the Zoning Ordinance, and as a guide to the implementation of future ordinance changes.

## BACKGROUND

Zoning is the division of a community into districts by ordinance for the purpose of regulating the use of land and buildings, their height and bulk, the proportion of the lot that may be covered by them, and the density of development. Zoning is enacted under the police power of the State for the purpose of promoting health, safety and general welfare and has long been supported constitutionally by the U.S. Supreme Court and the Michigan courts.

The Township Zoning Ordinance is one of the most important tools available to implement the policies of this Master Plan related to the use and development of land. The purpose of zoning is to assist in orderly development and growth. It is also used to protect property values and investments. Because of the impact it can have on the use of land and related services, local zoning regulations must be built upon the foundation of a Master Plan and “zoning plan.”

## ZONING DISTRICTS

The following are descriptions and general purposes of the categories within which the proposed zoning districts in the Township Zoning Ordinance are organized. The proposed zoning districts are summarized in the table below. The specific purposes of each district are described in Article 2.0 (Zoning Districts) of the Zoning Ordinance:

### Rural Districts

The principal purpose of the Rural District designation is to focus on conservation of lands with sensitive environmental characteristics like woodland, wetland, wildlife habitat, and farmland. A range of agricultural uses and agricultural support services are permitted, along with a limited range of very low-density single-family residential uses. The land zoned within this designation should conform to the areas planned for agricultural land uses and the Agricultural Preservation Area designated by this Master Plan.

Type of District	Zoning District Name	Symbol
<b>Rural</b>	Agricultural-Resource District	AR
	Rural Residential District	R-2
<b>Residential</b>	Manufactured Housing Park District	R-6
	Lake District	LK
<b>Business</b>	Convenience Commercial District	C-1
	Special Commercial District	C-2
	Industrial-Research District	I-1
<b>Other</b>	Public/Semi-Public Services District	PSP

**Residential Districts**

The principal purpose of the Residential Districts designation is to accommodate a variety of residential land uses. Three (3) separate residential districts are provided for in the Zoning Ordinance that accommodate residential land uses. The land zoned within the LK (Lake) and R-2 (Single-Family Residential) zoning district classifications should conform to the areas planned for residential land uses in the vicinity of Pleasant Lake. For the specific future land use policies associated with “Manufactured Housing Park Residential Development” and the R-6 zoning district classification, see chapter 5 (Plan for Residential) of this Master Plan.

**Business Districts**

The principal purpose of the Business Districts designation is to provide locations for compatible commercial, office or light industrial operations and activities in the Township. The land zoned within this designation should be strictly limited to the areas planned for commercial and industrial land uses in this Master Plan.

**Other Districts**

For the specific future land use policies associated with zoning and development of community facilities (including churches, schools, and other “institutional uses” as defined in the Zoning Ordinance) and the PSP (Public/Semi-Public Services) zoning district classification, see chapter 8 (Plan for Community Facilities) of this Master Plan.

**DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS**

The following table lists the dimensional standards table for each district of the Zoning Ordinance. The supplemental regulations and standards are listed in Article 3.0 (Dimensional Standards) of the Zoning Ordinance:

**Section 3.101 Table of Dimensional Standards by District.**

Standards		Districts								Additional Provisions	
		AR	R-2	R-6	LK	C-1	C-2	I-1	PSP		
<b>Maximum Building Height</b> (feet)	Feet	35	35	25	35	35	35	45	35	Section 3.201	
	Stories	2.5	2.5	2.0	2.5	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0		
<b>Lot Standards</b> (per unit)	<b>Minimum Width</b> (feet)	300	150	500	100	100	150	150	100	Section 3.202	
	<b>Minimum Area</b> (acres or square-feet)	10.0 acres	3.0 acres	22,000 sq.ft.	10,000 sq.ft.	10,000 sq.ft.	1.0 acre	1.0 acre	10,000 sq.ft.		
<b>Yard / Setback Standards</b> (feet)	<b>Front Yard</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	50	50	50	20	35	35	50	35	Section 3.203
		<b>Maximum</b>				35					
	<b>Side Yard</b>	<b>Minimum, Each Side</b>	30	10	30	10	10	10	20	10	Section 3.204
		<b>Minimum Rear Yard</b>	50	35	50	35	35	35	35	35	
<b>Minimum Separation Between Principal Buildings</b> (feet)			20	10		20	20	20			
<b>Maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR)</b>		0.10	0.10		0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60		
<b>Maximum Ground Floor Coverage (GFC)</b>		10%	10%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%		
<b>Minimum Gross Floor Area of a Principal Detached Dwelling</b> (square-feet)		1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000						
<b>Maximum Net Dwelling Unit Density</b> (units per acre)		1.0	1.0	6.0						Section 3.202	

## RECENT ZONING ORDINANCE CHANGES (2014)

As a principal tool for implementing this Master Plan, the requirements and standards of the Township Zoning Ordinance should reflect the applicable policies of this Plan. The Planning Commission initiated a process to update the Zoning Ordinance in 2008, which culminated in adoption of a comprehensive new Zoning Ordinance that became effective in early 2014. The following is a summary of the changes that have been incorporated into the new Ordinance:

1. **Organization.** The organization of the Zoning Ordinance has been comprehensively updated to improve readability and make it easier to find information quickly. Wherever possible, regulations have been grouped into tables. The heart of the new ordinance is Article 4.0 (Land Use Table), where all of the zoning districts and permitted uses can be found in one table. The goal of the land use table format is to quickly answer the most common zoning-related questions: “Where is a particular land use permitted, and what can I do with my property?”
2. **Illustrations and flowcharts.** More than three dozen new illustrations and flowcharts are included throughout the updated Zoning Ordinance to clarify and illustrate certain development review procedures, regulations, defined terms, and other zoning concepts.
3. **State Zoning Act requirements.** The new ordinance is up-to-date with all of the requirements of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, including several recent amendments adopted into law during the development of this new Ordinance. The updated ordinance also conforms to other applicable state and federal statutes, including the state Condominium Act and Right to Farm Act, and the federal Religious Land Uses and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA).
4. **New in this ordinance.** The following is a summary of other key changes from the previous Zoning Ordinance:
  - The Township’s site plan review requirements and review processes have been comprehensively updated consistent with current zoning practices.
  - New landscaping and screening standards for projects subject to site plan approval are included (see Section 10.10).
  - Updated natural resources protection standards for property subject to site plan approval have also been added (see Section 10.04).
  - Standards have been added to the Dimensional Standards table to establish a maximum permitted number of dwelling units per acre of land for each of the residential zoning districts (see page 3-1).
  - Permitted land uses in the A-R (Agricultural-Resource) District have been updated to expand opportunities for “entrepreneurial” or “value-added” agricultural activities that allow farmers to diversify their income sources.
  - The Planned Unit Development (PUD) option has been comprehensively updated to make this development option easier for the Township and the developer to work with, while ensuring that the Township’s interests are protected (see Article 14)
  - Comprehensive “dark sky” compatible standards for exterior lighting have been added to the Ordinance (see section 10.08).

- “Wind energy conversion system” regulations have been added to the Zoning Ordinance to allow for limited use of agricultural or private wind turbines.

**RECOMMENDED ZONING ORDINANCE CHANGES TO CONSIDER**

Following is a list of additional recommended changes to the regulations and standards of the Zoning Ordinance consistent with the policies of this Master Plan. These changes should be considered with deliberation by the Planning Commission and Township Board as the need arises, or in conjunction with other planned Ordinance amendments:

1. Consider adoption of specific land use regulations for medical marijuana caregivers and a prohibition against medical marijuana dispensaries or provisioning centers in the Township, consistent with the Michigan Medical Marijuana Act and recent (2014) Michigan Supreme Court decisions.
2. Consider amending Section 3.202 (Lot and Dwelling Unit Density Standards) to insert provisions for a reduced lot width of 150 feet for rural residential dwellings on non-farm lots with less than ten (10) acres of lot area in the A-R (Agricultural-Resource) District, which would reduce unnecessary conversion of agricultural land for non-farm uses and would be consistent with previous development practices for these types of lots in the Township.
3. Revise the description of the LK (Lake) District in Section 2.105 and adjust the zoning district reference tables in articles 2.0, 3.0, and 4.0 to reflect the final adopted character of this zoning classification as one of the “Residential Districts.”

**REZONING TO IMPLEMENT THE MASTER PLAN**

The Master Plan is intended to guide future changes to the Township’s Official Zoning Map. The relevant elements of this plan should be a principal source of information in the investigation of all rezoning requests. The Planning Commission should conduct a periodic appraisal of the Zoning Ordinance and Official Zoning Map to ensure that the goals and policies of this plan are adequately reflected in the ordinance text and map.

**Phasing of Zoning Map Changes**

A key to successful Master Plan implementation is the timing of future changes to the Township’s Official Zoning Map, whether initiated by the Township or by petitioners. When considering whether a rezoning request is consistent with this plan, the Planning Commission and Township Board should keep in mind that the Master Plan’s policy recommendations are based upon a ten to twenty year planning period.

While the Master Plan may identify certain Township lands for more intensive development, the time for such development may not yet have arrived. More intensive land uses and development should be phased-in over a period of time, consistent with the policies of this plan and the infrastructure and land capacity available to support the development.

Specific criteria have been incorporated into the Township Zoning Ordinance to help the Planning Commission and Township Board evaluate future rezoning applications [see Section 18.05 (Findings of Fact Required)]. These criteria should be carefully considered before making recommendations and decisions on proposed amendments to the Official Zoning Map.

## MORE ZONING TOOLS FOR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Following is a list of several additional zoning-related tools and techniques that can be used by the Township to implement the policies of this Master Plan:

### **Site Plan Review**

Each time the Planning Commission reviews a site plan for compliance with the Township Zoning Ordinance, another step is taken in the process of implementing the policies of this Master Plan. Development review and approval is an important implementation tool to ensure that new construction is consistent with the goals and objectives of this Plan.

### **Planned Unit Development (PUD) Option.**

The PUD zoning district is established under the special district authority authorized by Section 503 of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act. The PUD option offers considerable flexibility to the land developer to provide opportunities for site designs that respect the natural environment, result in efficient layout of infrastructure and public facilities, and ensure mitigation of negative impacts on adjoining land uses and the Township as a whole.

### **Development Agreement**

Although there is no explicit legislative authority for such agreements, many Michigan communities have used development agreements to achieve a mutual understanding between the developer and Township concerning the conditions under which development can occur. Development agreements are often negotiated as part of a planned development approval, allowing the community and developer to address complex issues that cannot be adequately addressed on a typical site plan. Development agreements might prove useful to achieve desired developments in the Township, especially if or when a mixed-use development is proposed.

### **Form-Based Zoning and Building Composition Standards**

Although there is no explicit legislative authority for form-based zoning, some Michigan communities are adding building design and appearance standards to local zoning ordinances. The intent of form-based zoning and building composition standards is not to mandate certain architectural styles or materials, but rather to achieve a more uniform streetscape where adjacent buildings share common design elements, height, number of stories, and other characteristics.



## CHAPTER 15 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The following is a summary of some of the plan implementation tools available to the Township:

### BACKGROUND

The Master Plan serves as a framework for future decision-making and a regulatory process through which governmental agencies guide land use. The plan should be re-evaluated every five (5) years or as development pressures require. As time goes on, Township objectives may change, which could result in a need to amend the plan. However, any amendment should only be made after sound evaluation and consideration of the overall implications of the change. Further re-evaluation of the plan allows future participation of the general public in framing Township policy.

Implementation of the Plan requires continuous coordination between the Township Board, the Planning Commission, and the Zoning Board of Appeals whose principal tools are the Zoning Ordinance and Map, and the subdivision and site condominium development regulations. In addition, the Township must also remain abreast of on-going planning activities of adjoining units of government that may affect Plan recommendations for future implementation.

### ZONING ORDINANCE

See Chapter 14, Zoning Plan.

### SUBDIVISION AND SITE CONDOMINIUM REGULATIONS

The policies of this Master Plan can be implemented in part through careful review of proposed subdivision plat and site condominium development projects. The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (P.A. 33 of 2008, as amended) includes specific provisions associated with subdivision plat review that apply most effectively to townships that maintain a local Subdivision Ordinance. Through such an ordinance, the Township can better control the design and character of future development.

Subdividing, or platting, is a more complex method of land division and is regulated by the Land Division Act (P.A. 288 of 1967, as amended) and any Township subdivision regulations. This method of subdividing involves technical review by the Township Planner, Planning Commission recommendation, and Township Board action on the various stages of the plat. This process is aimed primarily at zoning compliance, compliance with the Master Plan, proper vehicular and pedestrian circulation, future street extensions, buildable lots, proper relationship with neighboring properties, and provision of all public facilities and utilities.

The site condominium process is an alternative to the subdivision plat available under the state Condominium Act (P.A. 59 of 1978, as amended) and the Township Zoning Ordinance, but the end result is intended to be equivalent to a platted development. Since the issues and interests are the same from the Township's point of view in either approach to land division, the

Township’s review process for site condominiums should be as similar as possible to that exercised in subdivision review.

**DENSITY TRANSFER PROGRAM**

This implementation tool involves moving (transferring) proposed development (density) from one part of a site to another part that is considered to be more suitable for development. The density transfer process results in a portion of the site remaining undeveloped and the developed part having a higher net density, although the overall density of the site will not be increased. Density transfer may and should be used to protect or preserve natural features such as woodland, wetlands, stream corridors, open spaces, sensitive soils, while permitting a reasonable use of the entire parcel. This method is applicable to larger parcels under the planned unit development (PUD) option in the Township Zoning Ordinance. Density Transfer should meet the following standards:

1. All lands involved in the transfer are located in Freedom Township and the owner has fee simple title to the lands.
2. All lands involved are contiguous.
3. The transfer number of dwelling units allocated to the total land area by this plan will not be exceeded.
4. The transfer is made as part of a single PUD project that includes all lands in the transfer at the same time.
5. The land that receives that transfer of density will, with the additional dwelling units; be compatible with the existing and planned use of the neighboring area.

**CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM (CIP)**

One of the most important non-regulatory tools the Township has available to implement this Plan is a “Capital Improvements Program” (CIP). The Township can use a CIP to implement Master Plan recommendations for new or expanded public facilities, plan for major expenditures, ensure that public funds are used wisely and efficiently, and to be prepared with "shovel-ready" projects when unexpected sources of funding appear.

**What are Capital Improvements?**

Capital improvements are physical facilities that require substantial investments to construct/develop, and are intended to last/be used for a long period of time. Typical project examples include:

- fire engines, bulldozers, and similar large equipment purchases;
- treatment plants, water and sewer lines, landfills, street construction or reconstruction, and similar infrastructure improvements;
- libraries, schools, government buildings, and similar building projects; and
- replacement, expansion, or major repair of existing facilities and equipment.

“Gray area” projects that could also be considered “operating” expenses outside the scope of a CIP include vehicle and small equipment purchases, repairs, and remodeling projects.

**What is a Capital Improvements Program?**

A CIP identifies the community's capital needs; ranks them by priority; coordinates their scheduling over a specific number of years; and determines the best funding method(s) to pay for them. The first year of the CIP is the capital budget, and as each year is completed a new year is added at the end. Many CIPs are organized into three (3) sections:

1. Overview of the CIP process, along with a list of the benefits the community will derive from the capital improvements;
2. Financial data, including charts outlining historical revenue and expenditure data, projected revenue, expenditure, and debt service; and a
3. Description of projects recommended for funding in the CIP period, including a justification for a project's inclusion in the CIP, the project's relationship to the community's master plan and other long-range plans, and how the project will be financed within the community's fiscal capacity.

The CIP should cover a six (6) year period, updated annually, with the first year representing the community's capital budget. The document lists the proposed capital improvement projects and expenditures by:

- Location, date of construction, and relationship to other existing and proposed facilities;
- Cost, means of financing, and sponsor; and
- Priorities over the CIP time period and geography of the Township.

Per the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, any municipality with jurisdiction may prepare and adopt a CIP, but it is typically mandatory for most cities and villages and for those Michigan townships that “alone or jointly with one or more other local units of government owns or operates a water supply or sewage disposal system.” Freedom Township is not required to prepare a Capital Improvements Program, but the option is available as an implementation tool.

**What are the Benefits of Using a CIP?**

The CIP is a tool to enable and improve the local government’s ability to balance its capital needs and available financing over a multi-year period. The following are some of the additional benefits of adopting and maintaining an up-to-date capital improvements program:

- A CIP helps to ensure that new public facilities and infrastructure improvements meet Master Plan objectives, spreads large capital expenses over time, and breaks large projects into phases.
- An up-to-date CIP will alert residents and developers of the Township’s intention to make certain improvements in particular places at particular times. This helps coordinate private investment, minimize inappropriate development proposals, and restricts development from occurring at a too rapid rate.

- The process of adopting and updating a CIP increases opportunities for public input on and public support for proposed capital improvements.
- The CIP process helps to separate the good from the “it seemed like a good idea at the time.” Some “good ideas” cost more than their benefits. A public facility may turn out to be unnecessary, over-designed, or may not meet the community’s actual needs.
- Use of the CIP “tools” by the municipality enables private businesses and citizens to have some assurance as to when public improvements will be undertaken.

**FINANCING**

Successful implementation of these projects will depend on the ability of the Township to secure the necessary funding for community planning and project implementation. Besides the Township’s General Fund, there are an ever-changing range of potential federal and state government sources, community foundations, and other sources for grant funding and loans which the Township may be eligible for to complete a particular project.

The first step is to develop a capital improvements program (see above) to identify potential projects, anticipated costs, and potential sources of funding. Once a specific project has been identified, the most appropriate sources of grants and other revenues to supplement local funds can be considered. The following are examples of potential financing tools:

- **Millage.** A special millage can be used to generate revenues for a specific purpose.
- **Special Assessments.** Special assessments are compulsory contributions collected from the owners of property benefited by specific public improvements to defray the costs of such improvements, apportioned according to the assumed benefits to the property affected.
- **Bond Programs.** Bonds are one of the principal sources of financing used by communities to pay for capital improvements. General obligation bonds are issued for a specific community project and are paid off by the general public with property tax revenues. Revenue bonds are issued for construction of projects that generate revenues. The bonds are then retired using income generated by the project.
- **Grant Programs.** The State of Michigan periodically makes grant funding available for park development, land acquisition, and other public purposes. Local community foundations and private foundations may also have funding available for projects that fit their specific grant-making criteria.

**PLAN MONITORING PROGRAM**

The planning process, in order to be effective, must be continuous, and must be part of the day-to-day decisions that affect the physical character of the Township. Thus, the Master Plan must be in a form that encourages its regular use in the planning process. The plan is, in effect, the representation of the Township’s policies for the future. If the Master Plan is to perform its proper function, it must be reviewed regularly by the Planning Commission, and updated as conditions warrant.

As part of a consistent plan monitoring program, the Planning Commission should evaluate the Master Plan on an annual basis. Per the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, a major review of this plan should be made by the Commission at intervals no longer than five (5) years to enable the Planning Commission and Township Board to apply new perspectives to adopted policies.

### **Benefits of a Monitoring Program**

There are several benefits to the Township from a regular monitoring program.

- The Master Plan will be kept up to date.
- The maintenance program broadens the area of community agreement on basic development policies over time. The process invites reconsideration of alternatives to major decisions and encourages exploration of new issues and secondary questions.
- Annual review of the Master Plan will keep current the Planning Commission and Township Boards' knowledge of the plan's elements. Along with the Master Plan's use in day-to-day decision-making, the annual review process will assure that the Master Plan will be a living document, that its policies will not be frozen in time.
- Annual review will avoid delays that might otherwise be caused by calls for more study on certain issues before the basic plan is adopted. An annual review program assures that issues that require further examination will be studied at proper levels of detail at later times, and the policy changes resulting from such studies will be made in the plan.

### **Description of the Program**

The maintenance program will have two objectives:

- To determine the extent to which the Township is actually implementing the policies of the Master Plan; and
- To determine that the Master Plans policies are still desirable and appropriate in light of changing circumstances.

The basis of the maintenance program will consist of an annual review by the Planning Commission. Such review might result in identification of a need to make changes to a portion of the plan reflecting either a policy area or a geographic area. The results of the review will be forwarded to the Township Board in a report.

The Planning Commission, at the start of the review process, will determine the actual components of an annual review. The following should be among the elements studied by the Commission; others might be added as events suggest:

- Development proposals approved or denied - rezoning petitions, site plans, and subdivision plats.
- Land use regulations - Zoning Ordinance and subdivision ordinance amendments made in the past year or expected to be needed in the future.
- Building permits issued, by land use categories; estimate of the number of dwelling units, by type, added to the housing stock; estimates of the current population of the planning area.

- State equalized evaluation by assessor’s categories; track changes in agricultural and development classifications.
- Traffic counts; relation to road capacities.
- Programmed road improvements.
- Changes in public transportation service during the past year and proposed in the future that affect the planning area.
- Land divisions, other than in approved subdivision plats and condominium site plans.
- Major zoning and land use changes on the perimeter of the planning area in the past year and those that are likely to occur in the coming year.
- Policy changes by adjacent municipalities that affect Freedom Township, in the past year and that are likely to occur in the coming year.

### **PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT**

The necessity of citizen participation and understanding of the planning process and the Master Plan cannot be over-emphasized. A carefully organized public education program is needed to build support for and ease implementation of planning proposals. Residents’ failure to support planning efforts, special assessments, zoning, or public improvements is more often than not the result of public misunderstanding of long-range plans. To organize public support most effectively, the Township must emphasize the reasons for the planning program and encourage citizen participation in the planning process.

Public education can be achieved through an informational program involving talks by the Township Planner and other experts, preparation of newspaper articles, posting of updates on the Township’s website, and presentations at public meetings on current issues. Periodic community opinion surveys should be considered as another means by which Township officials can gauge changing attitudes and priorities.

A significant share of the responsibility of implementing this Master Plan rests on private efforts. Even one resident can have substantial influence in determining the appearance of the Township and influencing public opinion. The influence of an alert and informed citizenry may well compensate in a large part for limitations in the authority vested in the Township.