

Master Plan

a growth management plan



**Superior Charter
Township,**

Washtenaw County, Michigan

MASTER PLAN

a growth management plan

Planning Commission Public Hearing: May 26, 2010

**Planning Commission Adoption, and
Recommendation to the Township
Board for Final Approval:** June 23, 2010

**Final Approval by the Township Board
of Trustees:** July 19, 2010

**Superior Charter Township,
Washtenaw County, Michigan**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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*Photographs were taken by Kay Williams, Township Clerk;
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Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Following this introduction and a brief geographic description of Superior Charter Township is an overview of the elements of this Master Plan, a brief history of the Township, and observations about the future of the Township. These materials provide a context for the balance of the Plan.

New 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.

What's in a Name?

One of the changes incorporated into the new Act was a requirement that the local plan be called a “master plan,” rather than the various names typically used; including “comprehensive plan,” “growth management plan,” and “general development plan.” Superior Township has a history of local planning extending back more than 40 years, and has used the title “Growth Management Plan” for 17 years. To comply with the new MPEA, this updated document will be referred to as the “Superior Charter Township Master Plan,” while references to previous plans will use their original names.

References to State Statutes

This is intended to be the plan referred to in the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (Public Act 110 of 2006, as amended) as the basis for the Superior Charter Township Zoning Ordinance; and as provided in the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (P.A. 33 of 2008, as amended) to serve as the Master Plan for the Township. The required zoning plan elements are found in chapter 7 of this plan, and the following separate special plan elements and sub-area plans are also part of this Master Plan:

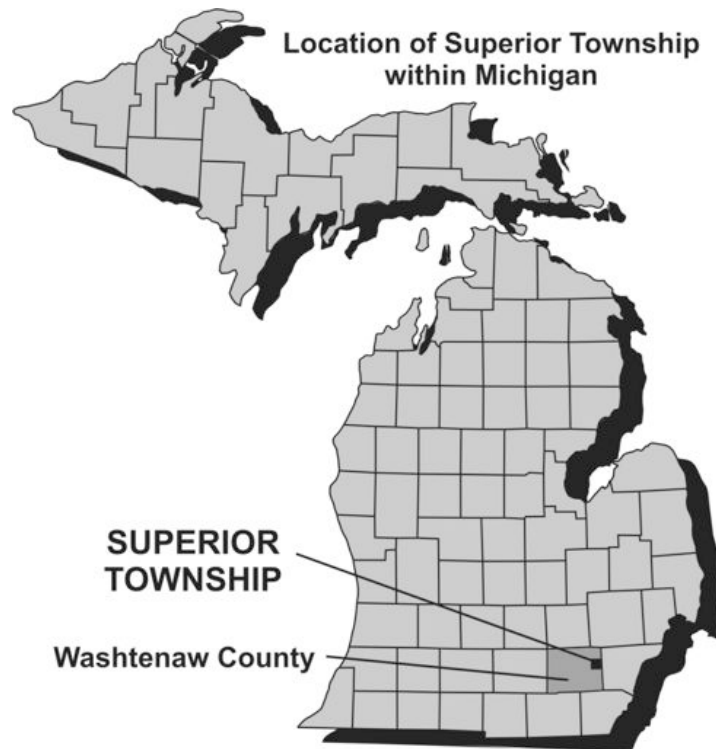
- ***Dixboro Area Plan Amendment***
- ***Superior Charter Township Parks and Recreation Master Plan***
- ***Utility Plan – Superior Charter Township***
- ***Historic Resources Inventory (1994) and Intensive Level Historic Survey (1997) for Superior Charter Township***

LOCATION

Location

Superior Charter Township is 35.5 square miles located along the eastern edge of Washtenaw County in southeastern Michigan (see Map 1-1). It is located between the westernmost suburbs of Metro Detroit to the east, Ann Arbor to the west, and Ypsilanti to the south.

Map 1-1 Location of Superior Charter Township in Michigan

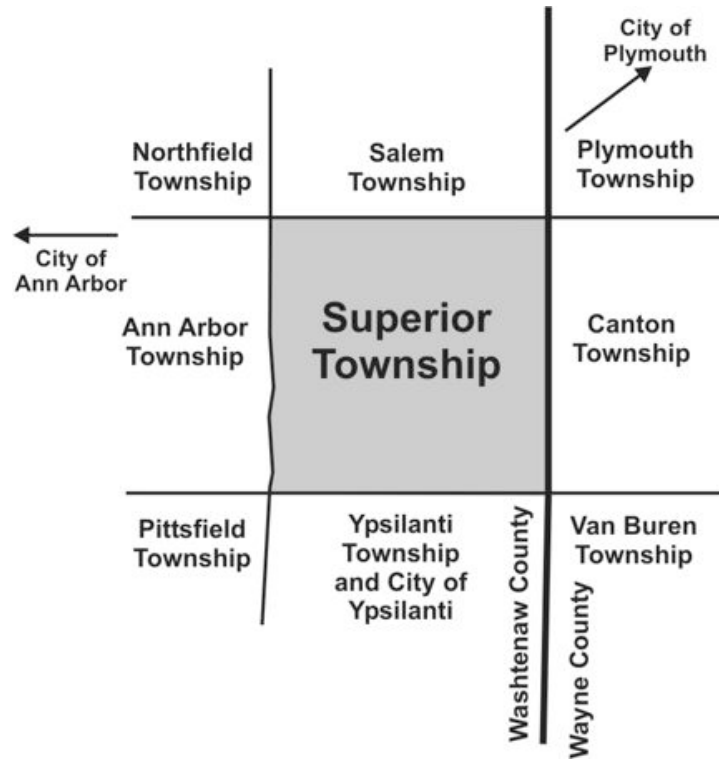


Superior Charter Township is a carefully planned mix of urban and rural neighborhoods, interspersed with many square miles of farmland, woods, wetlands, and other natural open spaces. In addition, the rural settlement of Dixboro in the northwest corner of the Township provides a unique historic dimension.

Coordination with Neighboring Jurisdictions

Superior Township shares boundaries with nine (9) other jurisdictions (see Map 1-2), and pledges to coordinate with and cooperate with neighboring jurisdictions, the County, region and state in the adoption of updates to this Plan, and in the review and comment on draft Plans of other jurisdictions.

Map 1-2 Location of Superior Township and Adjacent Communities



Map representative and not to scale.

DESCRIPTION OF THE MASTER PLAN

Relation to Past Plans

This Master Plan builds on the foundations of previous Township plans, including:

- **Growth Management Plan** (adopted in 1992; updated in 2004; and amended in 2006); and
- **General Development Plan** (adopted in 1982).

Most of the 2004 Plan remains pertinent today, and has been retained. Conditions within and affecting Superior Township have changed enough, however, to warrant an update of strategies and policies with respect to natural resources, recreation, growth, development, and land uses (See Chapter 2, Demographics and Chapter 3, Existing Conditions). Just as important:

- rapidly changing development pressures and patterns,
- the relationship of land use in communities adjacent to Superior Township,

- the continuing use of roads within the Township for regional commuting,
- the firm desire of Township residents to preserve natural scenic character,
- the importance of preserving the agricultural economy of the Township and
- increased knowledge of environmental concerns

warrant an increased emphasis on these issues within the Plan (See Chapter 4, Major Issues).

This Plan remains guided by a common vision of the future, which is detailed through a series of goals, objectives, and policies (See Chapter 5: Vision, Goals, Objectives, and Policies). The specific elements of the growth management strategy are detailed along with a list of changes needed in the Zoning Ordinance to effectively implement this Plan (See Chapter 6, Growth Management Strategy and Chapter 7, Zoning Plan). The Plan concludes with a list of proposed implementation steps (See Chapter 8, Implementation).

2009-Update

This Master Plan will, upon adoption by the Planning Commission and Township Board, update and replace the Growth Management Plan adopted in 2004.

In 2009, the Township Board and Planning Commission reviewed the adopted 2004 Growth Management Plan (GMP), and determined that revisions were needed to comply with the new Michigan Planning Enabling Act. In addition, the Township determined that, while the overall Plan continues to reflect the guiding principles of land use planning in the Township, some updates were necessary to ensure that the Plan accurately reflects the Township's current land use, growth management, and economic development policies.

As such, the majority of maps, illustrations, data, and text have been retained from the 2004 GMP, with targeted changes designed to bring the Plan up-to-date and into compliance with state statutes.

Principal Features of the Plan

The 2004 Growth Management Plan and this Master Plan can be described as a vision-based plan. The vision describes what residents of Superior Charter Township want the Township to be like in twenty years (See Chapter 5, Vision, Goals, Objectives, and Policies). The policies seek to address the fundamental issues that the Planning Commission and Township Board expect the Township to face within the foreseeable future. These basic issues are those which will have enduring effects on

the Township, and which will affect the physical character of the Township in the years ahead.

Because the Plan concentrates on goals, objectives, policies, and strategies, it follows that the Plan is, for the most part, general in nature. That is, the Plan shows various issues the Planning Commission and Township Board will consider and the approaches that will be followed. The Plan does not, however, prescribe or predict uses of specific parcels of land, except those in public ownership or in a private, permanent protection program. Instead, it describes the intended use(s) of general areas. The Plan also provides guidance for Township officials to use in the future in order to direct private development and public infrastructure decisions in the Township in a manner that reflects the vision of this Plan.

The Plan provides guidelines for making decisions or recommendations for individual parcels of land, specific public improvements, and similar questions that might arise in the future. The Plan provides the framework for Planning Commission recommendations and Township Board decisions. It is not the intent of the Plan that the designation of any area for a specific use entitle a property owner within that area to a zoning change consistent with the use designation (especially where the infrastructure or public services necessary for such development are not present). 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, applicable zoning, and any other applicable development regulations.

The Plan recognizes that the future is uncertain and cannot be predicted, and that current perceptions of future conditions will change. The major issues may change over time, and strategies and policies appropriate to respond to them will have to be modified or replaced. The Planning Commission intends to review (at least once each five years), refine, add to, or otherwise modify the Plan as necessary. The Plan may be amended if analysis indicates an amendment is appropriate. Detailed policies for specific areas of the Township may also be appropriate, in the form of sub-area plans (See Chapter 6 for a full description of this issue).

HISTORY OF SUPERIOR TOWNSHIP

"The Township of Superior is particularly an agricultural district...unsurpassed in the fertility of its soil or the advantages of its water-courses;... 'Superior' is stamped upon its lands and is said to extend itself to the people and their homes."

This description appeared in the 1881 History of Washtenaw County, Michigan and expressed the sentiments of the residents of Superior Township at that time and before, back to the time when the Township was first settled.

1824

The first parcel of land, 44.75 acres, was sold by the Federal government in 1823 to a land speculator who never lived in the Township. The following year 26 parcels were sold to 16 individuals, most of whom established residence in the township.

Until April 1827 there were only the unnamed survey townships in Washtenaw County, each containing 36 sections of approximately one (1) mile square, and known by their Town/Range location. Superior was T2S-R7E, which referred to Township (town) 2 south (second tier south of the Base Line), and Range 7 east (the seventh township east of the Meridian Line). The present Superior Township was made part of a larger named township when the original “Ypsilanti Township” was incorporated on April 12, 1827. The townships of Ann Arbor and Dexter were also established at this time, also comprising a number of survey townships.

Township of Panama

The Township of Panama, which consisted of the present-day Superior Township (T2S-R7E) and Salem Township (T1S-R7E), was divided from Ypsilanti Township on June 30, 1828 by the Legislative Council. The present day townships of Superior and Salem were created from the Township of Panama by a legislative act in March 1833.



Photo 1-1: Superior Charter Township was settled as a farming community.

Superior Charter Township was settled by farmers, and the Township remained a farming community for many years. Contrary to the

“Established 1824” road sign on Plymouth/Ann Arbor Road in the area between Albert Drive and Prospect Road, “Frains Lake” (or “Frain's Lake”) did not exist as a significant rural settlement until the 1920's. Before that time the only buildings located there were the Frain Lake school; the Gale house, store, machine shop, and gas station; the Begole house; and the Schrader house and barn.

The Township had three early areas of settlement, dating back to 1826: Dixboro, Superior/Free Church, and Lowell/Superior:

Superior/Free Church Settlement

As early as 1826, Hiram Tooker was selling one acre lots off his property at the intersection of the present day Ford Road and Gotfredson Road. Eventually a small community formed there with a couple of commercial buildings. In 1836, a post office was established at this location with the name “Superior.” The name may have been taken from the township since the only other post office in the township was known as Dixboro Post Office. After the First Free Church of Michigan was established there in 1849, the area became known as the “Free Church District.” The community eventually dissolved.

Lowell/Superior Settlement

Another “Superior” settlement developed during the 1830s in Section 32 near the Huron River. Originally called “Lowell” and later “Superior,” today only a few homes and the names “First Street” and “Superior Road” remain from this hamlet.

Dixboro

The Township, other than the settlement of Dixboro, lacked the principal requirements of permanent settlements in the early 19th century: A regional road and a river or major stream to provide access and hydropower. Dixboro had hydropower from Fleming Creek and a transportation route in South Territorial Road (now Plymouth Road). Other small settlements occurred: there were eight saw mills and three flour mills in the Township at various times, as well as the small Frain's Lake community. Only the Dixboro settlement has persisted as a "village" settlement.

The 25 acres of Dixboro were purchased in 1824 by Captain John Dix, who platted the land into 64 lots and a village green (public square) in 1826. The settlement grew slowly over the next 100 years, primarily as a residential settlement with some business services. With the advent of electricity, automobiles, and the paving of Plymouth Road, the village began to expand. By the time Dixboro Heights was constructed and occupied in the early 1950's, the population of Dixboro had more than doubled. The construction of new subdivisions during the 1980's and

early 1990's (e.g., Tanglewood, Tanglewood Hills, Creekside) resulted in dramatic growth in Dixboro's population.

Dixboro Church, built in 1858, still functions as an active church for the area. The village green, owned by the church since 1953, was the site of the original school, but is now used as a neighborhood playground and for church activities. Several houses date back to the late 1830's and 40's, and descendants of several of the original families still live in the area.



Photo 1-2: A Dixboro settlement.

World War II and Willow Village

The Township as a whole remained a quiet agricultural community until the beginning of World War II. In 1941, construction of the Willow Run Bomber Plant and the Willow Run Airport began. The plant and airport were located in Ypsilanti Township, but Willow Village, a housing complex to serve the employees of the plant, was constructed spanning Ypsilanti and Superior Townships. The impact of the entire Willow Village/Willow Run complex transcended municipal boundaries and affected all of Superior Township. What had been a boys' camp (owned by Henry Ford) for 65 boys in 1939 became a vast manufacturing complex employing over 42,000 people in the war effort in 1943. The employees and their families were attracted from all over the United States, with most coming from outside the southeast Michigan area.

Willow Village was created to house and service 15,000 to 20,000 people, and was complete with commercial and community facilities. The influx of this large number of workers and their families created tremendous

strains for the area, strains which were only partially alleviated by the public programs and facilities provided through Willow Village.

Following cessation of the war, production of the planes stopped and employment quickly declined. By December, 1945, less than 600 families lived in Willow Village. Not everyone left the area, however. Some people remained to work, and these formed the nucleus of a skilled and semi-skilled labor force which was absorbed into local employment, particularly the auto industry.

Because of the housing shortage that followed the war, Willow Village was not torn down immediately as was originally planned. The Federal government sold the Willow Village properties to Ypsilanti Township in 1954. Through written agreement with Superior Township, Ypsilanti Township supervised the demolition of the Willow Village housing and sold some of the large non-residential buildings to the Willow Run School District. Most of the Village's land located in Superior Township was sold to the Globe Development Company, and is the site of much of the Township's existing urban residential development.

Post World War II Era

The Willow Village area could not, of course, return to its pre-1941 condition, and the farmland could not be reclaimed. The basis had been established for substantial permanent employment and population growth in Ypsilanti Township and the southern part of Superior Township. The infrastructure for urban growth, such as sanitary sewer and water lines, drainage facilities, improved roads, and public schools, was present. The Woodland Acres single-family subdivisions (Washington Square and Oakbrook) were started in the mid-1960's and the apartment and condominium complexes were begun in the early 1970's.

The portions of Superior Township north of Geddes Road also experienced significant post-war change as the non-farm, rural residential population increased, and as major highways were built. The interstate freeway system, followed by the connecting freeways such as M-14, served the scattered, low density residences and provided access to employment centers.

In the past, the continued increase in the efficiency of agricultural production resulted in less and less concern over the loss of productive farmland to the spread of development into the countryside. As was the case with many other changes, this too was a national occurrence, but it was particularly applicable to Superior Township in the post-war years.

Today, the increasing, irreversible loss of agricultural lands has been recognized as a serious problem in many areas, including portions of southeast Michigan.

Superior becomes a Charter Township

In 1979, Superior became a charter township. Increased population created increased demand for services, particularly in the urban areas.

- The need for additional police coverage has been met through contractual agreements with the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Department.
- The Township's Fire Department has expanded and upgraded its fire fighting and emergency medical response vehicles and equipment.
- In 1989, coordinated refuse collection was established in the subdivisions south of Geddes Road through a special assessment district. In 1991, coordinated refuse collection was expanded into the remaining areas of the Township, and curbside recycling services were made available to all residents.
- Emergency 911 dialing services went into effect in Washtenaw County, including Superior Township, in 1991.

Recent History

Throughout the 1990's and up until 2005-2006, substantial development occurred in the urbanized part of the Township south of Geddes Road. The Township also took its first steps to support permanent farmland and open space conservation. These efforts were largely led by a local land conservancy and individual actions of farmers in the Township.



Photo 1-3: The original Superior Charter Township Hall.

FUTURE OF SUPERIOR TOWNSHIP

The history of Superior Township helps us to understand where we are and how we got here. We can use our knowledge of the Township's evolution over the past 180 years 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:

- Superior Township will never again entirely be the tranquil, rural/agricultural community that it was during the first 100 years of its existence. The transition from that completely rural community was made during and immediately following World War II, and is irreversible.
- The Township has developed into six (6) distinct areas: The urban residential south, the rural residential north, the Dixboro hamlet area, the Medical/Educational Center area (Washtenaw Community College/St. Joseph Mercy Hospital), the Technology Center area (Hyundai-Kia Motors North American Technical Center) and the agricultural center. It is certainly reasonable to expect that these patterns of development may continue, and that the Township will continue to be faced with the challenge of creating a sense of community among these areas, and distributing services equitably among them.
- The high quality, agriculturally productive soil for which the Township is named is still, for the most part, available for agricultural use. The type of agricultural activities might well change, i.e., more intensive or specialty types of agriculture, and value-added agriculture may become more dominant, but agriculture is still feasible and the rural economy is still an active part of Township life.
- Future population growth may continue to put pressure on farmers to sell land for conversion to rural residential development. However, many of the farmers appear willing to consider sale of development rights, or sale of the land to land conservancies, in order to permanently protect farmland and open space in the Township.
- The Township has developed as a residential and agricultural community. With the exceptions of the St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in the southwest corner of the Township and a technology center at Geddes and LeForge Roads anchored by the Hyundai-Kia Motors North American Technical Center, the Township does not have concentrations of commercial or industrial land uses.

- Decisions made in Ann Arbor, Ann Arbor Township, Ypsilanti, Ypsilanti Township, Salem Township, and Canton Township will continue to have an impact upon Superior Township and the quality of life experienced by Township residents. This interrelationship emphasizes the need for interjurisdictional cooperation and coordination.
- Change usually appears to be gradual, but can be dramatic. Thus far, Superior Township's development has been slower than that of some surrounding communities. This can be attributed to several factors, including the soil types, which are largely unsuitable for sanitary septic systems; large land holdings by farmers; the relative lack of demand for intensive land uses; and supporting infrastructure that exists at opposite ends of the Township.
- Superior Township has an opportunity to learn from the experiences of other communities that grew quickly, without cohesive plans, and are now attempting to cope with the aftermath of rapid growth.
- Superior Township is fortunate to have many outstanding natural features still intact that enhance our community and can continue to do so with proper protective measures and planning.
- The history and the conclusions in this section set the stage for the planning process, and establish a general framework for the Master Plan. An understanding of our historical base helps provide a sense of continuity and community. The conclusions help guide us into a plan that addresses, as fully as possible, the issues we will face in the future.



Photo 1-4: A recent rural residential home.

Superior Charter Township has evolved into a community with a great variety of characteristics. The Township's population is socially, economically, and racially diverse. For all its diversity, however, the Township's residents are remarkably consistent in their vision of the Township: a community that retains its unique character and natural beauty. With careful attention to the goals and objectives expressed in Chapter 5, and through the implementation of its policies and strategies, Superior Charter Township truly has the opportunity to plan for a community which incorporates the best characteristics of the 21st century, respects our heritage, and protects our natural environment.

Chapter 2 DEMOGRAPHICS

Introduction

This Chapter describes the population, housing, and selected economic factors of Superior Township. It presents current population estimates and the results of the 2000 U.S. Census, and relates them to historical data and to surrounding communities when appropriate. An estimate of future population prepared by the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) is also presented.

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS - 2009

Historic Population Fluctuations

In the decades prior to World War II the Township's population fluctuated, reaching a low point of 778 people in 1920. In 1941, construction of the Willow Run Bomber Plant and the Willow Run Airport began in Ypsilanti Township. Willow Village, a housing complex to serve the employees of the plant, was constructed spanning Ypsilanti and Superior Townships to house and service 15,000 to 20,000 people. Following the end of the war in 1945, production of the planes stopped and employment quickly declined. Not everyone left the area, as some people remained to work in the rebounding auto industry. This is reflected in the high 1950 population count (See Figure 2-1a).

Postwar Population Growth

The Willow Village area could not, of course, return to its pre-1941 condition. The infrastructure for urban growth, such as sanitary sewer and water lines, drainage facilities, improved roads, and public schools, was present. The next period of growth of the Township—a 127% increase between 1960 and 1980—occurred primarily in the area south of Geddes Road, in or adjacent to the old Willow Village area.

Another Growth Spurt in the late 1990s

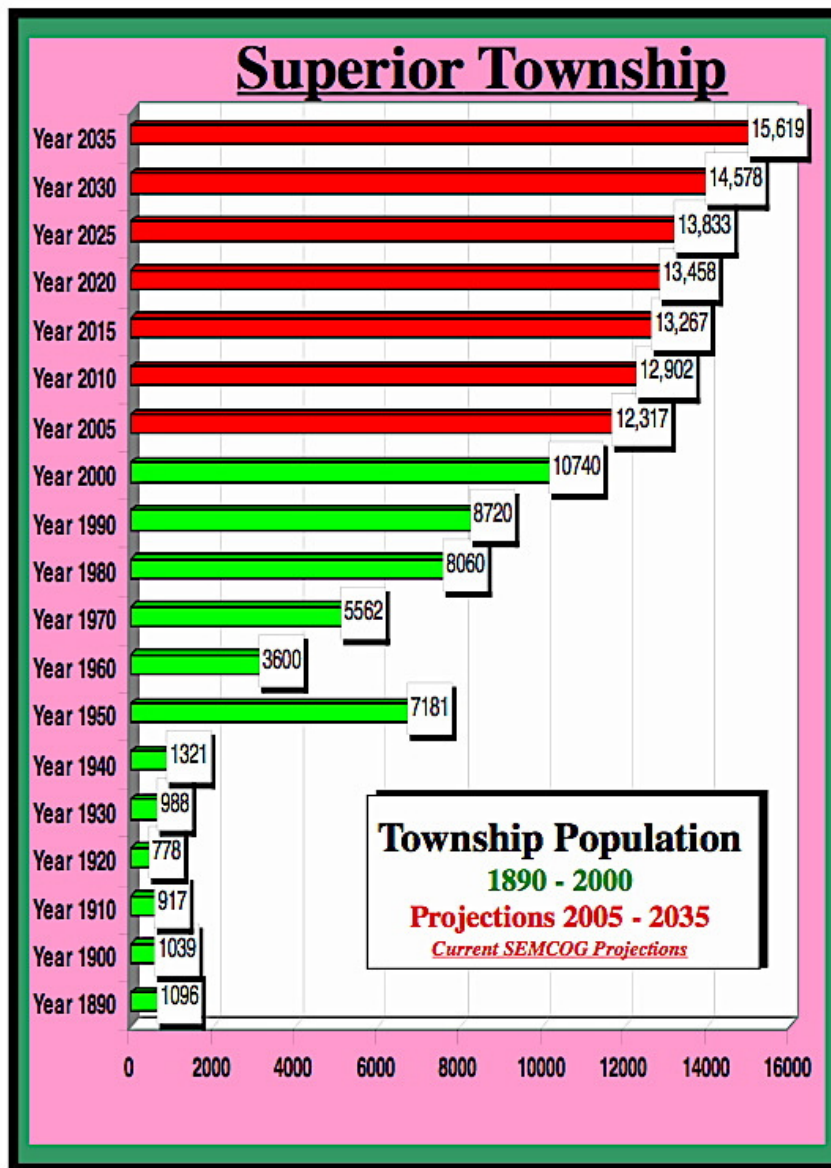
The estimated 2009 population of Superior Township is 13,143 persons, according to SEMCOG. This is a 50% increase from 1990 levels, reflecting the housing boom of the late-1990s to mid 2000s. This growth spurt can be most clearly seen on the SEMCOG building permit data shown in Figure 2-1b.

Slow Growth Projected (2010 – 2025)

Previous SEMCOG estimates prepared for the 2004 Growth Management Plan (GMP) projected a moderate to high growth rate for the Township, culminating in a 2030 population of 18,174, an increase of 108% over

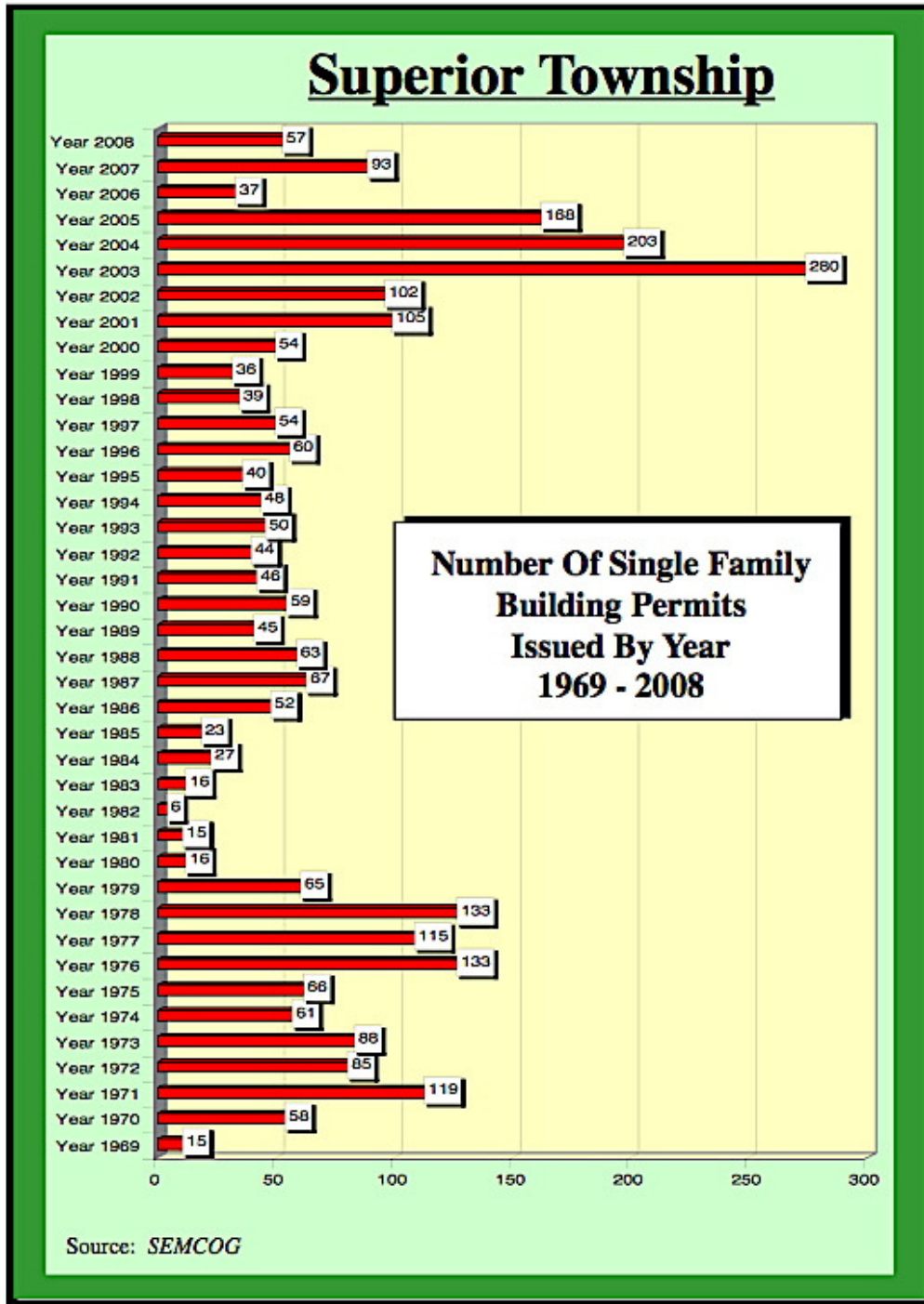
1990 levels. The growth management policies of the 2004 GMP reflected these numbers. In the wake of the deep economic downturn in Michigan, beginning in the mid 2000s, SEMCOG substantially revised its population projection calculations and assumptions. As a result, the Township’s projected rate of slow growth culminates in a revised 2030 population of 14,578 persons – a nearly 25% decrease over previous estimates. The revised 1990 – 2030 growth rate is projected to be about 67% (a 41% decrease over previous estimates). Based upon the 2009 estimated population, the revised rate of slow growth is even more apparent: Between 2009 and 2030, the Township’s population is only projected to increase by 1,435 persons or just under 11%.

Figure 2-1a – Township Population (1890 – 2035)



Source: SEMCOG, 2008

Figure 2-1b – Building Permits (1969 – 2008)



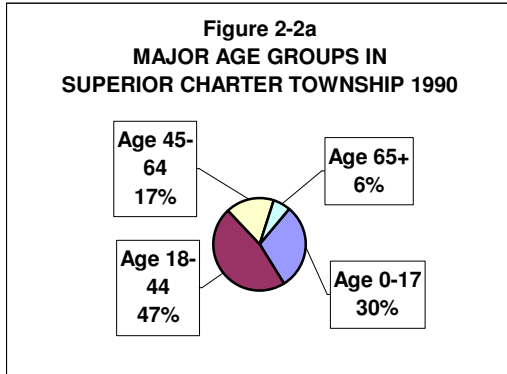
Source: SEMCOG, 2008

Age Structure

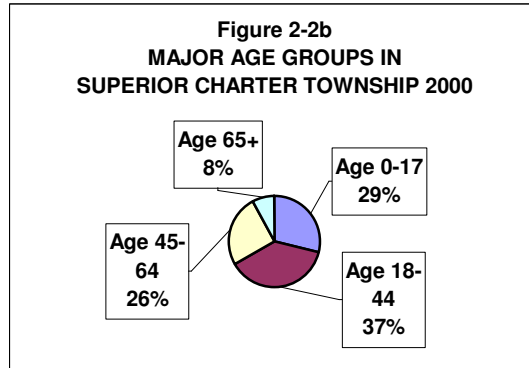
The population of Superior Township is aging. Older population groups are getting larger and younger population groups are declining as a

percent of the total population. In demographic terms, these are fairly dramatic changes in a 10-year period.

The changes in age groups as a percentage of total population can be seen in Figures 2-2a and 2-2b, and the size of age groups in Table 2-1.



Source: Census 1990



Source: Census 2000

Age Group	1990	2000	Total Change	% Change
1-17	2,605	3,106	501	19.2%
18-24	792	923	131	16.5%
25-34		1,497	-	-
35-44 (Combined in 1990)	3,318	1,639	-	-
45-54	936	1,843	907	96.9%
55-64	534	898	364	68.2%
65-74	357	456	99	27.7%
75+	178	378	200	112.4%
Total	8,720	10,740	2,020	23.2%

Source: Census 1990 & 2000

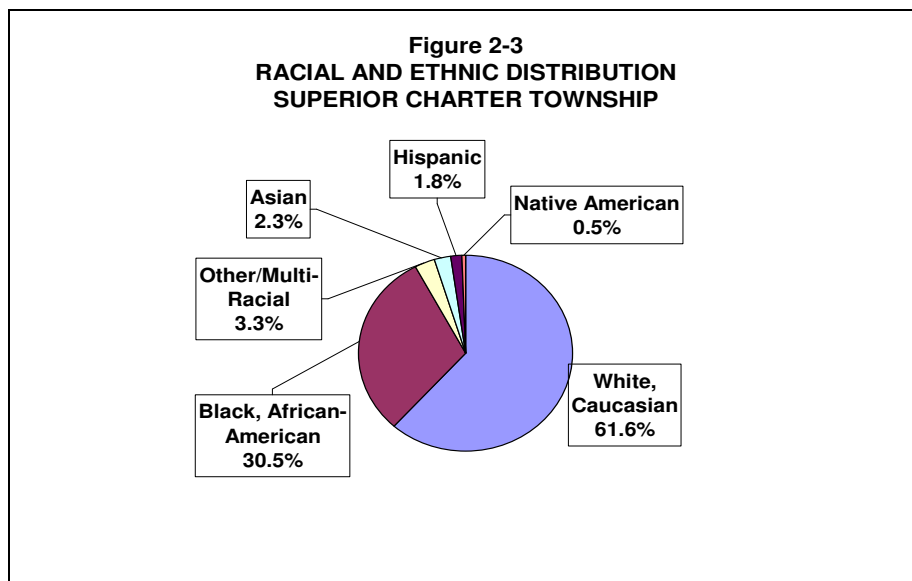
If this aging trend continues, Superior Township may quickly face a population that has different needs and will want different services and facilities than those currently provided in the Township (such as improved fire and emergency responder services), and a different set of recreational facilities. At the same time, the school-age population may grow little and may fall.

Diversity of Township Population

Superior Charter Township has a diverse population. While the current population is primarily White, non-Hispanic, (6,570 persons, or 61.6% of the total population); the growth of the White, Non-Hispanic population between 1990 and 2000 was less than growth in minority populations

(See Figure 2-3). The second-largest group is Black or African-American, numbering 3,309 persons, or 30.5% of the population. While this population grew by 879 persons, or 36.2%, between 1990 and 2000, it grew at a slower rate than other minorities. Between 1990 and 2000, the majority population in Superior Charter Township grew by 9.9%, and the total minority population grew by 40%, from 2,774 to 3,883 people. Asian residents experienced the largest percentage growth, up 100 residents, or 68%, from 147 to 247 people.

The second-largest minority percentage increase is within the Hispanic population, whose 2000 total of 197 was up by 71 people, or 56.3%, from 1990. The American Indian and Alaska Native population of Superior Charter Township rose by 10 people between 1990 and 2000, experiencing a 24.4% increase. Finally, 363 residents identified themselves as multi-racial or of some other race in the 2000 Census. This was the first census in which the Census Bureau presented this option.



Source: Census 2000.

Education

The people of Superior Township are well educated. Based on the 2000 Census, 26% of Township residents have a high school diploma while another 26% have attended “some college.” Twenty percent (20%) of Township residents have bachelor’s degrees, while another 20% have master’s or higher degrees.

Occupation Trends

The varying occupations of Superior Charter Township residents in the year 2000 were dominated by management, professional, and related

occupations. Over 2,300 residents worked in management or professional fields, while over 1,300 residents worked in sales and office occupations. Production, transportation, and material moving occupied 814 residents, and service jobs were held by 720 people. Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations were held by 324 Township residents, while 20 residents claimed the occupational group of farming, fishing, or forestry (most likely farming).

ECONOMIC MEASURES (1990-2000)

Median Household Income

In the 2000 Census, the median household income in Superior Township was \$56,622. This is higher than that of the State of Michigan and Washtenaw County, which were \$44,667 and \$51,990, respectively. However, the rate of increase in median household income in the Township between 1990 and 2000 was less than at the state or County, 23.8% compared to 44% and 101.7%, respectively. See Table 2-2.

Table 2-2 MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME 1990-2000				
Jurisdiction	1990	2000	Total Change	Percent Change
State of Michigan	\$31,020	\$44,667	\$13,647	44%
Washtenaw County	\$36,307	\$51,990	\$15,683	101.7%
Superior Charter Township	\$45,754	\$56,622	\$10,868	23.8%

Source: Census 1990 & 2000.

Poverty Trends

About 10% of the Superior Township population lives below the poverty level. The number of individuals (age 18 and older, related children under 18, and unrelated individuals over the age of 15) living below the poverty level in Superior Township increased by 206 people from 818 in 1990 to 1,024 people in 2000, or about 25%. During this period, poverty rates statewide and nationally went down. Superior Township experienced a greater percentage increase than Washtenaw County (5.3%), but three communities nearby experienced greater increases. These were Plymouth Township (150 people, or 44.8% increase), Pittsfield Township (1,087 persons, or 71.4% increase), and Northfield Township (232 persons, or 227.5% increase).

The number of families living below the poverty level in Superior Township increased from 203 to 250, an increase of 47 families, or 23.2% between 1990 and 2000. Female-headed households living below

the poverty level grew by nine (6.2%) from 145 to 154 between 1990 and 2000.

Property Tax Base

The five classifications of real property in Superior Township include agriculture, commercial, developmental, industrial, and residential. Superior Township’s total real property tax base equaled \$162,219,000 in 1991 and \$307,655,581 in 2001. This was an increase of over \$145 million, or 89.7%. (See Table 2-3.) This notable increase includes over \$148 million in new residential SEV (state equalized value), over \$9 million in new commercial SEV, nearly \$600,000 in new agricultural SEV, and over \$300,000 in new industrial SEV. Developmental SEV, which includes all unfinished major construction projects in the Township as of December 31, 1991 and 2001, accounted for a decrease of \$13,824,400 and fell from 8.5% of SEV to zero over that decade.

In 1991, agricultural land accounted for 5% of the total SEV, whereas in 2001, agricultural land decreased to 2.8% of the total SEV. Commercial land enjoyed an increase in SEV, but decreased its percentage of the total SEV between 1999 and 2001 from 14.4% to 10.9%. Industrial properties made up 0.3% of the SEV in 1991 and maintained at the same level in 2001. Residential land use experienced the largest increase in the tax base between 1991 and 2001, increasing by 127.4%. As a percentage of the total SEV, residential jumped from 71.8% in 1991 to 86.1% in 2001.

Classification	1991	% Total SEV 1991	2001	% Total SEV 2001	Total Increase	% Increase
Agriculture	\$8,117,400	5.0%	\$8,713,516	2.8%	\$596,116	7.3%
Commercial	\$23,412,500	14.4%	\$33,391,715	10.9%	\$9,979,215	42.6%
Developmental	\$13,824,400	8.5%	\$0	0.0%	-\$13,824,400	-100.0%
Industrial	\$454,900	0.3%	\$803,921	0.3%	\$349,021	76.7%
Residential	\$116,409,800	71.8%	\$264,746,429	86.1%	\$148,336,629	127.4%
Total Real	\$162,219,000	100.0%	\$307,655,581	100.0%	\$145,436,581	89.7%

Source: Michigan Department of Treasury, State Tax Commission

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS (1990-2000)

Housing Units

The change in the number of housing units in Superior Charter Township between 1990 and 2000 (up 941 units, or 29.8%) closely reflects the change in its population (up 2,020 people, or 23.2%), but is slightly higher. The Township also experienced a slight decrease in household size, from 2.84 persons in 1990 to 2.67 in 2000. This trend to more dwellings, and a smaller population per dwelling, is a national trend. The percentage increase in the number of housing units in the Township, including renter and owner-occupied units, was greater than in Washtenaw County, but not more than in the neighboring jurisdictions of Northfield Township (31.9%), Canton Township (40%), Pittsfield Township (58.3%), and Salem Township (61.4%).

Single-family detached housing is the most prevalent type of housing in Superior Charter Township, making up 62% of all housing units. Manufactured homes follow single-family detached homes in second place with 768 units. However, new units in manufactured housing parks will significantly increase the number of manufactured homes within the Township when next counted in 2010. Single-family attached homes are third-most prevalent in the Township (275), followed by five- to nine-unit buildings (257). Superior Charter Township has 83 buildings with 20 or more units, 63 buildings with three to four units, 52 buildings with 10 to 19 units, and finally, 43 buildings with two units.

In the year 2000, there were 3,961 occupied housing units in Superior Charter Township. Of these units, 81.6% were owner-occupied and 18.4% were renter-occupied. The rate of owner-occupation increased 2.8% since the 1990 Census (from 78.8%). The Township's renter-occupation rate decreased by 2.6% between 1990 and 2000 (from 21% to 18.4%).

Housing Value

The median value of owner-occupied housing in Superior Charter Township increased by \$58,900 from \$81,000 to \$140,000 between 1990 and 2000. This was an increase of 72%. The Township experienced a lower percentage increase in owner-occupied housing values than the bulk of its abutting local jurisdictions, as well as Washtenaw County as a whole (See Table 2-4).

With a median value of \$140,700, the Township's housing has a greater median worth than Ypsilanti City and Ypsilanti Township (\$117,500 and \$117,300, respectively). Eight of the other nearby jurisdictions have a median housing value of over \$150,000, with one, Ann Arbor Township, having a median housing value of over \$300,000. Washtenaw County

also has a greater median owner-occupied housing value than Superior Township, at \$174,300.

Table 2-4 MEDIAN VALUE OF OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING, SUPERIOR CHARTER TOWNSHIP AND SURROUNDING JURISDICTIONS 1990 & 2000				
Jurisdiction	1990	2000	Total Change	Percent Change
Ann Arbor City	\$116,400	\$181,400	\$65,000	55.8%
Ann Arbor Township	\$216,700	\$325,300	\$108,600	50.1%
Canton Township	\$109,300	\$194,100	\$84,800	77.6%
Northfield Township	\$83,400	\$171,600	\$88,200	105.8%
Northville Township	\$162,700	\$282,500	\$119,800	73.6%
Pittsfield Township	\$118,800	\$220,700	\$101,900	85.8%
Plymouth Township	\$127,200	\$218,500	\$91,300	71.8%
Salem Township	\$129,600	\$231,800	\$102,200	78.9%
Superior Township	\$81,800	\$140,700	\$58,900	72%
Van Buren Township	\$70,400	\$143,100	\$72,700	103.3%
Ypsilanti City	\$65,900	\$117,500	\$51,600	78.3%
Ypsilanti Township	\$57,400	\$117,300	\$59,900	104.4%
Washtenaw County	\$96,000	\$174,300	\$78,300	81.6%
<i>Source: Census 1990 & 2000.</i>				

Chapter 3 CURRENT CONDITIONS

Introduction

This Chapter examines the existing physical characteristics of Superior Township. Each topic is briefly described and includes a map. The topics are grouped under the headings of “natural environment” and “built environment.” For further information on any of the topics, contact the primary data sources, Washtenaw County and the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG).

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Natural Resources

The natural resources of Superior Township include the Huron River and other streams, wetlands, woodlands, fields, and crop lands. The location and extent of these resources have been mapped, based on interpretation of aerial photographs. The primary map used to locate natural resources is the land use/land cover map. SEMCOG prepared a land use/land cover map of Superior Township based on aerial photographs taken in 2000. Because the maps are produced using GIS, land cover and land use can be separated into two maps, and components of each can be made into individual maps, such as one map that shows just woodlands, another only wetlands, etc.

Land Cover

Land cover is a description of the presence or absence of vegetation and if present, the type of vegetation. These types could include agriculture, upland forest, lowland forest, pastures or meadows, and others. Non-vegetative cover types include developed areas, gravel pits, etc.

There are a wide variety of land cover types in Superior Township, but the overall characteristic is that the Township is highly vegetated. See Map 3-1.

The land cover type with the most extensive, continuous area in 2000 was active agricultural land. Agriculture occupied much of the south-central, and parts of the northwest portions of the Township and extended into neighboring jurisdictions. Woodlands are scattered in nearly all areas of the Township, but are more numerous and extensive in the northern half.

Grassland and shrub areas usually indicate areas that were in agriculture in the past 20 to 40 years. It can take that long for

agricultural fields to convert to annual weeds, then to perennial plants and grasses. Shrubs and trees first may begin to emerge in as little as five years but can take 40 or more years following agriculture. Grassland and shrub areas are most abundant in the northern half of the Township.



Photo 3-1: Agricultural land is important in Superior Township.

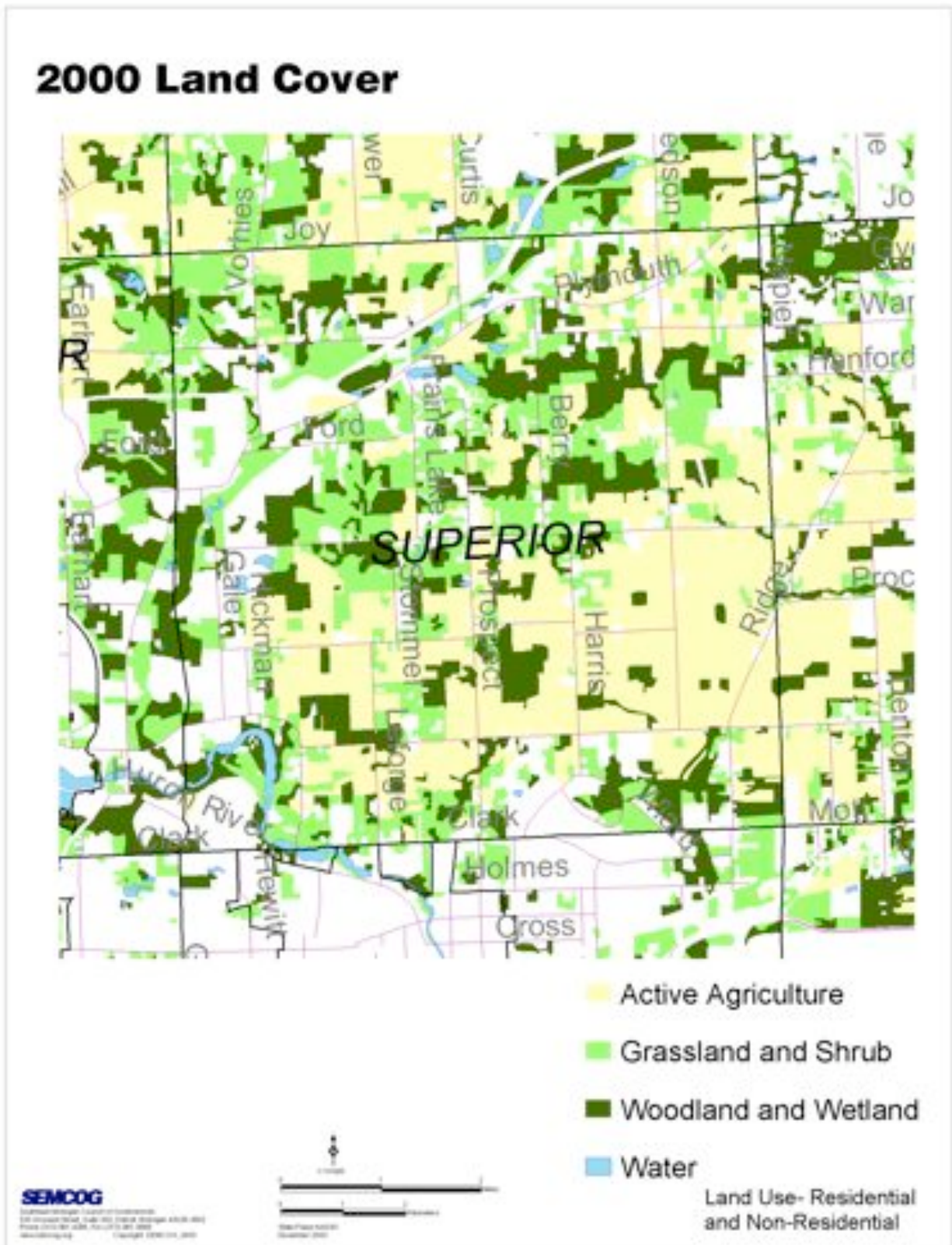


Photo 3-2: Fleming Creek flows through the Township as a tributary of the Huron River.



Photo 3-3: There are numerous ponds and small lakes in Superior Township.

Map 3-1 Land Cover



Farmland

Farmland occurs throughout most of the Township, but the largest, most continuous blocks of active farms are in the south central part of the Township (See Map 3-2). This area has some of the more gently rolling land, with soils better suited for agriculture than for houses. (See paragraph on soils later in this section.)

A growing block of actively farmed parcels north of Geddes Road and along the N. Prospect Road corridor are protected from change to another use by permanent conservation easements or ownership by a land conservancy organization. The Staebler Farm, another large block of agricultural land located near the Plymouth Road/Curtis Road intersection, has also been purchased and permanently protected as open space by the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Department (See Map 3-14, Conserved Agricultural Land and Open Space).

The State of Michigan’s Public Act 116 Farmland Preservation program has also been used to ensure that agricultural parcels are not developed through an agreement with the owner that reduces the effective property taxes on the property for the period of enrollment. Active P.A. 116 agreements in the Township are listed in Table 3-1 below:

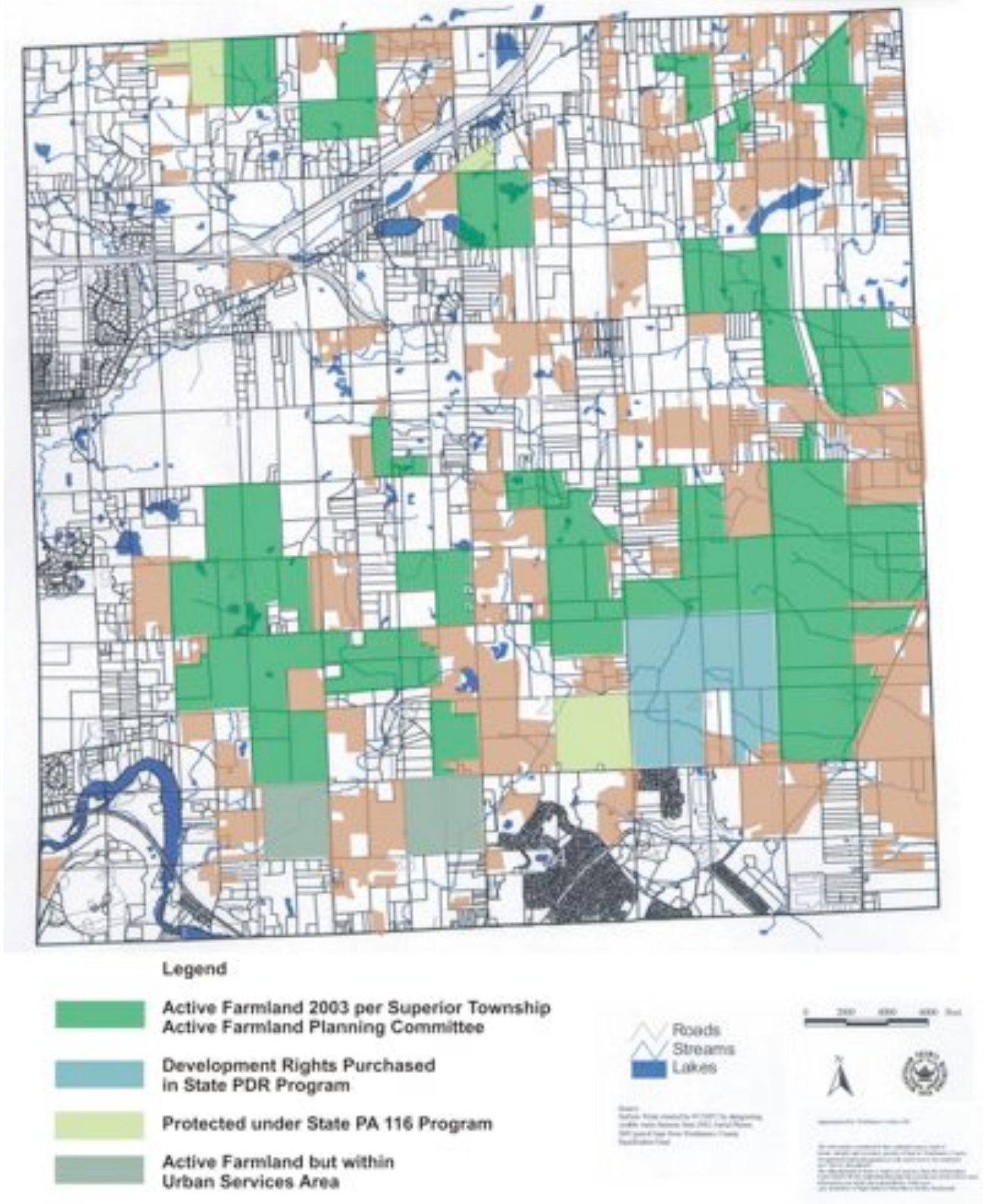
Note on Map 3-14 that existing farmland is surrounded by a mix of parcels of different sizes. Some remain in large blocks of 40 to 80 acres suitable for large-scale commercial farming and commodity crops like corn and soybeans, but others have been broken up into five to ten acre parcels limited to hobby or specialty farms, equestrian activities, and rural residences.

Table 3-1. Farmland Development Rights Agreements in Superior Township (2009)

Agreement Number	Section	End Year	Acres (estimate)
81-50934-123115	3	2015	18
81-50935-123115	5	2015	101
81-50936-123115	5	2015	19
81-57925-123152	26	2052	80
81-58319-123157	26	2057	58
81-58320-123157	26	2057	49
81-59164-123191	27	2091	159
81-0035-123112	9	2012	74
81-11941-123168	26	2068	9
81-PR2104-123199	26		360
81-PR2152-123199	27		171

If one compares Map 3-2, Active Farmlands and Protected Acreage with Map 3-1, Land Cover 2000, there appears to be much less active farming in 2003. This could be due in part to a reduction in active agriculture and in part to interpretation of aerial photographs that placed fallow fields into a non-agricultural category.

Map 3-2 Lands Designated for Agricultural Preservation



Source of farm locations: Superior Township Active Farmland Subcommittee.

Woodlands, Wetlands, Water Bodies, and Other Sensitive Natural Features

Woodlands are scattered throughout the Township and many are in large blocks. This means that woodlands are important ecological settings in the Township, as well as important amenities. Many woodland blocks approach or are larger than 100 acres. In the northern half of the Township, many woodlands are in close proximity to each other, nearly establishing contiguous ecological corridors. Small woodlands exist in the developed southern area of the Township, providing valuable amenities. If one travels the roads of Superior Township, one can see woodlands at least once every mile nearly everywhere in the Township. See Map 3-3. However, note that in very few locations are woodlands adjacent to the road.

The term “woodlands” is used in mapping and in the text of this Plan, but “forest” will also appear on maps and in the text. “Woodlands” refers to both forests (concentrations of trees with a 70% to 100% tree canopy coverage) and woodlands (concentrations of trees with a 20% to 70% tree canopy coverage). For purposes of mapping, SEMCOG used a tree coverage of at least 24%. Upland forests occur on drier soils and wetland forests on soils that experience standing water for part of the year (or standing water was present at least part of the year for many decades in the past).



Photo 3-4: Woodlands are located throughout Superior Township, and are more frequent in the northern part of the Township.

Wetlands are areas where the soil shows the effects of extended saturation by water and where the vegetation is typical of a wet root zone environment. Wetlands may have water visible for all of the year or only part. Wetlands can be marshy or they can be forested.

Wetlands provide valuable storage of rainwater and snowmelt. Some provide a groundwater recharge function; others help filter pollutants from stormwater and serve as wildlife nurseries and habitat. Wetlands have become important amenities for those who like the natural view and the wildlife that live or visit there. New residential developments use them as open space amenities, but care must be taken not to alter the natural landscape immediately surrounding wetlands as this diminishes wetland functions.



Photo 3-5: Wetlands are an important sensitive environment.

The total area of the Township covered by wetlands is small, but there are many of them. See Map 3-4. There are few wetlands shown in the agricultural south-central part of the Township. This may be because of alterations of pre-settlement wetlands for farming. The poor capacity of those soils to support septic systems suggests that more wetlands could have been present at one time. For those fields that have tile drainage, the disruption of those tiles in the future could result in the re-emergence of wetlands potentially subject to state regulations and the Township Wetlands Ordinance.

The Huron River, a major river in southeast Michigan, flows through the southwest corner of Superior Township. Fleming Creek is a tributary of the Huron River, flowing south and west through the western part of the Township. The eastern part of Superior Township is in the Rouge River watershed.

There are numerous ponds and small lakes in Superior Township. See Map 3-4. The largest of the lakes, such as Frain's Lake, are located in Sections 9, 10, 12, and 19 of the Township.

There are several groundwater recharge areas in Superior Township. See Map 3-4. These are areas in which rain and snowmelt percolate into the

ground and reach the water table. These areas are also at an enhanced risk for contamination of groundwater from pollutants on the surface of the ground.

Floodplains

Floodplains have been mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) along the Huron River in the southwest corner of the Township. See Map 3-4. Floodplains have also been identified along Fleming Creek by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ).

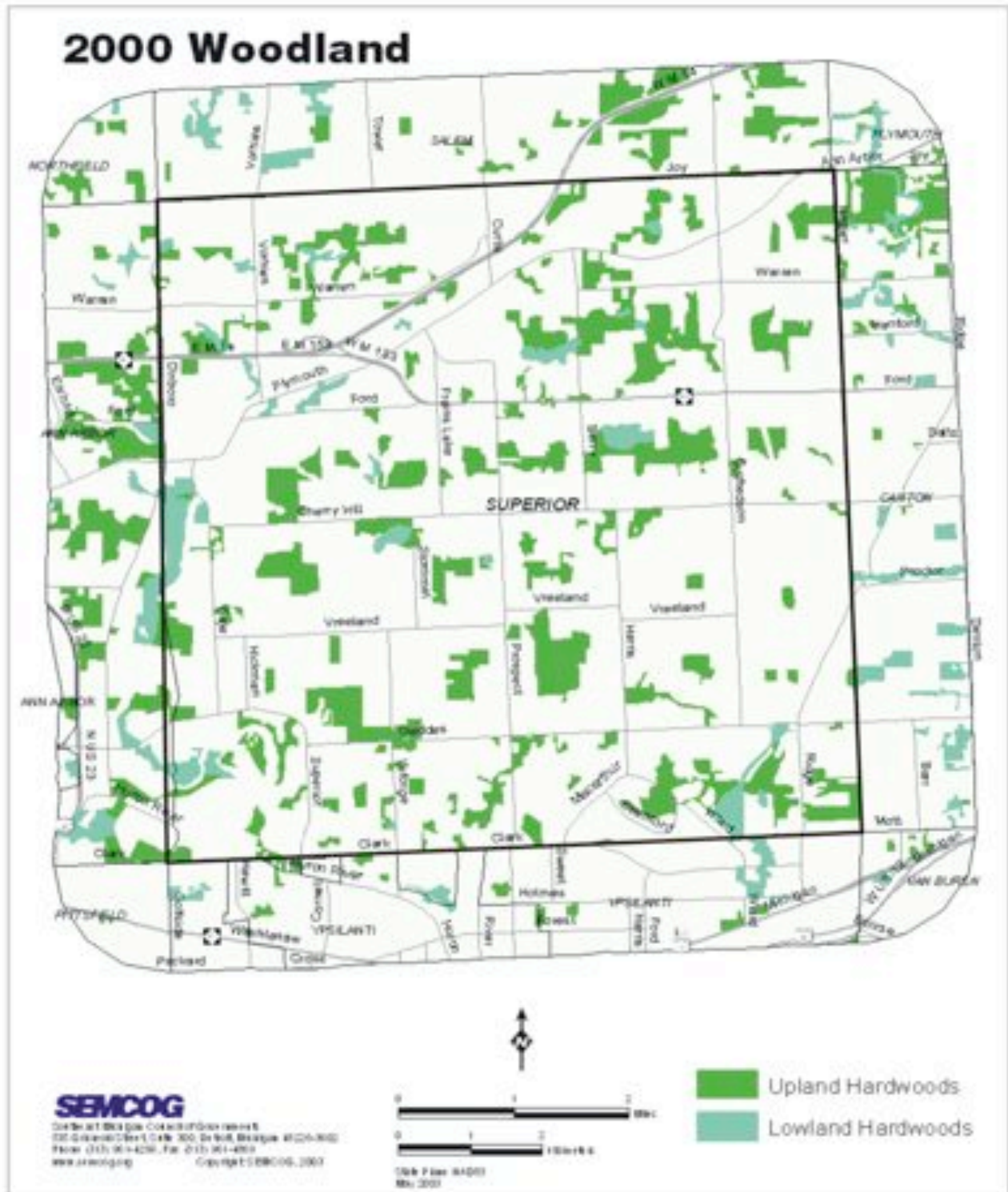
Soils

One of the reasons much of Superior Township is better suited for open space and very low density residential development is that most of the Township has soils unsuitable for high density development without sewers. The slow percolating soils often require “engineered” septic systems and ample space for backup tile fields according to the Washtenaw County Environmental Health Division. Further, the lot must be large enough for an adequate separation distance between the septic system (tank and drain fields) and the well and those of neighbors.

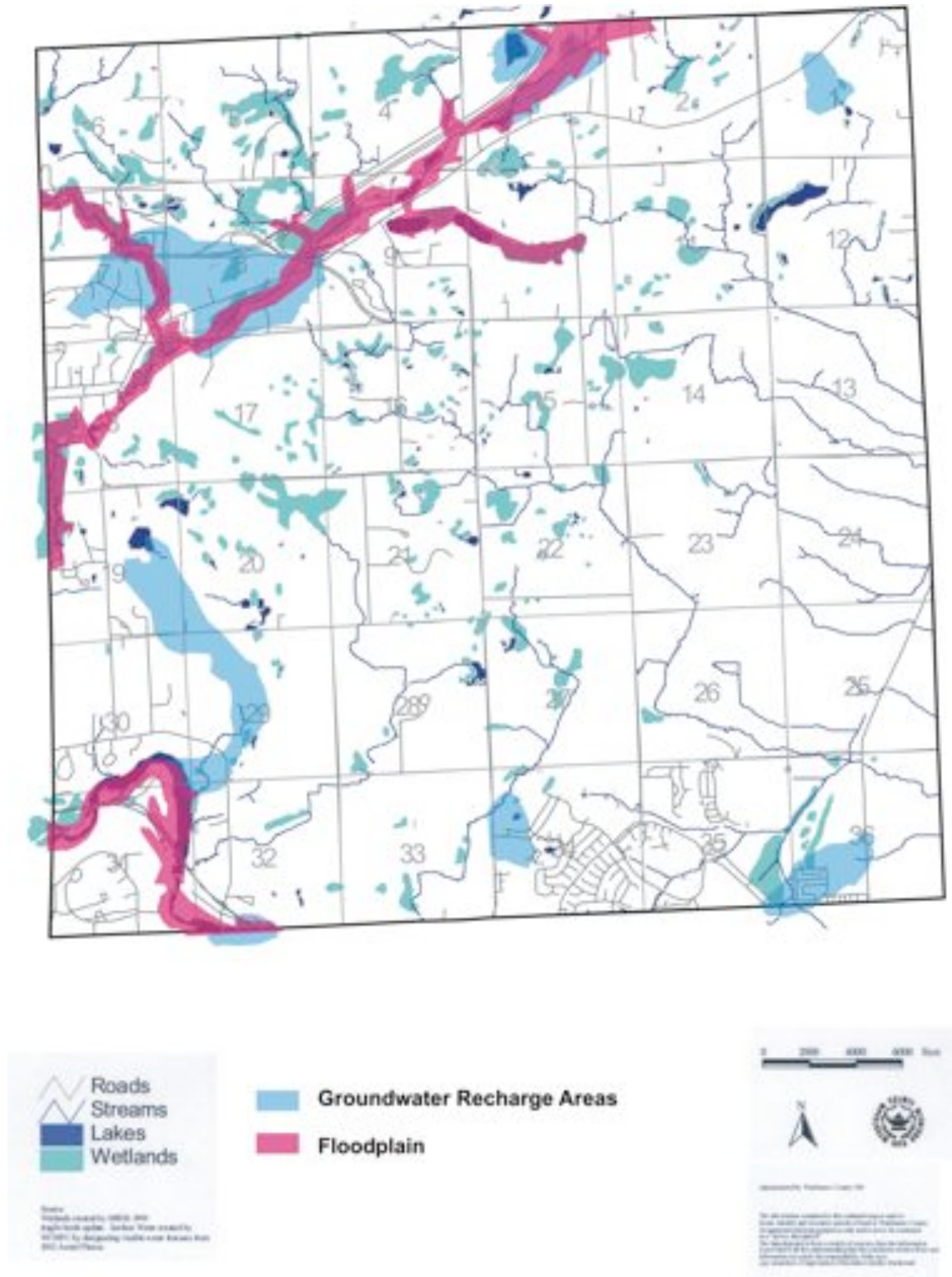
These soil limitations also indicate foundations are more susceptible to cracking and heaving and that the likelihood of wet basements is higher unless special measures are used to keep water away from footings and foundation walls. Together, these measure will cost homeowners more than building in areas with soils that do not have these characteristics.

Maps 3-5 (Soils with Limitations for Septic Systems) and Map 3-6 (Soils with Limitations for Basements) illustrate these points. Poor percolation soils (mostly heavy clay) exist throughout most of the Township with the exception of portions of the northwest corner of the Township (where limitations are moderate, instead of severe) and selected areas along the western and southern borders.

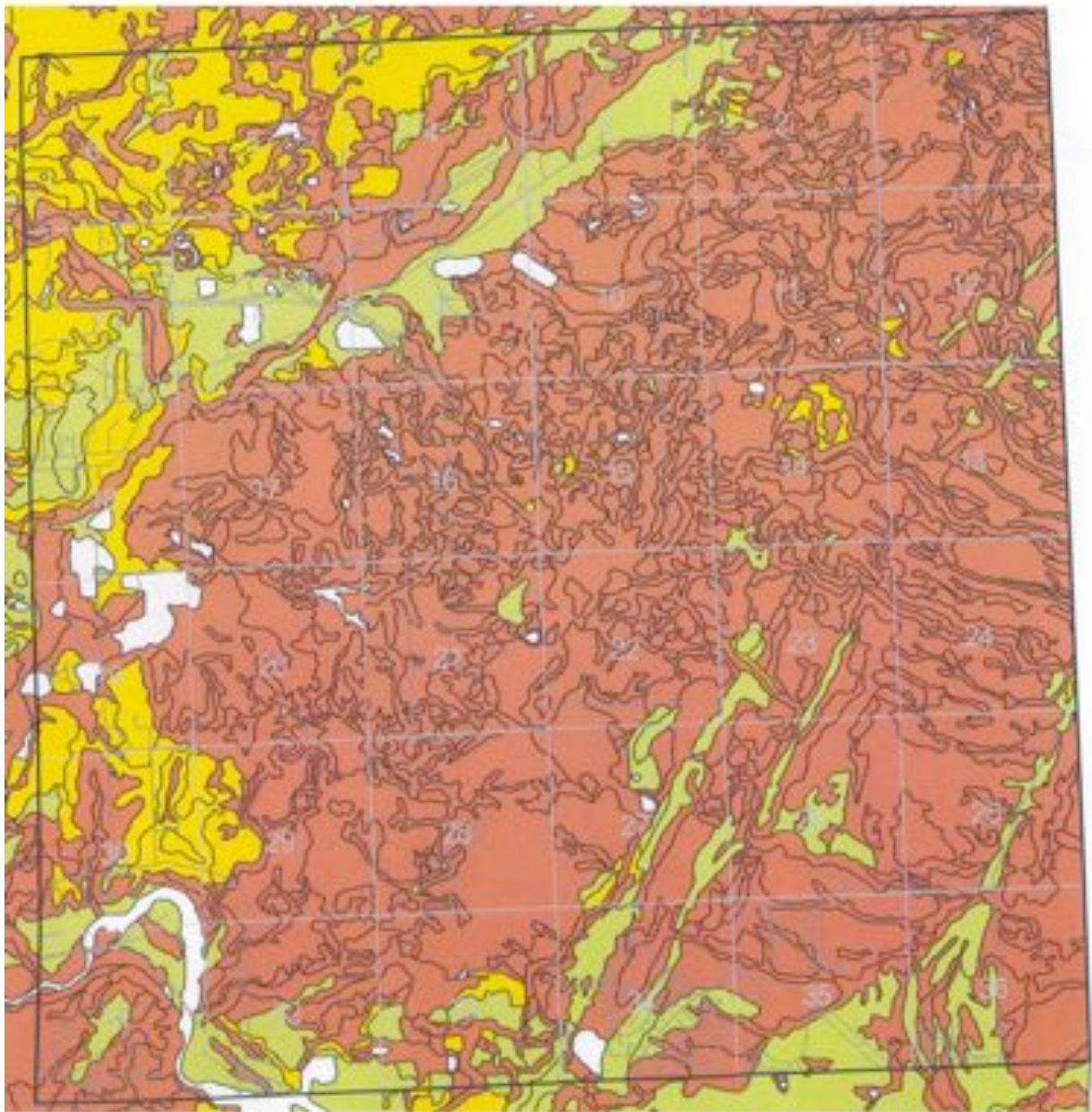
Map 3-3 Major Woodlands in Superior Township



Map 3-4 Wetlands, Rivers, Streams, Lakes, Floodplain and Groundwater Recharge Areas in Superior Township



Map 3-5 Soils with Limitations for Septic Systems



Section Lines
Septic Limitations
Slight
Moderate
Severe

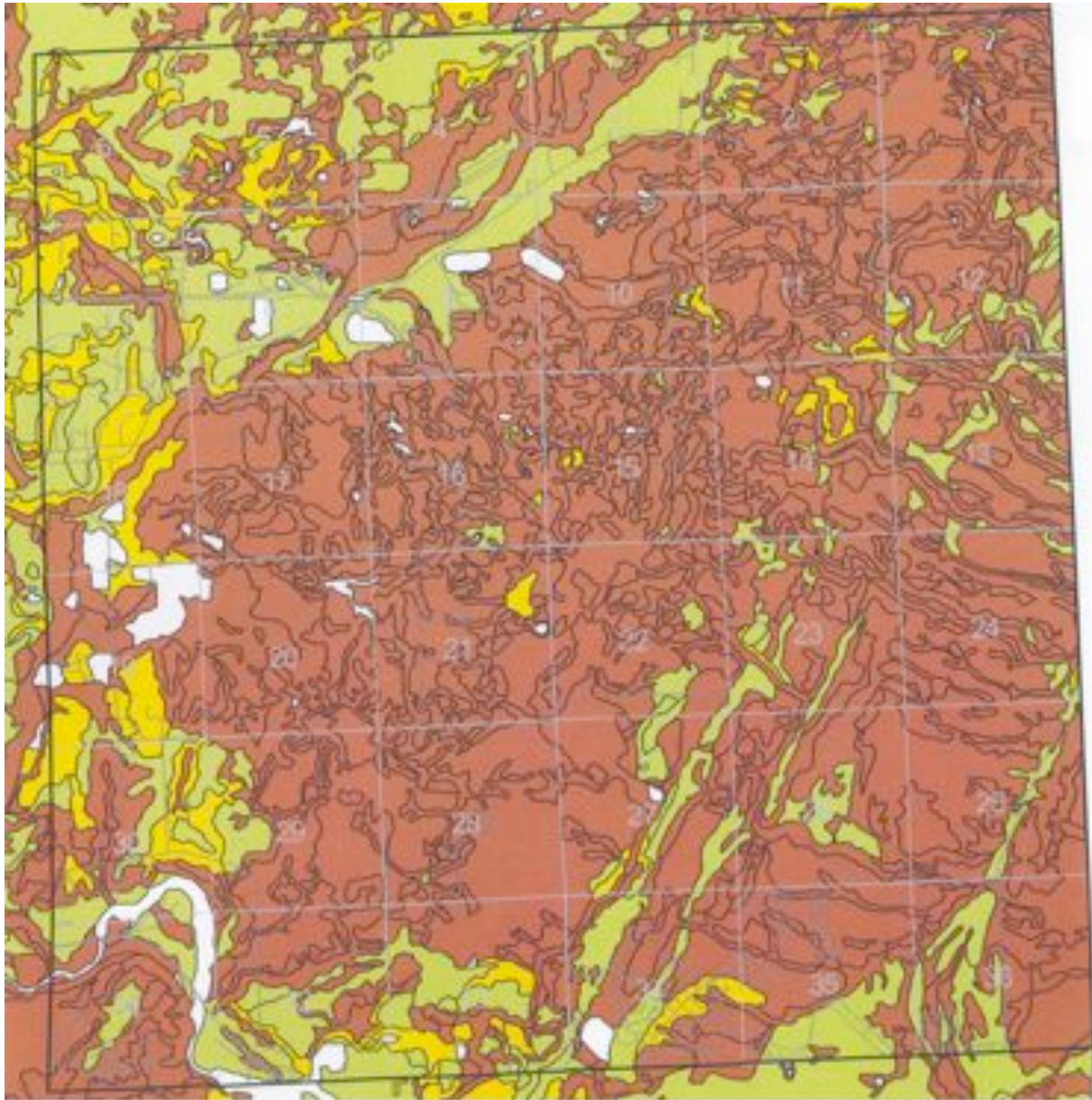
Source:
Soils with Poor to Bad Drainage Service
PWS Soil Survey

0 2000 4000 6000 Feet



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Map 3-6 Soils with Limitations for Basements



Section Lines
Basement Limitations
Slight
Moderate
Severe

Source:
Soils data from US Soil Conservation Service
©1984 Soil Survey



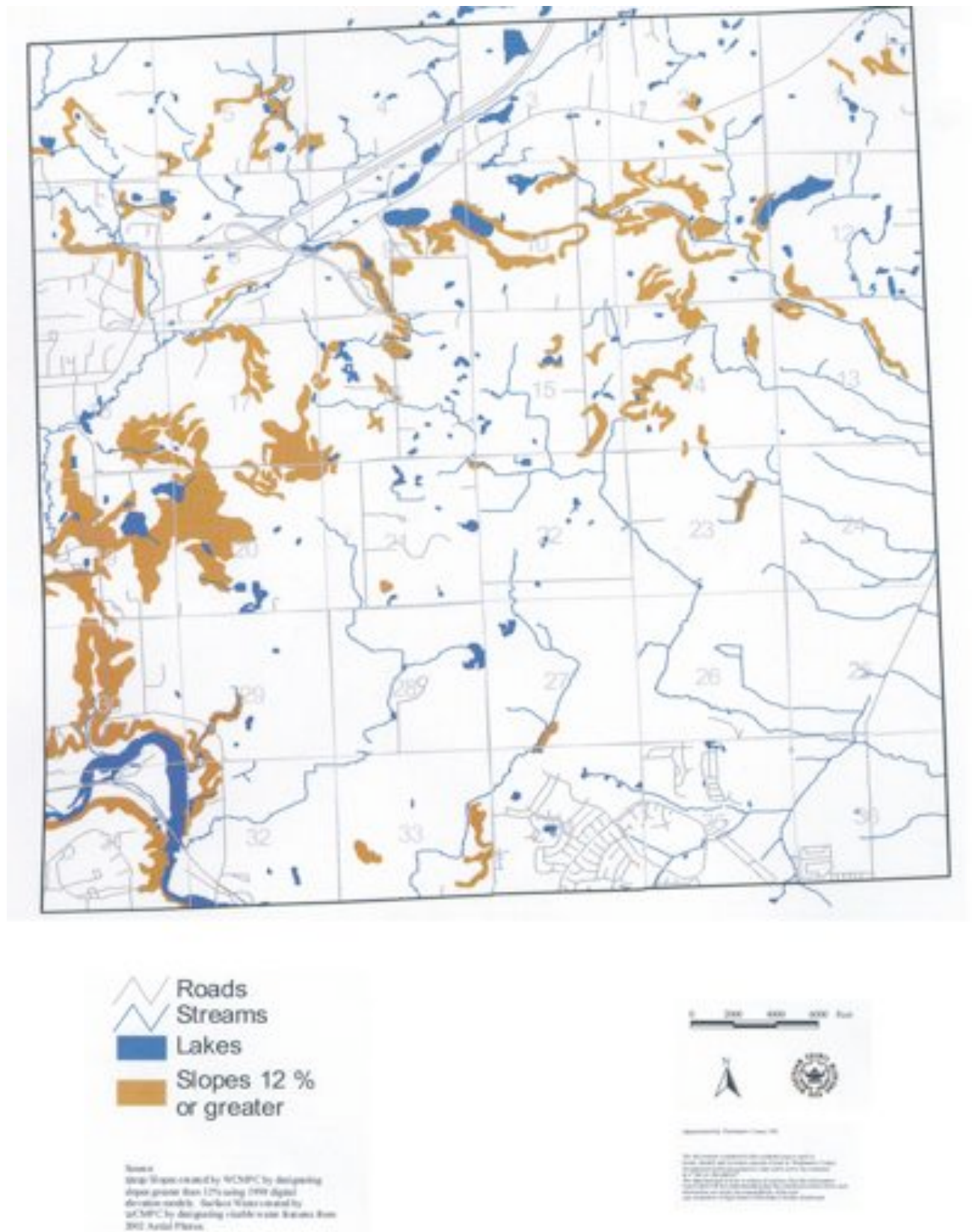
Superior Charter Township, Michigan
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Topography

While most of Superior Township is relatively flat to slightly rolling, there are areas with slopes as steep as 12% or greater. These occur along the Huron River in southwest Superior Township, along the western part of the Township in the vicinity of Gale Road, and in scattered locations to the north and east of Gale Road. See Map 3-7.

Slopes of 12% or greater pose challenges in placing development without damage to the environment. Resulting erosion can negatively affect surface water ecosystems. Development in areas with slopes or rolling topography, especially steep slopes greater than 25%, should best be placed away from the slopes or should be designed to minimize erosion. During construction, slopes need to be protected so that exposed soil does not cause sedimentation of surface waters such as drains, streams, wetlands, and lakes.

Map 3-7 Areas with Slopes Twelve Percent (12%) or Greater



BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Land Use

The 2000 Land Use/Cover Map (Map 3-8) is effective in showing the pattern of developed land uses compared with those that are undeveloped. Low density, single-family residential is widely scattered in the Township and is the predominant housing pattern in the Township. Dixboro, the urban area south of Geddes Road, and the far-western Geddes Road area have greater concentrations of single-family housing.

The impact on the Township of the wide extent of low density, rural single-family residential is only minimal to moderate so far. In the area north of Geddes Road, the Township’s visual character remains rural.

The largest category of land use/cover in 2000 was agriculture, with 7,684 acres. (See Table 3-2.) It remained the largest in spite of a loss of 1,673 acres between 1990 and 2000. Grassland and shrub was second in area, with 5,164 acres in 2000, gaining 267 acres between 1990 and 2000. Single-family residential was the third-largest land use by area, with 3,279 acres, gaining 772 acres between 1990 and 2000. The next largest land use in area was woodland, covering 3,177 acres in 2000. It lost 28 acres from 1990. The category, “under development,” gained 506 acres between 1990 and 2000 for a total of 972 acres. There are relatively small total acres of commercial and office, industrial, and institutional lands, 44 acres, 43 acres, and 339 acres respectively.

Table 3-2. Superior Township Land Use/Cover 1990 and 2000 (Acres)

LAND USE/COVER CATEGORY	1990 Acres	2000 Acres	Total Change in Land Use/ Cover 1990-2000 in Acres
Single-Family Residential	2,507	3,279	772
Multiple-Family Residential	70	76	6
Commercial and Office	47	44	-3
Institutional	339	339	1
Industrial	37	43	6
Transportation, Communication, and Utility	265	265	-1
Cultural, Outdoor Recreation, and Cemetery	266	404	138
Active Agriculture	9,357	7,684	-1,673
Wetland	508	524	15
Water	245	240	-5
Under Development	466	972	506
Woodland	3,205	3,177	-28
Wooded Wetland	525	522	-3
Grassland and Shrub	4,897	5,164	267
Total	22,732	22,732	

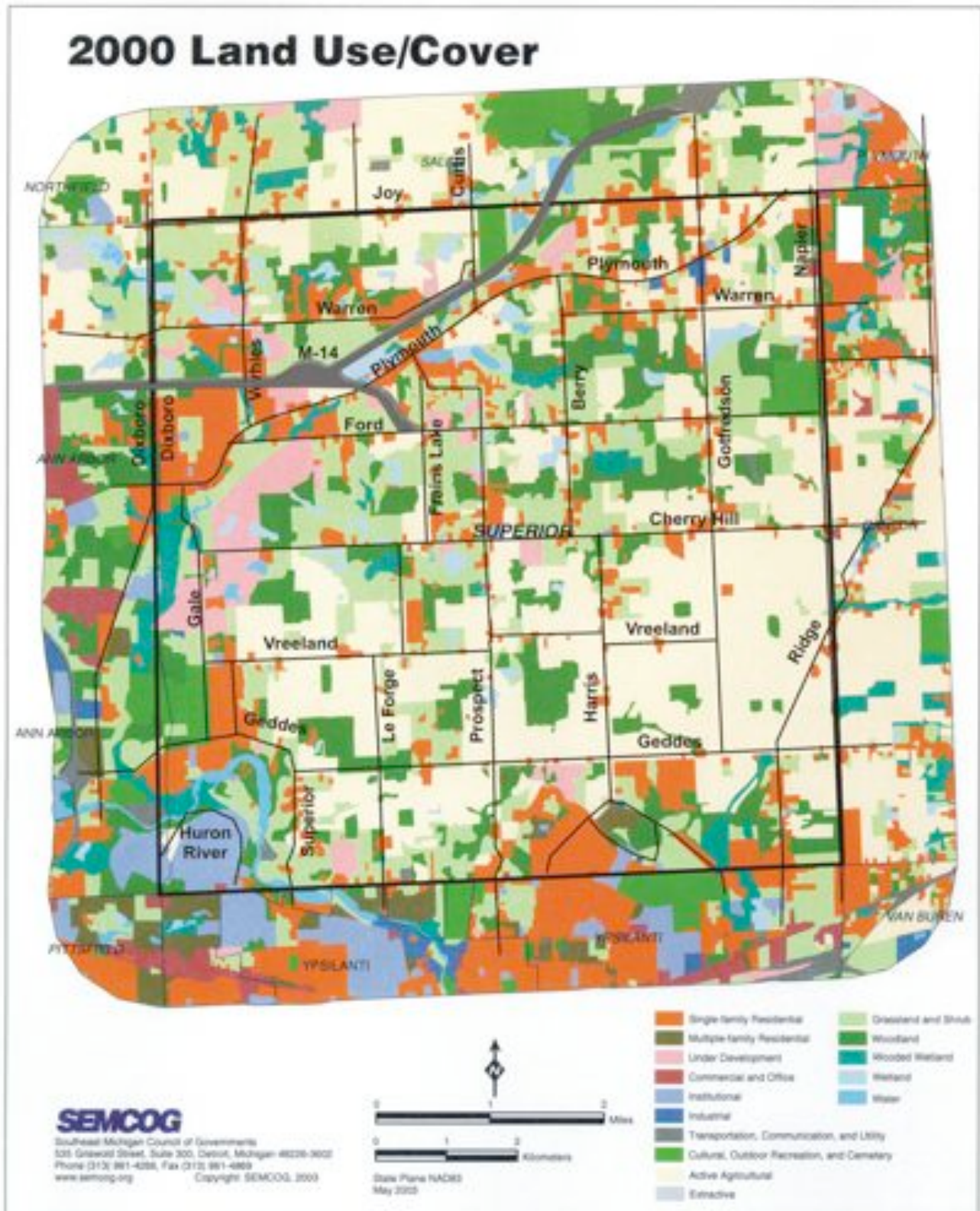
Source: Washtenaw County GIS Services. Because the base data was created using different methods, small differences in area are common. For example, water may not have shrunk by 5 acres.

Note that there was very little commercial/office land use and even less industrial within the Township in 2000. Since 2000, the Hyundai-Kia Motors North American Technical Center has been completed at the intersection of LeForge and Geddes Roads, more than doubling the industrial acreage in the Township. The largest concentrations of intensive land uses are the institutional land uses around the hospital in the southwest corner of the Township. However, these non-residential land uses occur more frequently and in larger blocks in surrounding jurisdictions, providing adequate job centers and commercial services to residents of Superior Township.



Photo 3-6: Many of the rural homes in Superior Township are on large lots.

Map 3-8 Land Use/ Cover



Historic Resources

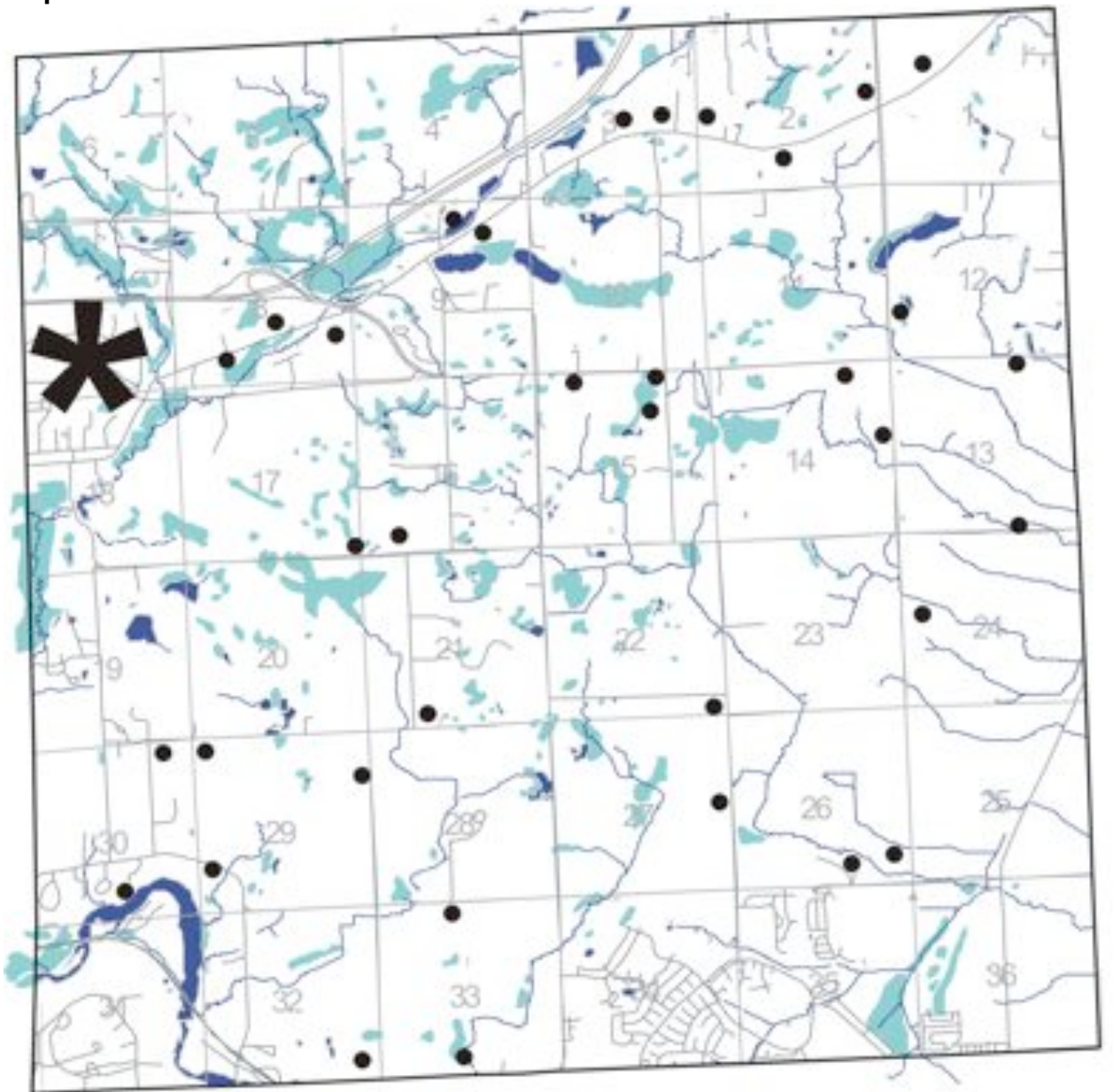
Due to the early settlement of Dixboro and the surrounding farming area, there are many historic homes and places in Superior Township. Significant historic sites are shown on Map 3-9. The number of listed sites has increased since the 1992 Growth Management Plan was prepared, because the new owners of several properties have allowed on-site inspection. The 1997 report, **Intensive Level Historic Survey**, identifies 25 properties warranting inclusion as historic sites and four sites were added following the report.

Many of the historic homes are located along Plymouth/Ann Arbor Road. This concentration is suggestive of an historic corridor.



Photo 3-7: Superior Township has identified many places of historic importance.

Map 3-9 Historic Sites and Places



● Historic Place

✱ Dixboro study area contains additional historic resources.

For more information on historic resources in Superior Township see the *Intensive Level Historic Survey, 1997*



Map prepared by Superior Township Planning Department
Map Date: 10/2011
Map Scale: 1 inch = 2000 feet
Map Projection: NAD 83
Map Contour Interval: 10 feet
Map Contour Elevation: 1000 feet
Map Contour Interval: 10 feet
Map Contour Elevation: 1000 feet
Map Contour Interval: 10 feet
Map Contour Elevation: 1000 feet

Infrastructure

Public agencies maintain roads, publicly owned and operated sanitary sewerage and water systems, park properties, fire service, and schools in all or parts of Superior Township.

Circulation. Public roads in Superior Township range in characteristics from gravel-surfaced to two-lane, paved subdivision roads to two-lane, paved County roads to a limited access highway (See Map 3-10). Several of these roads have congestion problems, including M-14 and the intersection of Plymouth Road with Cherry Hill Road. Safety problems at the intersections of Plymouth Road and Cherry Hill Road in Dixboro and Plymouth Road and Old Ford Road/Tanglewood Drive northeast of Dixboro are indicated by traffic crash data listed in Table 3-3.



Photo 3-8: Rural roads in Superior Township include both paved and gravel roads.

While the roads of all classes adequately serve the residents of Superior Township, pass-through traffic from adjacent jurisdictions increases the loads these roads must carry. Cherry Hill Road and Geddes Road are two-lane roads that are carrying increasing loads from development in Canton Township and Ann Arbor through Superior Township. Plymouth Road carries increasing traffic between Plymouth and Ann Arbor, especially when congestion occurs on M-14.

In 2008, the Geddes Road/Superior Road intersection underwent a major intersection reconstruction that includes a roundabout designed to improve traffic flow and increase safety. The Geddes/LeForge Road intersection also was upgraded with turning lanes and traffic signals at

the same time. All of these improvements are associated with the Hyundai-Kia Motors North American Technical Center development.

Natural Beauty Roads. Three road segments in the Township are designated Natural Beauty Roads. These are: 1) Gale Road; 2) a western portion of Warren Road north of M-14; and 3) Napier Road between Warren and Plymouth/Ann Arbor Road. Natural Beauty Roads are established by petition of landowners along the road and require a public hearing prior to activities that would substantially change the vegetation along the road, except for work by utilities on infrastructure constructed prior to Natural Beauty Road designation.

The Township also has several other scenic roads as recognized and designated by the Township Planning Commission (See Map 3-10). Scenic roads are those with valued visual character that Township residents would especially like retained. Scenic Roads include the eastern portion of Warren Road, the northern portion of Gotfredson Road, Berry Road, Stommel Road, Geddes Road west of Superior Road, and Cherry Hill Road west of Prospect Road.

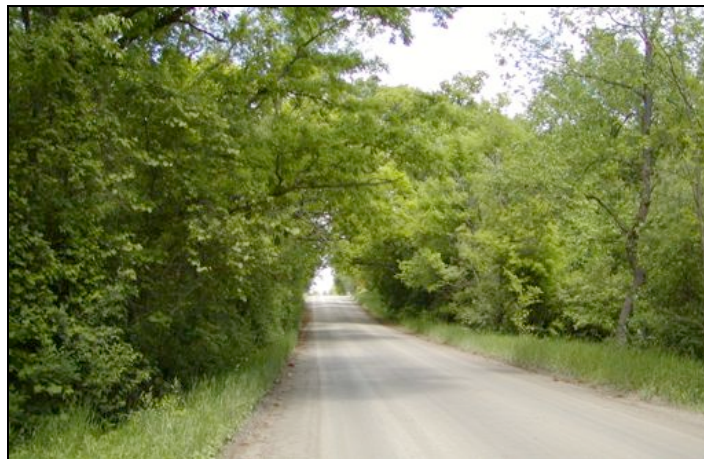


Photo 3-9: Superior Township contains several segments of roads with a natural beauty designation.

Traffic Crashes. The Washtenaw Area Transportation Study and Michigan State Police track the number of traffic crashes at intersections in Superior Township. The top twenty crash intersections for the 2005 through 2007 period are listed in Table 3-3. The worst intersection for crashes in the Township is at the Plymouth Rd. and Tanglewood Dr./Old Ford Rd. intersection northeast of Dixboro. Three (3) of the other top five (5) intersections for crashes have been improved since this data was collected.

Table 3-3 Top Twenty Intersections for Traffic Crashes (2005 – 2007)

Intersection	Total Crashes	Crash Frequency Rank	Crash Rate	Crash Rate Rank
Plymouth Rd & Old Ford Rd & Tanglewood Dr	45	40	2.29	27
N Prospect St & Ford Rd**	31	81	2.29	28
Geddes Rd & Superior Rd**	35	67	1.90	44
N Prospect St & Geddes Rd	37	59	1.68	60
LeForge Rd & Geddes Rd**	21	150	1.39	87
W Huron River Dr & McAuley Dr & N Hewitt Rd	34	75	1.05	163
N Prospect St & E Clark Rd**	21	151	1.06	161
Cherry Hill Rd & N Prospect St	13	225	1.33	96
W M 153 & E M 153 & Frains Lake Rd & Ford Rd	11	249	1.35	93
Superior Rd & N Huron River Dr	26	115	0.87	227
Cherry Hill Rd & Plymouth Rd	17	180	1.02	168
E Clark Rd & N River St	11	251	1.07	160
Gotfredson Rd & Plymouth Rd**	21	153	0.73	262
Gale Rd & Geddes Rd	7	364	1.09	151
N Harris Rd & Geddes Rd	9	318	0.91	209
Geddes Rd & Ridge Rd	10	286	0.79	243
E M 153 & Ford Rd	10	303	0.46	371
Plymouth Rd & Curtis Rd	7	373	0.56	331
Berry Rd & Ford Rd	5	461	0.53	339
Berkshire Dr & N Prospect St	5	467	0.41	391

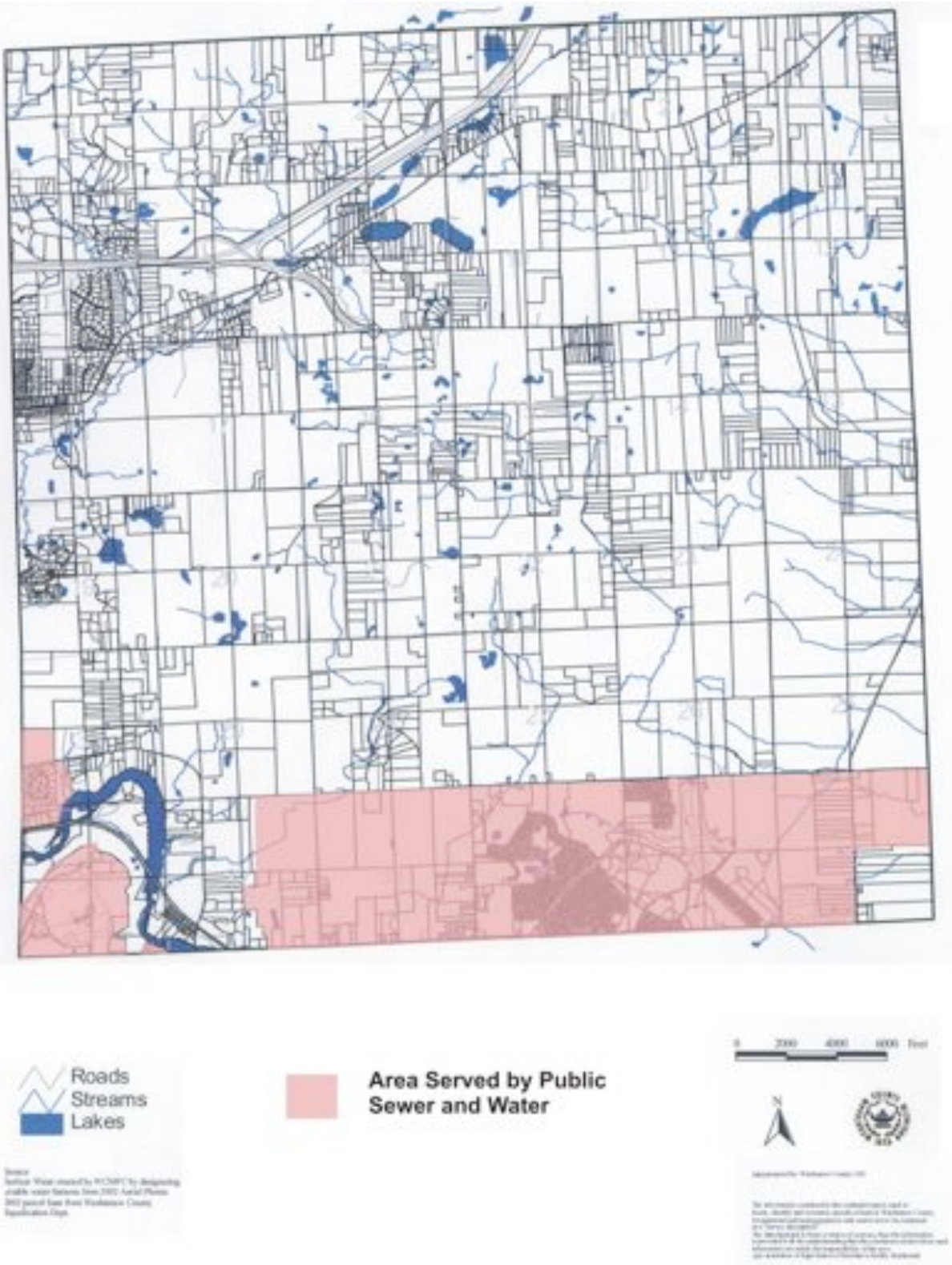
Source: Washtenaw Area Transportation Study and the Michigan State Police

** intersections have been improved/updated since 2005

Public Sewer and Water. The Township provides sanitary sewer and water services within designated service areas under contract with the Ypsilanti Community Utilities Authority and the Township of Ann Arbor. The only areas in the Township served by publicly owned and operated sanitary sewerage and water systems are the land south of Geddes Road, the Medical Center area, and an area adjacent to Ann Arbor Township (See Map 3-11).

The land area south of Geddes Road and Medical Center area are within the Township's designated Urban Service Area (see Chapter 6), and have a greater intensity of non-residential land uses or density of housing that make such service efficient and necessary. There is very limited capacity to extend publicly owned and operated sanitary sewer and water lines to any other areas of the Township. The location and extent of the areas served by the Township are based upon the planned maximum capacity of utility infrastructure serving the Urban Service Area, and the designated capacity limits under existing service contracts between the Township and adjoining units of government.

Map 3-11 Area Served by Public Sewer and Water



Community Facilities and Schools

Township Facilities. The principal public buildings in the Township are:

- The Superior Township Hall on Prospect Road at Cherry Hill Road, which includes a police substation;
- Fire stations on Harris Road at MacArthur Blvd., and on Ford Road at N. Prospect Road;
- The Township utility department’s business office on Clark Road at N. Prospect Road, and maintenance building on MacArthur Blvd.;
- The Ypsilanti District Library’s branch location on Harris Road at MacArthur Blvd.; and
- The historic Township Hall behind the present Township Hall.

Schools. The people of Superior Township are served by four school districts. These include (also see Map 3-12):

- the Ann Arbor schools in the west and northwest part of the Township;
- the Plymouth-Canton Schools in the extreme northeast;
- the Ypsilanti Schools in the center-west portion; and
- the Willow Run schools in the eastern part of the Township.

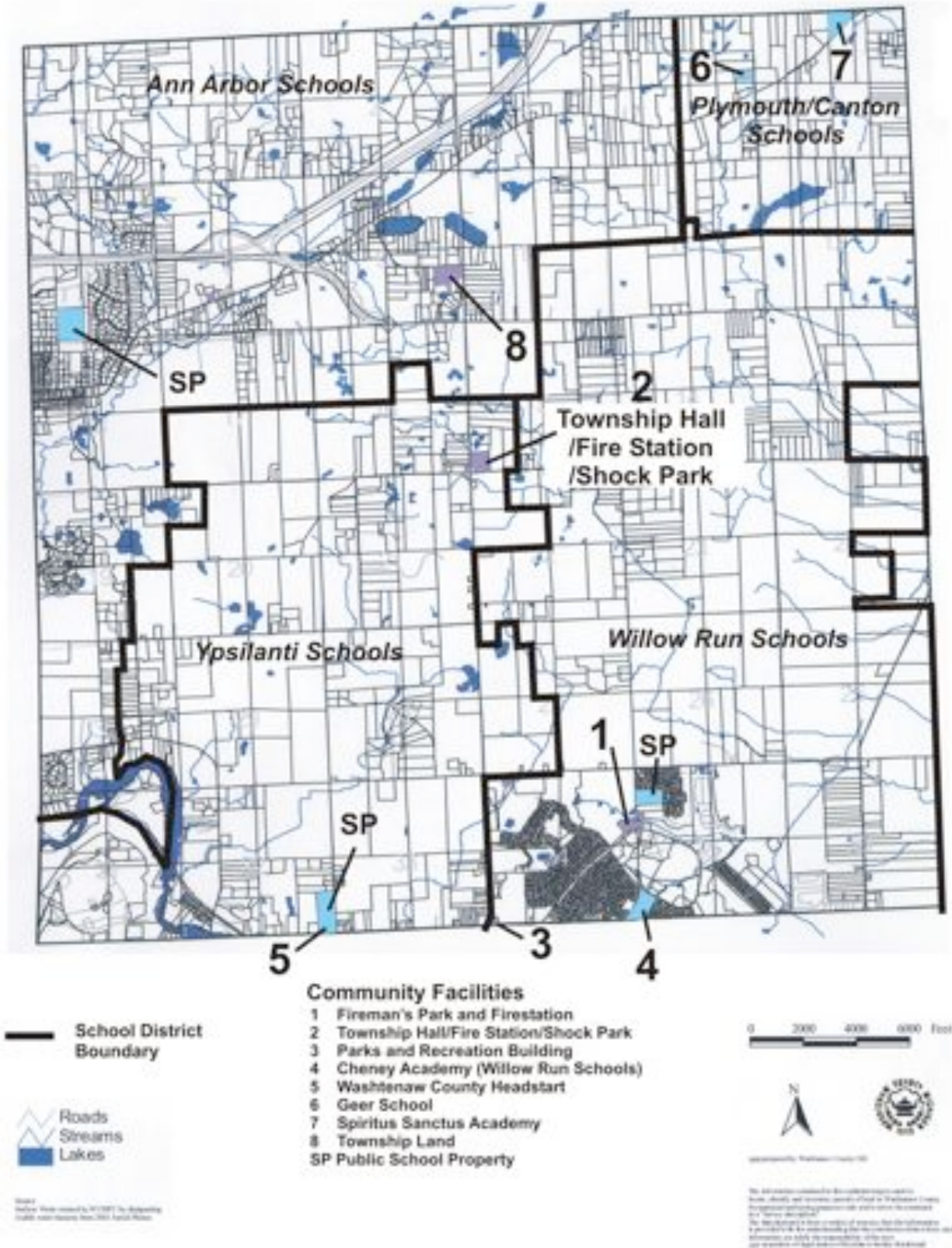
There is only one public elementary school, Cheney Academy of the Willow Run School District, located within the Township, but other school facilities are readily accessible in adjoining units of local governments (See Map 3-12).

Recreation Facilities. Park and recreation facilities in the Township are shown separately on Map 3-13. These include Township parks, one County roadside park, one school with play facilities, and private and semi-public facilities, such as golf courses and a tennis club. A separate Township Parks and Recreation Master Plan provides an analysis of recreation needs and a proposal to develop needed facilities and programs.

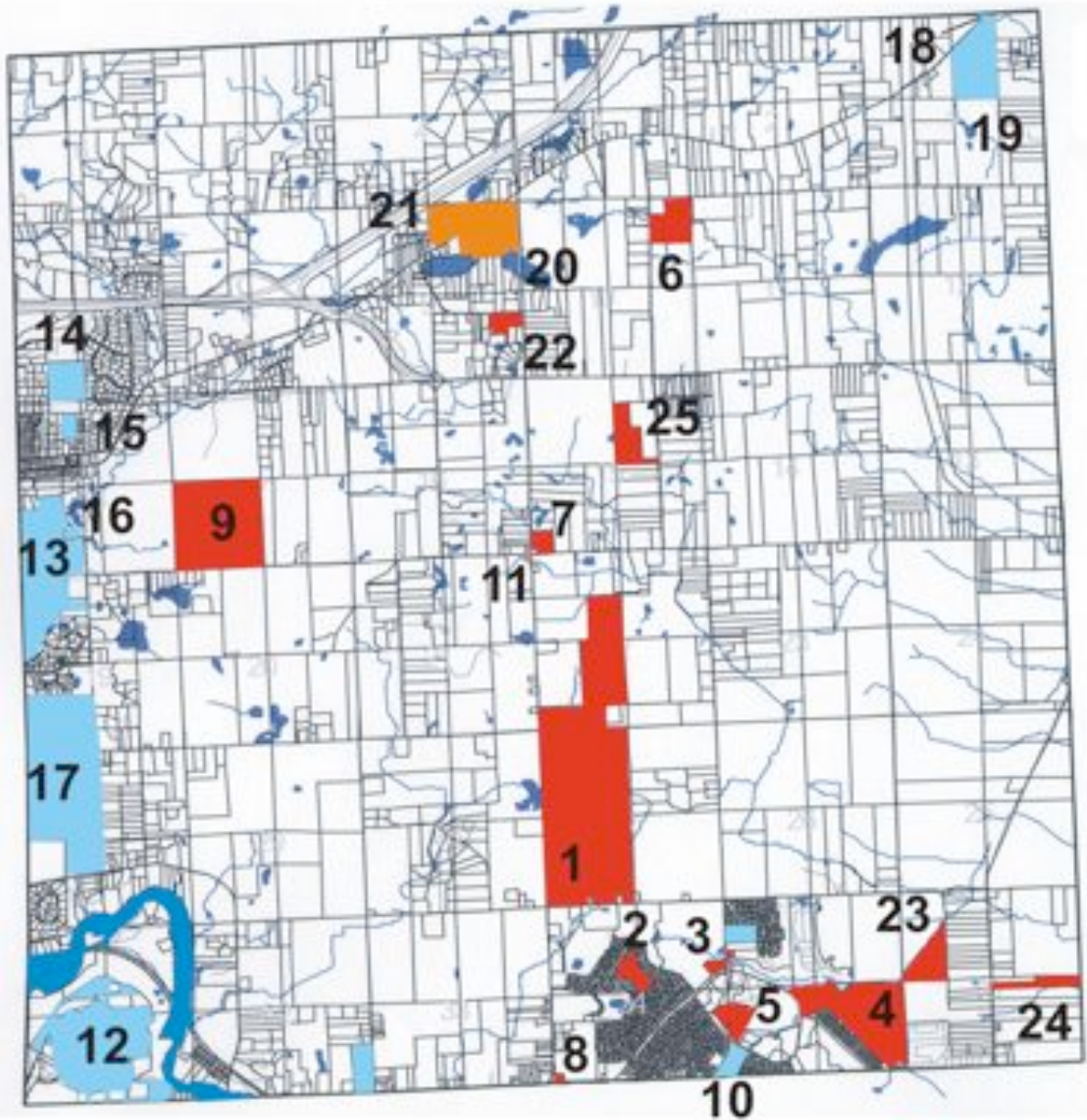


Photo 3-10: Playgrounds and playing fields are important recreational facilities.

Map 3-12 Community Facilities and School Districts



Map 3-13 Recreation Facilities



Recreation Facilities

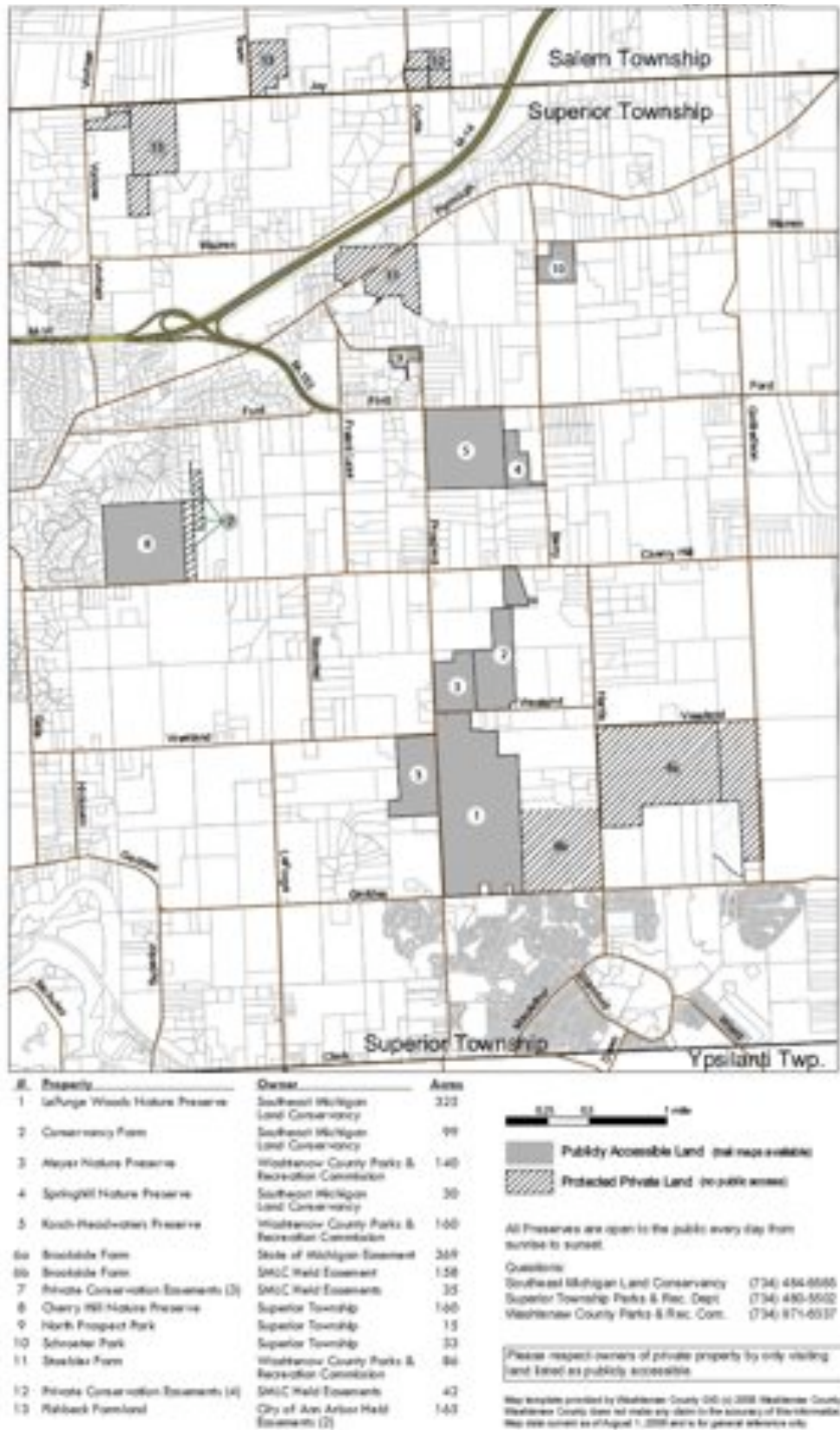
- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 Le Furge Woods Preserve | 14 The Green (private) |
| 2 Norfolk/Oakbrook Park | 15 Dixboro Church and Freeman School |
| 3 Fireman's Park | 16 Huron Valley Tennis Club (private) |
| 4 Harvest Moon Park | 17 Radrick Farms Golf Course (private) |
| 5 Community Park | 18 Arbor Joy Driving Range (private) |
| 6 Schroeter Park | 19 Plymouth Orchards (private) |
| 7 Shock Park/Township Hall | 20 Murray Lake Club (private) |
| 8 Parks and Recreation Building | 21 Staebler County Farm |
| 9 Cherry Hill Nature Preserve | 22 Township land |
| 10 Cheney Academy (Willow Run Schools) | 23 Bromley Preserve |
| 11 Superior Center Roadside Park (Washtenaw County) | 24 Township land |
| 12 St. Joseph Mercy Health Systems (private) | 25 Spring Hill |
| 13 Matthaël Botanic Gardens | |

- Township
- County
- School or Private
- Roads
- Streams
- Lakes



Source: Data provided by GIS by Geographic Information Systems Inc. (GIS) and others.
 Prepared by: Planning Department
 Date: 10/2011
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Map 3-14 Conserved Agricultural Land and Open Space



Source: Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy and Superior Land Conservancy

Chapter 4 MAJOR ISSUES

State and local trends and conditions in and around Superior Township raise major issues affecting the future of the community. It is important to address these issues in the Master Plan in order to effectively plan for the next 20 years. The major issues are briefly described below and measures to address them are set forth in Chapters 5 and 6. The geographic dimension of some of these issues is illustrated on Figure 4-1.

PRESERVATION OF NATURAL FEATURES

Superior Township has a variety of natural features—wooded areas, streams, wetlands, and a varied topography. It is important that these features be integrated into the development pattern so that they will be preserved, because they form the essential natural rural character of most of the Township.

In order that ecological integrity be maintained and the natural character of the Township preserved, dispersed natural features need to be connected by corridors of undeveloped land into a greenspace network or system. Existing, natural stream corridors and drains are important components of a greenspace system.

A greenspace system should include wetlands, woodlands, and open fields, and provide a diverse, viable habitat for wildlife and rare native plants. In some places, public trails will be appropriate; in others, the green space should be preserved in a natural state without public access.

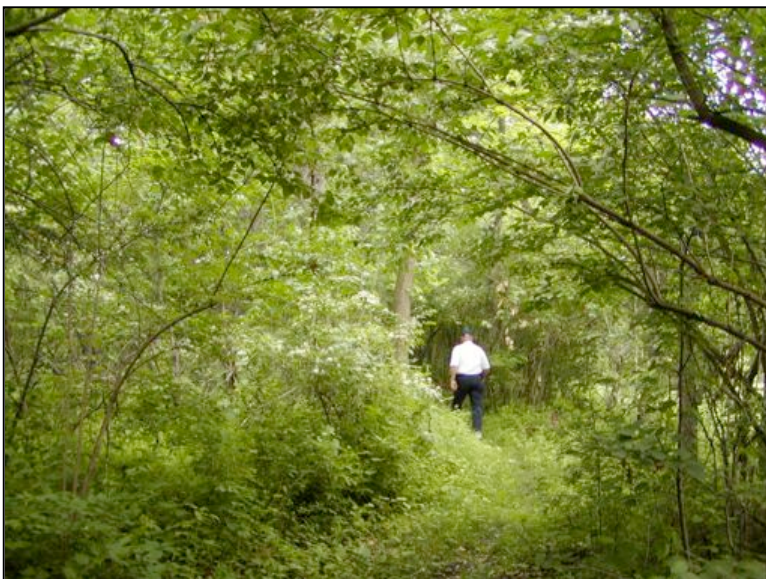
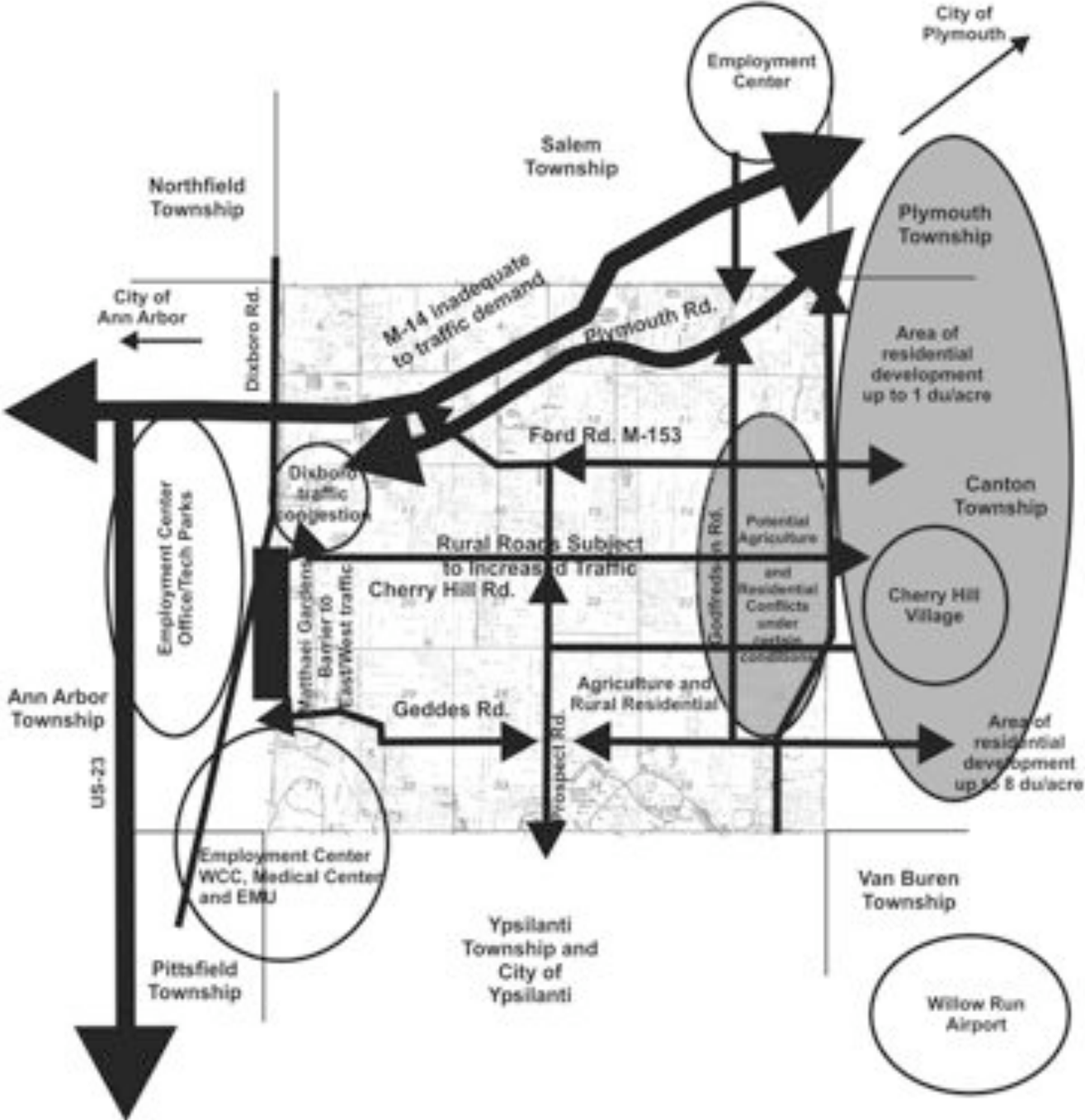


Photo 4-1: Retaining natural areas is an important issue in Superior Township.

Figure 4-1 Relationship of Land Uses in Adjacent Communities to Superior Township



Huron River and Fleming Creek Corridors

The Huron River and Fleming Creek are the two principal watercourses in Superior Township. Both have unique characteristics. Fleming Creek constitutes an important part of the headwaters of the Huron River.

Protection of streams and rivers involves making sure that the water that flows off the land and into the streams is as close as possible in quality to the rain or melted snow that fell on a woods or meadow. It is best if water runoff flows to the river slowly, much of it percolating into the soil and reaching the stream as groundwater, clear and cool. Where development occurs near the Huron River and Fleming Creek, it should be required to minimize surface water runoff, and provide extensive natural buffering from the stream corridor to protect water quality and the fish and other organisms that live there.



Photo 4-2: The Huron River and Fleming Creek corridors are important natural features in Superior Township.

AGRICULTURE AND THE RURAL ECONOMY

Loss of Agricultural Land to Development

The principal threats to local agricultural land are:

- (1) rural non-farm housing replacing active farm fields;
- (2) the incompatibilities that arise from locating non-farm or urban housing close to active agriculture; and
- (3) increasing property tax burdens on farmland.

Agriculture, at least long-term commodity farming operations (wheat, corn, soybeans, and similar farm commodities), cannot compete successfully with new housing development for the same land, or even

for the same general area. New non-farm dwellings near active agricultural operations:

- Increase potential for adverse off-site impacts (and resulting complaints) due to noise, odor, and dust typical of commercial agriculture;
- Increase potential for traffic conflicts (and accidents) involving farm equipment, and decrease the ability of farmers to easily transport equipment to non-contiguous parcels; and
- Increase costs for the farmer, including higher property taxes and increased risk of crop damage or loss.

Financial pressures on farmer-landowners may also result in the incremental sell-off of portions of their properties as rural residential lots [existing zoning permits rural lots of a minimum five (5) acres in the A-1 district and two (2) acres in the A-2 district]. Often, these lot splits create strips of non-farm residences with multiple driveway approaches along county roads, which may adversely impact both traffic safety and the rural character of the area.

Retention of agriculture and the large open spaces typical of agriculture are extremely important to Township residents. There is a desire to allow farmers to farm as long as they want to, to promote and encourage a strong agricultural economy in the Township, and to preserve as much of the land in permanent open space as possible. The Township has worked successfully with landowners, county and state agencies, the City of Ann Arbor's Greenbelt program, and local land conservancies in recent years to permanently preserve substantial agricultural land and open space areas, especially along the Geddes Road and Prospect Road corridors (See Map 3-14). Examples of farms and natural areas that have been permanently protected include:

- 716 acres of the Shultz farm in Sections 26 and 27, which are in the state purchase of development rights (PDR) program;
- 340 acres at the corner of Geddes Road and Prospect Road, which are protected by the Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy; and
- 86 acres of the Staebler Farm on Plymouth Road near the Curtis Road intersection, which was purchased for conservation purposes by the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission.

However, existing large tracts of contiguous agricultural land tend to be owned by a small number of farmers and land speculators who may be contemplating future non-agricultural uses. In addition, declining tax revenues and the potential for less available public funding for purchase of development rights may restrict the ability of the Township and other agencies to preserve the agricultural heart of the Township from future development.



Photo 4-3: Valued agricultural land is being lost to other uses in Superior Township.

Loss of Agricultural Support Services

The presence of only a few non-farm residences can adversely affect the stability of an agricultural area. As more non-farm housing is developed, other agricultural landowners make decisions to sell out and relocate away from development. Investment in local farm equipment and supplies decreases, resulting in a corresponding loss of the local support services farmers need to prosper, such as farm markets, implement dealers and repair shops, large animal veterinarians, feed and grain mills, etc. Without such support services in close proximity, commercial or commodity farming becomes unsustainable.

Changing Character of the Agricultural Economy

The predominant character of agriculture in the Township is changing from a commodity farming model to more specialty and hobby farming, equestrian-oriented land uses, and “value added” agricultural activities such as corn mazes, ‘U-pick’ operations, roadside stands, and local farm markets. The Township has responded to this trend with changes to the Township Zoning Ordinance that allow farmers to diversify their income sources by adding these types of activities.

Some “value added” income sources for farmers have the potential to adversely impact neighboring land uses. For example, the State of Michigan’s ongoing push for increased use of alternative and renewable energy sources offers opportunities for farmers to “farm the wind” by constructing wind turbines or leasing land for commercial ‘wind farms.’ More recently, a bill backed by the Michigan Corn Growers Association

was introduced in the state legislature to require Michigan townships to allow equipment and storage facilities for on-site ethanol production of up to 100,000 gallons per year as a use “by-right” in agricultural zoning districts [HB 4838].

While this bill may or may not be approved, it reflects a legislative trend towards one-size-fits-all solutions to perceived problems, which are designed to limit the ability of local communities to preserve rural character where such actions conflict with statewide policy initiatives.

HOUSING

Rural Housing

Rural housing is popular, and at this time it appears that people will continue to buy this type of housing. A combination of nearby employment centers, an established commuting culture, and a population that prefers to live away from others on large lots and can afford to do so, is driving the market for rural housing. Demand for rural housing will likely continue throughout Superior Township, particularly in

- the north and northwest areas served by the Ann Arbor and Plymouth-Canton School Districts;
- agricultural areas of the Township; and
- areas designated for urban development, but in which sanitary sewer and water services are not yet available.



Photo 4-4: New homes are being built on large rural parcels.

This type of housing threatens to increase the loss of farmland and natural features as well, unless it is carefully designed. Current zoning regulations and dwelling unit density standards in the A-1 and A-2 zoning districts do not adequately provide for preservation of large blocks of farmland (parcels of 20 acres or more) and natural features, nor ensure new residences are located in places which minimize incompatibilities between farms and non-farm homes.

The principal issue is to make sure rural housing does not become strip residential development that destroys the rural character of Superior Township. Roads lined with homes on two- to five-acre lots can make for

an attractive community, but it is not rural character. In order to maintain rural character, a large part of new rural residential development will need to:

- (1) occur in clusters that place substantial open space along the public roads and in interconnected corridors (greenspace system), and
- (2) be grouped on separate access roads to better manage traffic.

Some of the recent rural development has been “estate” development. Homes are placed well back from roads and in some cases a natural open space is left along the road. This is a good approach, but it can also be applied to more affordable rural development by clustering homes on two acre lots instead of individual parcels of ten or twenty acres each.

The total land area needed for rural housing will be small if the rate of population growth is slow to moderate, as expected (See Chapter 2). Therefore, the most important issue may not be the amount of land needed for rural housing, but rather where that land is located and the design of the development providing the new dwelling units.

Urban Housing

The Township has established an Urban Service Area (see Map 6-3) and planned for housing at urban scale and densities on land generally south of Geddes Road. A wide range of housing types and densities are and will continue to be available within the Urban Service Area. Existing residential development includes a planned mix of single-family homes, manufactured housing, and apartments. The Township presently has two (2) manufactured housing parks within the Urban Service Area (Westridge on Ridge Road and Arbor Woods between Gotfredson and Harris Roads). Together they have 831 lots and are served by public sewer and water.

It is not sound regional or community planning to encourage or permit the extension of public sanitary sewer lines to properties outside of the designated Urban Service Area. Development of housing at urban scale and densities on land outside of the Urban Service Area would contribute to an inefficient pattern of “urban sprawl,” which is the unplanned, uncontrolled spreading of urban-scale development into rural areas of the Township. Such action would require revision of this Plan and the Zoning Ordinance.

Stalled Housing Developments

Between the mid 1990’s and the mid 2000’s, Superior Township experienced a significant surge in new housing development, primarily concentrated within the Urban Service Area. Between 2000 and 2005,

more than 900 building permits for new home construction were approved, which represents an increase of more than three hundred (300%) over the preceding six (6) year period. In addition, numerous Planned Community (PC) Area Plans, condominium subdivision plans, and plats were approved for new residential development during this period.

The current (2009) inventory of approved and/or building permit-ready single-family and attached residential units in the Urban Service Area is detailed in Table 4-1. The amount of un-built units far exceeds the current absorption rate for new home development in the Township. Several developments have indicated to the Township that future phases will be “mothballed” indefinitely. Others are in foreclosure or already bank-owned.

Table 4-1. Remaining Unbuilt Residential Units (2009)

Stalled Developments	Residential Units		
	Units Approved	Units Constructed	Remaining Inventory of Un-built Units
Approved Planned Community (PC) District Area Plans	220	0	220
Expired Final Site Plans*	791	0	791
Approved Final Site Plans - Projects Not Started	33	0	33
Incomplete (Building Permit-Ready) Projects	1206	284	922
TOTAL:	2,250 units	284 units	1,966 units

* Previously approved final site plans that have expired are subject to a new Planning Commission approval prior to the start of construction.

Source: Superior Charter Township

This oversupply of single-family lots leaves the Township with several challenges to address during this planning period, including:

- (1) Partially completed or incomplete paving, landscaping, utilities, and other improvements associated with the development;
- (2) Abatement of construction debris and other unsecured construction site hazards;
- (3) Long-term mowing and basic site maintenance and security;
- (4) Developer foreclosures, ownership changes, relationship with existing residents of the development, and questions about responsibilities of homeowners’ and condominium owners’ associations; and
- (5) The potential need to consider alternative development proposals and other land use options for the site.



Photo 4-5: There is a significant oversupply in building permit-ready residential lots in the Township.

Existing Neighborhoods

Superior Township offers a full range of housing types, from starter homes to rural estates, and from garden apartments to townhouses. Homes in the Township range in age from new construction to more than 170 years old. However, over forty percent (40%) of homes in the Township were built during a twenty (20) year period between 1960 and 1979. These older neighborhoods are concentrated around the former Willow Run Village area off of Clark Road and MacArthur Blvd.

Communities across Michigan are facing significant challenges with older residential neighborhoods, including abandoned properties, crime, blight, and conversions from owner-occupied to predominantly rental properties:

- The increasing number of foreclosed, abandoned, and bank-owned properties create opportunities for vandalism, theft, and crime;
- Deferred maintenance, such as a lack of winterization or weatherization of vacant homes, can lead to structural damage, black mold, insect infestations, and other blighting conditions that affect neighbors and the Township as a whole;
- The conversion of formerly owner-occupied homes to rental properties can lead to a loss of neighborhood cohesion and character, and a lower standard of property maintenance; and
- Changing ownership patterns, family structure, and the aging of the population can lead to increased feelings of isolation among neighbors and a belief that “nothing can be done” about these issues.



Photo 4-6: Superior Township has a full range of housing types available for residents.

Even in healthy older neighborhoods with solid housing stock there is a need to upgrade obsolete infrastructure, including insulation, electrical systems, broadband Internet access, and heating/cooling systems to improve energy efficiency and better serve the needs of current residents.

URBAN GROWTH IN SURROUNDING TOWNSHIPS

Ann Arbor Township:

The area of Ann Arbor Township east of US-23, bordering Superior Township between M-14 and the Huron River, is served by public sewer and water and has developed into a significant office/research and residential corridor. Development in this part of Ann Arbor Township may increase the potential for new development activity within the northwest part of Superior Township, especially in the Dixboro area.

This has become more apparent with the widening of Plymouth Road to five lanes from US-23 to Dixboro Road. The effects will probably be felt in the form of increased rural housing, and limited increases in village commercial and office uses in the Dixboro hamlet designed to serve the immediate population. However, the presence of a large, regional scale commercial and office center in Ann Arbor Township will likely preclude the need for similar land uses in northwest Superior Township.



Photo 4-7: Rapid urban growth is occurring in adjoining communities.

Canton Township:

Canton Township developed rapidly between 2000 and 2006, with more urban residential development approaching and along the eastern boundary of Superior Township. Cherry Hill Village, an urban density, mixed-use, neo-traditional town at Cherry Hill Road and Ridge Road, is building out. The Canton Township Future Land Use map designates land bordering Superior Township’s agricultural preservation areas for residential densities of up to three (3) units per acre, and includes no land planned for preservation of agriculture within Canton Township. If approved and if land is significantly developed this way, even more residential density will abut Superior Township’s eastern border.

Salem Township:

Salem Township has planned for a large residential, commercial, and research and development center to be located around the M-14 and Gotfredson Road interchange. This is just northeast of Superior Township. If the land is developed according to approved plans, travel to and from this development area will have a significant impact on roads within Superior Township.

Need for Additional Commercial Development

The unique location of Superior Township in relation to large urban centers in adjacent communities has resulted in a situation where the primary commercial needs of Superior Township residents are being adequately met at locations outside the Township. It is not likely that additional commercial centers will be needed within the Township nor is it likely that they could challenge the market dominance of adjacent commercial developments where adequate infrastructure exists.

It is not sound regional planning policy to encourage duplication or overdevelopment of commercial centers in the region, which would contribute to an inefficient pattern of “urban sprawl” and could result in vacant retail and office space as well as unnecessary expansion of expensive infrastructure. Superior Township will continue to rely on adjoining jurisdictions for the bulk of new shopping opportunities while it tries to permanently preserve open space as a respite in urbanized southeast Michigan. It will also try to meet the growing challenges associated with maintaining a rural appearance along roadways that are facing rising through-traffic from developments in adjoining jurisdictions.



Photo 4-8: Superior Township's needs for major commercial services are met in adjoining jurisdictions.

PLANNED TECHNOLOGY CENTER

A proposal initiated in the early 1980's to create a planned manufacturing/high tech center centered on Geddes Road at LeForge Road is finally bearing fruit. Hyundai has completed construction of its Hyundai-Kia Motors North American Technical Center, and has acquired additional land adjacent to the site for future expansion.

An integrated “live/work” neighborhood development pattern tailored to the specific needs of Technology Center employees and businesses could provide an appropriate mix of future land uses in the area adjacent to the Hyundai-Kia facility. The land use effects on the immediate vicinity will be a major policy issue for the Township and will require strong and persistent regulatory efforts to preserve the structure and balance of land use policy and the integrity of existing development in the area.

TRANSPORTATION

The principal arterial roads in the Township are Ford, Prospect, Plymouth, Geddes, and Clark Roads. They will continue to be the principal roads, with Gotfredson Road added because of its interchange with M-14. Ford, Geddes, and Prospect Roads are likely to increase in importance because of their roles in the area-wide road network.



Photo 4-9: Cherry Hill Road receives through traffic from adjoining jurisdictions.

Traffic volumes from development in adjoining jurisdictions will continue to put pressure on these arterials. The Township does not want the road capacity of these roads expanded, because that usually results in more traffic, higher speeds, and a less rural character. As a result, it will need to take every opportunity to retain rural character along roadways as new road improvement projects are proposed.

Adequate street access to the St. Joseph Mercy Health System area is a major problem. While only a small corner of the southwest part of the Township is directly involved, the effects of traffic concentration in this area are felt several miles away.

An expanded public transportation system will also be an important issue in the next 20 years. The pattern and density of future development in the urban part of the Township should take this issue into account. In addition, the non-motorized circulation system must be increased. At a minimum, non-motorized trails or sidewalks are essential along existing arterials and collectors south of Geddes, as well as along all new streets in subdivisions and condominium developments.

Geddes Road Corridor

One of the most significant east/west transportation routes in Superior Township, north of the Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti urban area, is Geddes Road. Geddes Road has historically served as a regional arterial connector from rural areas to urban centers and other transportation networks. Within Superior Township, Geddes Road passes through significant land holdings of the Ford Motor Company, highly productive farmlands, the Township's Technology/Research Village area anchored by the Hyundai-Kia Motors Technical Center, and notable residential areas. Farther to

the west, within Ann Arbor Township, Geddes Road intersects with the Dixboro Road corridor, an area becoming increasingly urbanized, and with an interchange with US-23. The two-lane rural character of Geddes Road is enhanced as it passes through long stretches of flat agricultural lands in the eastern and central portions of the Township and then turns into a winding roadway over gentle hills in the western portion of the Township.



Photo 4-10: Geddes Road serves as a regional arterial connector from rural areas to urban centers and other transportation networks.

Geddes Road will continue to increase in importance because east/west transportation is restricted within the southern portion of the Township. The Huron River is located south of Geddes Road. University of Michigan properties, including Radrick Farms and Matthaei Botanical Gardens, are located west of Gale Road and north of Geddes. Other north/south roadways intersect with Geddes Road, thus directing additional traffic onto Geddes Road. Previous planning policies have recognized that Geddes Road is a logical physical barrier to buffer rural lands to the north from encroaching urban development from the south.

In recognition of the dynamic pressures that will be placed on Geddes Road in the future, policies in the Master Plan will be directed toward maintaining the unique rural character of Geddes Road, and retaining it as a physical barrier to buffer land uses. This will include an initiative to plant trees along each side of the road, and to construct a separate pedestrian/bicycle trail along the road.

The M-14 Corridor

The M-14 freeway, opened to traffic in 1979, will continue to increase pressure for development in the area along the freeway and Plymouth Road, especially for rural housing. Fortunately for the preservation of agricultural land, the freeway corridor does not pass through the Township's best farmland. The freeway will also increase the importance

of Ford Road east of the freeway. To a lesser extent it will also increase the importance of Plymouth and Prospect Roads and, eventually, Gotfredson Road.

M-14 has become a preferred route for commuters traveling from north and west of Ann Arbor to work in the Metro Detroit region. As a result, it is becoming more frequently congested during peak hours, which results in vehicles diverting to Plymouth or Ford Roads. It is essential that additional lanes be added to M-14 in each direction to preserve the integrity of rural Township roads.



Photo 4-11: M-14 can become congested resulting in traffic increases on Plymouth/Ann Arbor Road.

PUBLIC SANITARY SEWER AND WATER SERVICES

Publicly-Owned and Operated Sewer and Water:

The Township presently provides public sanitary sewer and public water services within designated service areas under contracts with the Ypsilanti Community Utilities Authority and Ann Arbor Township. These service areas cover several square miles in the area south of Geddes Road. There is a very limited capacity to extend such services to any other areas of the Township. The policies of this Master Plan and Township utility plans are based upon maintaining the designated Urban Service Area boundaries, as defined in Map 6-3.



Photo 4-12: Sanitary sewer and water service is provided to new houses south of Geddes Road.

Private Community Wastewater Systems:

Under Part 41 of Act No. 451 of the Public Acts of 1994, as amended, the State of Michigan is authorized to issue permits for private wastewater disposal systems that serve more than one property ("private community wastewater system" or "PCWS"). Such private systems have increased in popularity among developers because they can increase the development potential of land not located within areas served by publicly-owned and operated sanitary sewer lines and treatment facilities. The PCWS option

has been used by some developers in other Michigan communities to justify increased residential densities and smaller lot sizes in otherwise rural areas.

The long term challenges of using PCWS to treat and dispose of sewage include:

- Potential impacts on ground and surface waters of the Township;
- Inconsistent or deferred maintenance by responsible parties (homeowners’ associations or equivalent); and
- Failure of such systems, with the resulting need to extend public sanitary sewer lines into areas not planned for such services.

Consistent with Michigan case law and state statutes, Superior Township has enacted a local ordinance and established zoning ordinance standards to allow limited use of such systems. However, the potential for such systems to adversely impact neighboring properties and the waters of the Township is significant. Where such systems are permitted, the PCWS design, construction, and operation should be closely monitored.

Extensions or Use Outside of the Urban Service Area:

It is not sound regional or community planning to encourage or permit the extension of public sanitary sewer and public water services outside of the Urban Service Area (if capacity is available), or to permit the use of a PCWS to justify residential developments of an urban scale and density. Development of housing at urban scale and densities on land outside of the Urban Service Area would contribute to an inefficient pattern of “urban sprawl,” and would not be in accordance with the policies of this Plan. Such action would require revision of this Plan and the Zoning Ordinance.

OTHER PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Recreation:

There are recreation facilities within Superior Township (see Map 3-12), but these are not adequate to serve future needs. The Township’s adopted Parks and Recreation Plan identifies how recreation needs should be met. In addition, a connected greenways trail system is seen as highly desirable to the quality of life in the community, and expectations for such a system are growing. A trail will be developed along the Huron River in the southwest portion of the Township connecting other local communities and Superior Township could tie into that system. However, a new integrated trail system will also be needed to tie together all the rest of Superior Township.

Schools:

The Township is served by four school districts: Ann Arbor, Plymouth-Canton, Willow Run, and Ypsilanti (See Map 3-12). The Plymouth-Canton portion of the Township is small and is not of major significance in terms of future growth in the Township. Most of the Township's residential growth over the past decade has occurred within the boundaries of the Willow Run district. The existing capacity in the Willow Run school system is sufficient to handle additional students under a moderate level of growth.

About eight (8) square miles of the Township are located in the Ypsilanti district. Additional students will mostly come from future development south of Geddes Road within the Township's Urban Service Area. An added area might be the extreme northern part of the district that is close to the M-14/Plymouth Road corridor. The existing capacity in the Ypsilanti school system is sufficient to handle additional students under a moderate level of growth, but if new rural housing were developed in this northern area of the Township, expanded busing would be required.

Most of the rural housing growth is likely to occur in the Dixboro area and in the M-14/Plymouth Road corridor, both of which are located in the Ann Arbor school district. The district recently completed construction of the new Skyline High School. The district has capacity to handle additional students that would be generated from new rural housing in Superior Township under a moderate rate of growth. However, population growth in the development area in Ann Arbor Township and in the northeast part of the City of Ann Arbor could result in capacity problems in the northeast part of the school district.

Police, Fire, and Other Government Services:

The need for police and fire protection and general government services will increase with population growth. If the growth rate is moderate, the requirements should be manageable. The plan for the Fire Department is to have a minimum of two (2) stations strategically located in order to meet the service needs for the foreseeable future. A new station was recently completed and is in operation at the intersection of



Photo 4-13: The Township Hall provides offices for Township staff and officials, and has a public meeting room.

Prospect and Ford Roads, and Station Number Two is planned to be strategically relocated within the southern portion of the Township.

This will provide acceptable response times, and the ability to service all parts of the Township with a minimum of manpower for a considerable period of time. The Fire Department will evaluate requests for new or expanded services periodically, as growth occurs, and will make recommendations for additional apparatus and structures as needed.

RESPONSE TO REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

Superior Township could be susceptible to large-scale or multi-use development proposals on various parcels in the future. Such projects have occurred in adjacent communities and near to Superior Township in the 1980's and 1990's and some are currently under development, such as Cherry Hill Village. It is not possible at this time to address the acceptability of similar proposals regarding their location or their relationship to Superior Township's character or adopted development policies. Such a proposal would have to be analyzed on an individual basis considering site-specific criteria. This Master Plan contains land use relationship policies that should be utilized when planning or reviewing such development proposals.

GREENWAYS

A growing issue in the Township is the lack of a coordinated policy to protect greenways. The most important feature of greenways are the links or connections they provide. Recreational greenways connect residential concentrations with parks, recreation facilities, and cultural facilities. They also serve as linear recreation facilities independent of other facilities. Natural greenways serve as buffers, habitat corridors, surface runoff filters, and as threads of naturalness throughout the community. Without trails, greenways are buffer strips serving as visual separators and wildlife corridors.

Township residents are interested in two types of green links. These are:

- Greenways that include non-motorized use of trails for walking, biking, cross-county skiing and in-line skating, and other non-motorized uses where possible. Many of these trails would be paved; some would be separate from road rights-of-way, while others would parallel roads. Some non-motorized trails would also function as horse trails; these would not be paved and horses could be limited to dry weather use only; and

- Greenways that are nature corridors, but do not have trail access. These serve as natural buffers and wildlife corridors. They generally have a natural landscape character and help maintain a visual connection to nature throughout the Township.

It is important that any community greenspace system that is created respect private property rights and sensitive environments. While greenways invariably increase amenity and property values, recreational greenways need to be carefully designed to prevent opportunities for trespass or disruption of sensitive habitat areas.

Chapter 5 VISION, GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

Introduction

Following is a future vision statement that describes Superior Township as residents in 2009 want it to be in the year 2029. Following the future vision statement are goals, objectives, and policies to chart a path for achieving the vision.

When reading this vision, it is necessary to imagine the year is 2029. Thus, there are references “back” to the early 2000’s. This statement was prepared based on Visioning Town Meetings conducted in 2004 and refined following subsequent Planning Commission, Township Board, and public input.

FUTURE VISION OF SUPERIOR CHARTER TOWNSHIP

Proactive Planning and Sustainability

Superior Township is on the cusp of entering the fourth decade of the 21st century as one of the most desirable places to live in Southeast Michigan.

Urban sprawl means the unplanned, uncontrolled encroachment of urban-scale development and infrastructure into areas of the Township that are intended to remain rural in character and/or planned for preservation of agricultural lands and open space.

Strip commercial development means a development pattern characterized by a string of automobile centered retail, food service, and other businesses along major arterial roads, each with direct vehicular access to the roadway.

Sustainability means meeting the needs of all the people of the present generation throughout the Township, while protecting the environment and not compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Residents and businesses in Superior Township enjoy a rich quality of life and are reaping the benefits of proactive planning and commitments started in the 1970’s.

Superior Township has become a true reflection of sustainability, having prevented the proliferation of the inefficient strip commercial and urban sprawl development patterns that have been prevalent in other communities. Neighborhoods, parks, businesses, local government, and natural resources are healthy and self-sustaining in 2029. Reaching sustainability required the community to look beyond short-term gains in order to plan for a good life for their children and grandchildren.

Quality of Life: Impressions, Standards, and Visual Character

When asked about Superior Township, residents use descriptive terms like “natural beauty,” “farms,” “open space,” “rural,” “quality construction,” and “vibrant neighborhoods.” In Superior Township, large-scale changes to the landscape have been minimized by the consensus decision of community leaders to permit only growth that meets standards of sustainability, maintenance of the natural resource base, and visual character.

Quality of Life: Natural and Agricultural Landscape

The most common landscape view in most of Superior Township continues to be a mix of woods, meadows, wetlands, and farm fields. This is because the center area of the Township remains largely undeveloped, and settlement still retains a rural character at all but the southern edge of the Township. The bulk of the population continues to live in the more developed portion south of Geddes Road, and in the historic hamlet of Dixboro. A greenspace system of open spaces and greenway trails links all parts of the Township and contributes to the natural character.



Photo 5-1: Retaining natural landscape is part of the vision for Superior Township.

The rural landscape does more than simply provide scenery, as the benefits of nature to citizen mental health are recognized as very important. Farming continues as a viable economic sector for those landowners interested in continuing in agriculture. Woods and fields permit water infiltration, help maintain biological diversity, and provide habitat for wildlife. Property owners have coordinated the retention of natural areas, forming connections to create ecological corridors, enhance recreation, and provide a more continuous natural scenic view along transportation corridors. Streams, wetlands, and small lakes have buffer plantings that help protect water quality.

Citizens, well-versed in land and water protection approaches, have been deeply involved in making decisions about preservation. Working with individual landowners, conservancies, the Ann Arbor Open Space Preservation Program (passed in 2003), the State Purchase of Development Rights Program, and developers, Superior Township has preserved key parcels. Many approaches have been used over the past two decades, including donations, conservation easements, and development rights purchases from willing landowners. As a result, wetlands, forests, farmland, and green spaces that comprise the scenic character and ecosystem of the Township have been permanently protected in a manner that protects the property rights of affected landowners.



Photo 5-2: Dixboro residents want the settlement to retain its character.

Quality of Life: Access to Opportunities

Township residents have access to multiple downtown business districts and shopping centers, regional arts and cultural centers, and a wide variety of employment opportunities in surrounding Metro Detroit and Ann Arbor area communities. Superior Township leaders made the sensible decision to avoid duplication of services, overdevelopment of commercial centers, and unnecessary expansion of expensive infrastructure beyond the Urban Service Area of the Township. Public urban services to support those activities already exist elsewhere and are scaled to provide for such uses in those locations.

Quality of Life: Recreation

Superior Township is known as a walkable and bike-friendly community, providing safe connections for recreation, enjoying nature, and for a transportation alternative to driving. These connections are part of a

Township-wide greenspace system that includes greenway trails and undeveloped open spaces. There are also links to greenways with trails that extend beyond Superior Township into other communities throughout the region.

The Township has long regarded recreational opportunity as an important aspect of quality of life. County and Township parks, greenway trails, bicycle paths, and nature preserves have been maintained and expanded, and are popular year-round outdoor recreation destinations for both residents and visitors to enjoy.



Photo 5-3: The vision for Superior Township includes recreational greenspace connections.

Quality of Life: Infrastructure and Neighborhoods

Good quality primary County roads and state highways help move people around and through the Township and use of access management techniques to control the number and spacing of driveways has helped preserve the public investment in roads. However, many roads in the central part of the Township have not been improved in order to maintain a rural character. Capacity improvements to M-14 have helped take some of the through-traffic burden off Superior Township roads. Improvements to high volume intersections have made driving through the Township safer.

The Township has maintained its public sewer and water service south of Geddes Road and has provided for much higher density development there consistent with the urban services that are available. Improvements to curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and streetlights in this area have improved the quality of those neighborhoods while providing a broader range of housing types and densities to those seeking to live in the Township.

Quality of Life: Dixboro

The Dixboro area remains a distinctive community in the Township, with a unique physical identity as a rural, village type of residential settlement

containing buildings of historical and cultural heritage. Rural open space and very low-density rural residential land uses continue to frame the edges of the community. The historic church, general store, and brick schoolhouse distinctively define the community’s center and desired architectural character, with the schoolhouse adapted for use as a popular community center and meeting place.

This center has become a popular local shopping and dining destination for nearby residents, with new village-scale commercial development around the Plymouth Road – Cherry Hill Road intersection. These infill buildings within the historic center have been developed consistent with Dixboro’s rural, village character and architectural pattern. While additional visitors have brought more vehicles into Dixboro, the impact of regional traffic through the community has actually been lessened using traffic-calming methods, including curbing, on-street parking, bike lanes, and sidewalks which offer a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere.



Photo 5-4: The historic church and school define the center of the Dixboro community.



Photo 5-5: Infill development has been designed to be consistent with the orientation and character of Dixboro’s historic structures.

NATURAL FEATURES

GOAL

The preservation and management of natural features and creation of new natural features.

I. OBJECTIVE: WETLAND AND SURFACE WATER PROTECTION

Protection of the quality of wetlands and surface water.

POLICIES

A. Flood Plains

Development shall be prohibited within the 100-year flood plain of existing water courses or wetlands. See Map 3-4.

B. Surface Water and Wetlands

1. Surface water, stream corridors, and wetlands shall be preserved in their natural condition. See Map 3-4.
2. The hydrology and alignment of surface water, streams, and wetlands shall not be disrupted through alteration of their topography or vegetation.
3. New developments shall be consistent with Zoning Ordinance standards for natural features protection to ensure designs that restrict negative impacts on surface waters and wetlands.

C. Stormwater Runoff

Stormwater runoff shall be managed to retain the same quantity, temperature, velocity, and purity of water as that from an undeveloped landscape. See Utilities Section of this Chapter.

D. Private Waste Water Treatment Facilities

Development and use of private community wastewater treatment systems (PCWS) shall be restricted. See Utilities Section of this Chapter.

E. Land Use

Land use patterns shall be established that limit potential adverse impact on water features, including:

1. preventing topographical disturbance, including grading and/or filling;
2. preventing bio-chemical pollution;
3. preventing thermal pollution;
4. avoiding stream channel alteration;
5. protecting existing vegetative buffers;

6. locating the most intensely developed portions of a site (buildings, roads, parking, walks, and lawns) on the least sensitive land;
7. reducing impervious surfaces and separating them from surface waters by vegetative areas; and
8. retaining stormwater on site or detaining it prior to slow discharge at levels no greater than those required by law.

F. Erosion

Erosion shall be controlled during construction and after construction by:

1. limiting stripping of vegetation, soil removal, and regrading;
2. minimizing the duration of exposure of disturbed areas;
3. requiring the use of temporary vegetation, mulching, or other techniques to protect exposed areas; and
4. requiring establishment of permanent vegetation or other techniques to prevent erosion.

II. OBJECTIVE: GROUNDWATER PROTECTION

Protection of the quality of groundwater through protection of the hydrology of groundwater recharge areas and preventing pollution in those areas. See Map 3-4.

POLICIES

A. Groundwater and Recharge Area Protection

1. A description of groundwater recharge areas and rough delineation of their borders shall be required for site plan review. The areas depicted on the groundwater map prepared by Washtenaw County shall be used, unless another person recognized by the Township as qualified to do so has prepared a more detailed map.
2. A zoning standard for maximum site coverage by impervious materials over groundwater recharge areas shall be established.
3. Stormwater retention facilities shall be required to maintain the existing quantity and quality of water supplies to groundwater recharge areas.
4. Surface vegetation shall be protected where needed to purify or retain stormwater runoff.
5. New developments shall be consistent with Zoning Ordinance standards for natural features protection to ensure designs that restrict negative impacts on groundwater and protect newly identified recharge areas.

B. Land Use

Land uses that pose little or no hazard for groundwater contamination are encouraged in groundwater recharge areas.

C. Land Development

Land development practices that protect groundwater from contamination or harmful impact on the operation of the underground water system shall be permitted on groundwater recharge areas. Such practices include:

1. careful siting of on-site septic systems;
2. very limited percent of site coverage by impervious surfaces;
3. greatly reducing the potential for water contamination from surface use of herbicides, fertilizers, and pesticides by eliminating under most circumstances the need or use of those materials;
4. greatly reducing the potential for water contamination from spills of hazardous substances;
5. limiting the potential for contamination from road de-icing materials; and
6. limiting land contour changes that alter water flow patterns.

III. OBJECTIVE: WOODLANDS PROTECTION

The protection of woodlands, upland brush, and landmark trees.

Note: For the purposes of the Master Plan, “woodlands” will refer to both forests (concentrations of trees with a 70% to 100% tree canopy coverage of the portion of site with trees) and other woodlands (concentrations of trees with a 20% to 70% tree canopy coverage of the portion of the site with trees). See Map 3-3.

POLICIES

A. Land Use Development

1. The impact of development on woodlands shall be restricted by encouraging the least disruptive land uses in woodlands, and by sensitive site design and development practices.
2. Clustering of developments may be allowed to restrict the impact of development on woodlands.
3. Permanent protection and expansion of woodlands and areas of upland brush through the establishment of deed restrictions and easements shall be encouraged.
4. A special effort should be made to protect small woodlands in the densest developments and in the most urbanized parts of the Township.

5. Except for bona fide agricultural operations, land shall not be cleared of non-invasive vegetation, trees, or soil without a permit.
6. New developments shall be consistent with Zoning Ordinance standards for natural features protection to ensure designs that restrict negative impacts on woodlands and landmark trees.

B. Wildlife Habitat

1. The diversity and quality of wildlife habitats and their associated flora and fauna shall be protected, including:
 - a. landmark trees (trees over a specified diameter of designated species located outside of woodlands);
 - b. woodlands (concentrations of trees with a minimum concentration of "stump coverage" or "canopy coverage");
 - c. upland brush (areas of miscellaneous trees and shrubs located at the edge of woodlands and in environmentally sensitive areas); and
 - d. retention of a minimum number of "seed" trees, shrubs and forbs of species important to maintaining species diversity, food, and shelter plants in valued ecosystems.
2. A special effort should be made to protect small quality habitats in the more dense developments and in the most urbanized parts of the Township.

C. Invasive Species

1. New developments shall be required to prepare and implement a plan for identification, control, and eradication of certain pervasive species of woody shrubs, including Common (European) and Glossy Buckthorn, Autumn Olive, Honeysuckle, and Multiflora Rose.
2. New landscaping elements should be restricted to species native to Michigan.
3. Property owners will be encouraged to plant species of trees, shrubs, and other plants that are native to Michigan as part of landscaping improvements.

IV. OBJECTIVE: OPEN SPACE FOR CONSERVATION AND/OR RECREATIONAL USE

Protection of strategic open space for nature conservation and/or recreational use.

POLICIES

A. Public Open Space

Strategic properties should be identified and dedicated for open space or recreational use. Strategic properties may include:

1. parks in urban and suburban residential areas;
2. conservancy or land trust sites with permitted public access;
3. environmentally sensitive sites that are potentially endangered; and
4. buffers between incompatible land uses.



Photo 5-6: LeFurge Woods Nature Preserve provides public open space in Superior Township.

B. Private Open Space

1. The provision of private open space in new developments shall be encouraged and/or required, with such open space to be a significant element, especially in planned community developments.
2. Some conservancy or land trust sites not associated with development with no permitted public access will also be encouraged, especially if they contain special or unique habitats where public access would be detrimental. Landowner participation on already developed property shall be voluntary.
3. Special efforts shall be made to provide private open space in the most dense developments and most urbanized parts of the Township.
4. Standards shall be added to the site plan review section of the Zoning Ordinance to ensure the provision of adequate private open space in new developments.

C. Recreation Space

The Township should use purchase or donation of property, conservation easements, and other tools to expand recreation space according to the Park and Recreation Plan and Greenways

Plan of the Township (See Recreational Land Use Section of this Chapter).



Photo 5-7: Portions of the ecological corridor connections in Superior Township will need to be on private lands.

V. OBJECTIVE: INTERCONNECTED OPEN SPACE FOR CONSERVATION AND RECREATION LINKS

The establishment and protection of an interconnected system of natural environmental areas, including wetlands, woodlands, and open fields (in either prairie or agricultural use), that provide a diverse, viable habitat for wildlife and desirable and rare native plants (See Map 6-5 in Chapter 6).

POLICIES

A. Land Use and Development

1. In those areas with natural features designated in Map 6-5, land uses shall be those that can be developed while leaving natural features largely undisturbed.
2. Land uses shall be designed and developed in ways that minimize the potential for adverse impact from development on designated natural features.
3. Low density (five acre minimum lot size or overall density of one dwelling unit or less per five acres) residential land uses may be permitted within areas with designated natural features provided that the building and circulation area footprint disturbs as little of the natural features as possible.
4. Cluster development that protects designated natural features within environmentally sensitive areas by placing developed portions of a project on less-sensitive areas of the property shall be encouraged.
5. Establishment of conservation easements and deed restrictions on those portions of sites with sensitive natural features to permanently protect those natural features shall be encouraged.

B. Wildlife Habitat

1. Environmental features, including wetlands, woodlands, hedgerows, prairies, and meadows, that support a viable wildlife habitat within environmentally sensitive areas shall be protected. Hedgerows may be removed as part of an active, bona fide agricultural operation.
2. Natural links shall be retained between environmentally sensitive areas to facilitate movement of wildlife between areas.
3. Identification of fragile natural features shall be required for site plan review, including:
 - a. wetlands;
 - b. woodlands;
 - c. hedgerows;
 - d. prairies or meadows; and
 - e. other fragile features, such as wildlife breeding grounds.
4. Standards shall be added to the site plan review section of the Zoning Ordinance to ensure designs that restrict negative impacts on wildlife habitat.

C. Recreational Uses

Development of public and private open space and recreational uses shall be coordinated with environmental conservation areas where the requirements for the recreational use are compatible with the requirements for environmental conservation.

D. Trails

Development of trails for non-motorized uses, such as pedestrian, bicycle, and horse trails shall be coordinated with environmental conservation areas. See Recreational Land Use and Greenspace Sections of this Chapter.

VI. OBJECTIVE: STREETScape CREATION AND PROTECTION

Attractive natural streetscapes along all Township roads and streets.

POLICIES

A. Landscaping and Existing Vegetation along Township Roads

1. Existing landmark trees, hedgerows, and stands of native and naturalized vegetation located adjacent to Township roads shall be protected (See Circulation Section of this Chapter).
2. Landscaping to foster a native, naturalized, non-invasive hedgerow, woodland, meadow, wetland, or prairie shall be required along Township roads for all new development.

3. Streetscapes along special corridors (i.e., roadways with a recognized scenic or historic character) shall be protected and/or enhanced. See Circulation Section of this Chapter.
4. The location of overhead and underground utilities shall be coordinated to restrict their impact on existing vegetation and wetlands, with the protection of roadside plants a high priority. Utilities shall be placed underground wherever feasible. See Utilities Section of this Chapter.
5. Within twenty years all the county roads in the Township shall be tree-lined with native trees planted outside the right-of-way. See Major Tree Planting Section of this Chapter.
6. All public streetlights and lighted signs shall be downshielded and all private yardlights shall be encouraged to be downshielded or movement- or sound-activated in order to preserve the night sky.



Photo 5-8: Tree-lined roads provide rural character and can screen development from view.



Photo 5-9: Roadside trees contribute to rural character.

VII. OBJECTIVE: URBAN BUFFER

The majority of the land north of Geddes Road and outside of the hamlet of Dixboro and the Township’s designated Urban Service Area shall be

preserved, managed, or developed in a manner that focuses on long-term retention of agricultural operations, greenspace, and other rural land uses. This area of the Township is characterized by tree-lined roads, farm fields, large rural lots, woodlands, wetlands, and other sensitive natural features that serve as a green buffer adjacent to the urbanized areas of Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, and metropolitan Detroit.

POLICIES

A. Density shall be highest in the urban parts of the Township

The density of development in the Township shall be highest within the Township’s designated Urban Service Area and within the hamlet of Dixboro, and then generally decline in density in the balance of the Township.

B. Township Center

Agricultural uses, as defined in the Agricultural Land Use Section of this Plan, conservancy, recreational, and low density rural residential uses (screened by native vegetation), shall be retained as the predominant land uses in areas in the Township outside of the hamlet of Dixboro and the Township’s designated Urban Service Area. See Map 6-4 in Chapter 6.

VIII. OBJECTIVE: PROTECTION OF SLOPES

Protection and preservation of areas where the soil is highly erodible or any area with existing steep slopes of twenty five percent (25%) or greater from adverse impact from development; and restricted development activity in areas with slopes of at least twelve percent (12%) but less than twenty five percent (25%). See Map 3-7, Areas with Slopes 12% or greater.

POLICIES

A. Slopes of at least 12% but Less Than 25%

1. Restricted development activity on slopes of at least 12% but less than 25%) shall:
 - a. maintain slope stability and prevent soil erosion;
 - b. control amount and velocities of stormwater runoff;
 - c. maintain existing positive aesthetic qualities; and
 - d. include minimal cut and fill activities.
2. New developments on such slopes shall be consistent with Zoning Ordinance standards for natural features protection to ensure designs that restrict negative impacts on site topography, steep slopes, drainage patterns, and other natural features.

3. The natural contours, vegetation, and drainage patterns shall be maintained or enhanced when development occurs in areas that include such slopes.

B. Steep Slopes of 25% or Greater

Development shall be prohibited on:

1. Steep slopes of twenty five percent (25%) or greater, and
2. Where soil conditions create erosion potential.

C. Prioritizing Importance of Slopes Under Development

Where land is proposed for development subject to Township ordinances, the following will guide the preservation of the integrity and profile of slopes:

1. **Required to be Preserved:**
 - a. Slopes of 25% or greater; and
 - b. Slopes within areas of highly erodible soils.
2. **High Priority for Preservation:** Slopes of at least 12% but Less Than 25% that:
 - a. Contain other significant natural features, such as woodlands or landmark trees; or
 - b. Are located in close proximity to rivers or streams.
3. **Low Priority for Preservation:** Slopes of at least 12% but Less Than 25% that:
 - a. Are located within previously farmed fields;
 - b. Do not contain other natural features; or
 - c. Are not located in close proximity to rivers or streams.
4. **Disregard:**
 - a. Slopes of less than 12%;
 - b. Slopes verified as man-made; and
 - c. Incidental bumps or dips in natural topography.

IX. OBJECTIVE: PERMANENT PROTECTION OF OPEN SPACE AND AGRICULTURAL LANDS

Permanent protection of strategic open space and agricultural lands from development.

POLICIES

A. Strategic Open Space

Strategic open space includes sensitive natural features, interconnected open space, and land immediately adjacent to roads in the Township.

B. Land Trusts and Conservancies

Public or nonprofit land trusts and conservancies with the power to buy property, establish deed restrictions, and sell property shall be encouraged to operate in the Township.

C. Parks Commissions

Donation or sale of land to the Superior Charter Township or Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission or to public or private land trusts and conservancies for open space, recreational, or agricultural use shall be encouraged.

D. Deed Restrictions and Easements

Donation or sale of deed restrictions, view easements, and permanent conservation easements to a public or private entity empowered to hold them shall be encouraged.

E. Planned Communities and Cluster Development

The use of planned community developments and cluster developments to establish permanent easements for open space or agricultural use on common lands shall be encouraged or required.

X. OBJECTIVE: PRESERVATION AND CREATION OF VIEWSHEDS

The cumulative experience of the varied visual perspectives (or “viewsheds”) that can be seen while traveling across the Township leaves a distinct impression of a landscape which can be described in terms like “natural beauty,” “farms,” “open space,” “rural,” “quality construction,” and “vibrant neighborhoods.”

POLICIES

A. Preserve and Enhance Visual Character

The Township should seek to preserve and enhance the unique views and perspectives which give the community its character, including:

1. Historic buildings, farms, and sites (See “Historic Structures and Sites” in this chapter);
2. Natural features, such as landmark trees, topography, watercourses, lakes, and open spaces (See “Natural Features” in this Chapter).
3. Tree-lined roads and special landscape corridors (See Map 3-10).
4. Places within the Township that have unique visual character, such as the hamlet of Dixboro, natural beauty roads, and scenic road corridors (See Map 3-10 and Chapter 9, Dixboro Area Plan Amendment).

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. Require the following information for site plan review for all proposed development requiring site plan review under the Township’s Zoning Ordinance:

- a. 100-year flood plain;
 - b. lakes, ponds, stream courses, and wetlands;
 - c. on-site watershed for on-site water features;
 - d. slopes over 12% and less than 25%, and slopes over 25%;
 - e. organic soils and highly erodible soils;
 - f. vegetation in buffer zone (a minimum of 25 feet) adjacent to on-site and off-site surface water features, wetlands, and woodlands;
 - g. woodlands;
 - h. landmark trees;
 - i. areas of upland brush;
 - j. hedgerows;
 - k. groundwater recharge areas;
 - l. open space or ecological corridors, recreational trails, and facilities on adjacent parcels;
 - m. special or unique habitat areas; and
 - n. areas dominated by invasive species.
2. Consistently enforce ordinance requirements to protect natural features such as surface water, wetlands, groundwater, and woodlands. Place special emphasis on those features that provide viable wildlife habitat.
 3. Work with the Superior Charter Township Parks and Recreation Commission to identify strategic sites and greenspace corridors for recreation and environmental conservation. Delineate sites for public acquisition on an Official Public Facilities Map.
 4. Work with local land conservancies and/or other nonprofit land trusts to encourage donations and/or purchases of lands for open space, recreational, or agricultural use.
 5. Adopt standards for setbacks and natural landscaping along Township roads in appropriate ordinances.
 6. Enforce standards for site design in areas of slopes for sites under site plan review.
 7. Enforce landscaping ordinance requirements to maintain the stability of slopes and to prevent erosion.
 8. Encourage and approve applications for P.A. 116 Local Open Space and Development Rights Easements, donations of development rights to local land conservancies, and use of permanent conservation easements.

9. Encourage and approve applications for purchase of development rights under the Federal or State PDR program or any county or local program.
10. Work with the State legislature or appropriate bodies to establish enabling legislation for tools to remove development potential from agricultural and environmentally sensitive lands while providing an opportunity for the landowner to capture the value of the development rights in the land.

HISTORIC STRUCTURES AND SITES

GOAL

Preservation of Superior Charter Township's archeologically, historically, and architecturally significant areas, buildings, and sites.



Photo 5-10: It will be important to protect historic homes in Superior Township.

Historic resource means a publicly or privately owned building, structure or site that is significant in the history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture of the township, county or State of Michigan; and is identified in the Historic Resources Inventory (1994) and/or Intensive Level Historic Survey for Superior Charter Township.

I. **OBJECTIVE: PRESERVATION**

Preservation of the archeological, historic, and architectural integrity of the Township's historic resources at their existing location and within their historical context and character.

POLICIES

A. Public Education

The Township should work to develop a high level of public awareness and understanding of the Township's historic resources as identified in the Historic Resources Inventory (1994) of Superior Charter Township, with particular emphasis on those detailed in the 1997 Intensive Level Historic Survey (see Map 3-9, Historic Sites and Places). The Township should also seek to educate owners of historic resources about the benefits and requirements of state historic preservation laws and programs.

B. Registration on National Register of Historic Places

Owners of the 25 properties identified in the 1997 report, Intensive Level Historic Survey, should be encouraged and assisted in applying for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

C. Historic Heritage Corridor Designation

The Township should designate Ann Arbor-Plymouth Road as a Heritage Corridor.

D. Protection

Historic resources should be retained through the integration of historic buildings, site features, and site character into new development and through protection under the Township Heritage Area Ordinance.

E. Maintenance, Rehabilitation, and Restoration

Owners of historic resources should be encouraged to maintain, rehabilitate, and restore them in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (following page).

F. Relocation

Relocation of historic buildings, structures or similar resources from the historic sites should be considered in circumstances where there are no alternatives to demolition. Such historic resources should be relocated to a site in close proximity to the historic location that provides a similar context and character.

Photo 5-11:
The church and
village green are
important
landmarks in
Dixboro.



II. OBJECTIVE: PROTECTION OF DIXBORO

Protection and enhancement of the historic character of Dixboro.

POLICIES

A. Dixboro Sub-Area Plan

The Dixboro community shall be retained as a special planning area. See Chapter 9, Dixboro Area Plan Amendment.

**The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for
Rehabilitation of Historic Structures**

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. Recommend reactivating the Superior Charter Township Historical Committee with a mandate to:
 - a. assist interested owners of properties identified in the 1997 report Intensive Level Historic Survey with application to the National Register of Historic Places;
 - b. petition the Township Board to designate the West Ann Arbor-Plymouth Road as a local historic heritage corridor;
 - c. develop guidelines for sensitive maintenance, rehabilitation, and restoration of these historic resources; and
 - d. provide information for the public concerning these resources and their maintenance, rehabilitation, and restoration.
2. Implement ordinance requirements to designate Township historic resources for protection.
3. Adopt new zoning ordinance provisions to encourage protection and adaptive re-use of historic resources on sites where additional development is proposed.
4. Additional historic and archeological sites should be inventoried as the opportunity presents itself.
5. Prevent loss of historic resources to “demolition by neglect” through enforcement of building and property maintenance codes.
6. Partner with the Washtenaw County Historic District Commission to improve awareness of historic resources in the Township, benefits of historic preservation to the property owner, and the process of designating property as part of a local historic district.
7. Revise the Township Zoning Ordinance’s land development requirements to add incentives for preservation and adaptive re-use of historic resources, including historic farm homes, barns and outbuildings, as part of a development project.
8. Revise the Township Zoning Ordinance to present alternatives to demolition of historic resources on a parcel proposed for development, and to consider that such resources be relocated to a site in close proximity to the historic location that provides a similar context and character as part of a development project.

RECREATIONAL LAND USE

For a more detailed review of recreation facilities, goals, objectives, and strategies please see the current Superior Township Parks and Recreation Plan.

GOAL

Integrated, accessible and linked open space and recreational facilities systems for all Township residents. See Map 3-13, Recreation Facilities and Map 6-5, Elements to Consider in Developing a Greenspace Plan.

I. OBJECTIVE: PUBLIC PARKS, TRAILS, AND GREEN SPACE

Public parks and trails as part of a Township-wide greenspace system to provide a variety of active and passive recreational opportunities and to protect key natural features.



Photo 5-12: Recreational greenways will link all areas of Superior Township for bicycling and walking.

POLICIES

A. Township Parks and Recreation Commission

The Planning Commission should coordinate with the Township Parks and Recreation Commission for development of parks and acquisition of open space and trail elements of the greenspace system. See Greenspace System section of this Chapter.

B. County Parks Commission

The Planning Commission should coordinate with the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission and the Township Parks and Recreation Commission for development of County Parks and trail elements of the greenspace system within the Township and improved access to County facilities by Township residents. See Greenspace System section of this Chapter.

C. Parks Definitions and Policy

Definition: A **mini-park** is a small recreational area of less than two acres. It is intended only to serve the immediate community within an approximate 1/4-mile radius.

Definition: A **neighborhood park** is an intensive recreational area ranging from two to twenty acres. Most are capable of serving a population within an approximate 1/2-mile radius.

Definition: A **community or Township park** is a large recreational area of fifteen to fifty acres. A park of this kind is likely to be used by people living within an approximate one- to five-mile radius.

Definition: A **county park** is often larger than a community park and smaller than a regional park. It is designed for use by residents throughout the County.

D. Linked Greenspaces

The development of private or public parks, open space, and greenspace links (also known as greenways) throughout the Township, particularly in all areas of concentrated development, shall be encouraged through development and implementation of a Greenspace Plan. Pedestrian and bicycle linkages between parks and open spaces should be included in new developments wherever feasible.

II. OBJECTIVE: PRIVATE RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

The development of low-intensity private recreational facilities in designated areas.

POLICIES

A. Residential Amenities

The development of private recreational amenities within new residential developments shall be encouraged and/or required.

B. Private Recreational Amenities

The development of privately owned, ecologically sound, low-intensity recreational facilities shall be encouraged where they are compatible with existing and proposed adjacent land uses.

C. Connection of Private Recreation Amenities to Greenspace System

Links between residential and other private recreation facilities should be encouraged with appropriate controls for the protection of property rights.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. Adopt recreation facility guidelines to establish minimum standards for mini- and neighborhood parks for use in evaluating rezoning applications and site plans for proposed residential developments.
2. Incorporate and enforce zoning provisions for recreational land requirements within special residential zoning districts or residential developments in R-4 or higher density zoning districts.
3. Encourage and approve applications for P.A. 116, Local Open Space and Development Rights Easements.
4. Work with the Superior Charter Township Parks and Recreation Commission to:
 - a. identify parcels of land for possible purchase or dedication as community and Township parks in anticipation of expected residential development;
 - b. identify parcels of land for possible purchase or dedication for open space/nature conservancy areas;
 - c. identify environmentally sensitive sites that should be considered for purchase and protection by the Parks Commission; and
 - d. delineate a system of pedestrian/bicycle paths to provide access to existing and proposed parks and open spaces.
5. Work with the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission and regional greenways, parks and recreation organizations to enhance recreational opportunities for Township residents.
6. Implement the recommendations in the Greenspace System section of this Chapter and the Greenspace Plan section of Chapter 6.
7. Update the Recreation Plan every five years in order to stay eligible for Natural Resources Trust Fund and other state and national grant programs.

GREENSPACE SYSTEM

GOAL

Develop a Greenspace Plan for Superior Township.

Definitions

Greenspace – Undeveloped or minimally developed land such as parks, farmlands, wetlands, woodlots, natural areas, plant and wildlife habitat, trails, river or recreational corridors, community gardens, pocket parks, vegetation buffers, tree-lined parkways, and similar areas with natural or planted vegetation.

Greenway – (1) a linear open space established along either a natural corridor, such as a riverfront, stream valley, or ridge line, or over land along a railroad right-of-way converted to recreational use, a canal, a scenic road, or other route; (2) any natural or landscaped course for pedestrian or bicycle passage; (3) an open space connector linking parks, natural reserves, cultural features, or historic sites with each other and with populated areas; and (4) locally, certain strip or linear parks designated as a parkway or greenbelt (Charles Little, author of *Greenways for America*, 1990).

Regional greenways connect communities and major habitat areas.

Local greenways provide significant connections within a community.

Neighborhood greenways provide minor connections and tie people to the larger system.



Photo 5-13: The Superior Township Greenspace System will link natural areas.

I. OBJECTIVE: IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL GREENSPACE LINKS

Identify greenspace segments for protection and future development.

POLICIES

A. Maintain Data Base

The existing natural features survey and related mapped information will be updated and maintained to guide identification of natural features for use in developing linked greenspaces. The survey establishes the characteristics of land that should be

integrated into the Township greenspace network as that land is converted to more intensive use. These include the following:

1. Environmentally Significant Areas of Superior Township, Superior Land Conservancy, 1992.
2. Map 6-5, Elements to Consider in Developing a Greenspace Plan.

II. OBJECTIVE: ECOLOGICAL CORRIDORS

Retention of nature throughout Superior Township.

POLICIES

A. Linked Natural Features

Establish a linked natural greenway system of open spaces, parks, streams, wetlands, drains, easements, habitat, and other protected sensitive environments.

B. Natural Feature Buffers

Preserve a buffer of natural landscape along streams, rivers, wetlands, drains, ponds and lakes, woodlands and steep slopes to:

1. filter runoff;
2. protect water quality and water temperature; and
3. protect natural wildlife corridors.

C. Natural Scenic Character

The daily visual experience for Township residents should include nature close to their homes and along roads in the Township. To that end:

1. roadside vegetation of native or naturalized species should be preserved or restored;
2. as new development occurs, open space along roads should be preserved; and
3. cluster development should be encouraged to provide preserved open space around homes and between developments.

III. OBJECTIVE: LINKED RECREATIONAL GREENWAY SYSTEM

Lay out a linked recreational greenway system of non-motorized trails and bicycle paths within the Township.

POLICIES

A. Recreational Trails

Establish recreational trails for non-motorized use throughout Superior Township for the recreational use of residents and visitors.

B. Trail Connections

1. Link important cultural facilities in the Township including:
 - a. parks;
 - b. schools;
 - c. museums;
 - d. Township hall;
 - e. Dixboro;
 - f. other important public gathering places; and
 - g. employment and commercial centers.
2. Provide appropriate trail connections to adjoining jurisdictions as part of an area-wide or regional greenways plan.
3. Plan trail links into new developments.

C. Trails

All trails in the Township shall be designated for non-motorized, use except for use by motorized handicap wheelchairs and Township maintenance vehicles.

D. Horse Trails

Some non-motorized use trails could also be designated as horse trails; these would not be paved and the use of horses could be restricted to dry weather use only.

IV. OBJECTIVE: DEVELOP GREENWAYS MAP

A greenways map shall be maintained that illustrates the principal ecological corridors and trails that should be preserved.

POLICIES

A. Greenways Map

Existing and proposed greenways on both public and private property shall be mapped and used to guide future greenways decisions.

1. Ecological corridors shall be included on the map.
2. Recreational trails shall be included on the map.

B. Relationship to Agriculture and Open Space Map

The heart of the Township is proposed for long term permanent open space protection. Initially, this will include agricultural use, but over time these lands may be converted to permanently protected open space. Parts of this area will be directly included on the Greenways Map and over time, if agricultural uses are terminated, efforts to shift ownership to the public or to include as

part of conservancy holdings may result in those lands being added to the Greenways Map.

V. OBJECTIVE: IMPLEMENTATION

Future land conversion and development decisions on lands designated as greenways should be consistent with greenways objectives.

POLICIES

A. Education

Information on the greenway objectives of Superior Township should be shared with all property owners.

1. A brochure should be prepared explaining greenway objectives, depicting proposed greenways, and listing options for landowners to help protect greenways.
2. More detailed information on greenway and open space preservation options should be available at the Township Hall. At a minimum this should include information on:
 - a) donation of land;
 - b) purchase of development rights;
 - c) transfer of development rights;
 - d) conservation easements;
 - e) trades;
 - f) open space agreements under PA 116; and
 - g) tax benefits of various options.

B. Integrating Greenways into Zoning Decisions

As land is proposed for conversion to more intensive use, the location of natural greenways should be incorporated into the site plan.

1. Procedures for pre-application negotiation should include greenway elements.
2. Site plan review standards should be modified to incorporate greenway elements.
3. Incentives should be offered to developers to link greenways inside new development with existing or planned public access trails and natural greenways on abutting properties.

C. Link to Regional Greenways Efforts

As the opportunity presents itself, the Township should create or link greenways with greenways in adjoining jurisdictions, especially when part of regional greenways efforts.

AGRICULTURAL LAND USE

GOAL

To encourage agricultural activities, preserve farmland for agricultural purposes, and strengthen the rural economy of the Township.

I. OBJECTIVE: AGRICULTURAL AND OPEN SPACE LAND USE

- A. Traditional agricultural operations have a long heritage that is cherished and has long been protected in Superior Township. Some farmers have enrolled their land in the State PA 116 Farmland Open Space Protection program and others have participated in the State purchase of development rights program. These commitments to long-term agricultural use are testimony to the need to continue to protect agricultural uses and the rural economy of the Township.
- B. Farmland in the center of the Township (see Map 3-2) is especially valued as the location for permanent protection of rural open space.
- C. Conversion of large (20 or more acres) parcels of farmland outside of the designated Urban Service Area to residential development or other non-farm uses is contrary to the goals of this Master Plan.

POLICIES

- A. Agricultural Land Use and Relationship to Rural Residential Land Use
 - 1. Central Agricultural Use Area:
 - a. The areas identified on Map 3-2 (Lands Designated for Agricultural Preservation) as active farmland or otherwise protected agricultural lands shall be considered the agricultural preservation area of the Township, where agriculture and permanently protected open space are the preferred land uses. Landowners are encouraged to participate in the State PA 116 program, purchase of development rights (PDR) opportunities, and any available transfer of development rights (TDR) program such as the Township's Planned Community Special District provisions for off-site open space preservation. In addition, acquisition of farmland or rights in farmland by local land conservancies is also promoted.
 - b. Traditional production of row crops, landscape stock, wildflowers, u-pick fruit, small-scale and specialty farming operations, and similar agricultural pursuits are encouraged in accordance with the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. A range of value-added

agricultural pursuits is also permitted as defined in the Zoning Ordinance, such as corn mazes, vegetable stands, hay rides, and similar heritage agricultural activities.

- c. Division of land in this area for residential purposes, even on very large lots, is strongly discouraged. The Township will assist any landowner in this area to identify options to capture the development value without conversion to a developed use. Where additional residences are warranted, such as a homestead for a family member of the farmer, it shall be located so as to minimize the amount of farmland lost.
2. Remainder of Agricultural Areas in the Township
 - a. Landowners are encouraged to participate in the State PA 116 program, purchase of development rights (PDR) opportunities, and any available transfer of development rights (TDR) program such as the Township's Planned Community Special District provisions for off-site open space preservation. In addition, acquisition of farmland or rights in farmland by local land conservancies is also promoted.
 - b. Traditional production of row crops, landscape stock, wildflowers, u-pick fruit, small-scale and specialty farming operations, and similar agricultural pursuits are encouraged. A range of value-added agricultural pursuits is also permitted as defined in the Zoning Ordinance, such as corn mazes, vegetable stands, hay rides, and similar heritage agricultural activities.
 - c. Division, sale, and development of farmland in these areas for rural residential purposes is permitted, subject to the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. Landowners who choose to develop are strongly encouraged to use cluster development designs that preserve at least 60% of the site as permanent open space. A density bonus should be offered to encourage such designs, in accordance with the standards in the Zoning Ordinance. These standards should include but not be limited to:
 1. require that the housing sites be positioned to allow continued agricultural use of the remainder of the acreage;
 2. require that a buffer of existing and/or new natural features be created between housing

3. require that a buffer of existing and/or new natural features be created between housing sites and highways to preserve and enhance the visual character of rural areas;
 4. permit only agricultural or open space use of the acreage outside of the residential cluster through zoning and deed restrictions; and
 5. provide density incentives for establishment of permanent deed restrictions on agricultural and open space acreage.
- d. Rural residential design shall include retention of a natural character and use of native vegetation along public roads to preserve and connect natural features.

B. Recreational Land Uses in Agricultural Zones

Ecologically sound recreational land uses may be permitted when these uses provide a buffer between agricultural uses and urban or suburban residential areas. See Recreational Land Use Section of this Chapter.

C. Land Ownership

1. Ownership of land by farmers or entities committed to long-term agricultural use of the land shall be encouraged.
2. Applications for P.A. 116, PDR, TDR, or purchase of farmland or interests in land by a land conservancy shall be encouraged.
3. The establishment of agricultural and/or open space deed restrictions or easements to create permanent agricultural or open space reserves shall be encouraged.

D. Utilities

1. Extension of public sanitary sewer or water service into agricultural zones (A-1 or A-2) shall be prohibited. Such lands within the Urban Service Area must first be rezoned consistent with this Plan.
2. Use of private wastewater treatment facilities shall be strictly limited (See the “Utilities” section in this Chapter).

E. Roads

1. A system of low-speed, low-traffic roads should be retained to permit movement of farm equipment between noncontiguous farm parcels.

2. Access to new development shall conform with Township access management regulations.

II. OBJECTIVE: SMALL SCALE FARMING

Successful specialty farming and small-scale agriculture on smaller parcels in the Township [two (2) to 20 acres in size].

POLICIES

A. Education

Work with Washtenaw County 4-H and MSU-Extension to promote and educate landowners of smaller parcels in the Agricultural Districts on ways to succeed in agricultural production and specialty farming on [two (2) to 20 acre parcels].

B. Equine-Related Rural Uses

Promote the continuing development of equine-related rural land uses in the Township.

III. OBJECTIVE: RURAL ECONOMY

Successful agricultural operations that have multiple income streams, supported by all necessary agricultural support businesses and services at convenient locations within the Township or nearby in adjacent communities.

POLICIES

A. Rural Economic Development

1. Encourage farmers to diversify their sources of income through farm-based tourism/entertainment activities permitted by the Zoning Ordinance.
2. Identify existing businesses that support and sustain local agriculture for the purpose of including them in a Township business retention program (see the “Employment Center Land Uses” section of this Chapter).
3. Encourage businesses that provide agricultural support services, bulk feed and seed, large animal veterinary care, and related services to locate in the Township.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. Maintain a primary Agricultural (A-1) zoning district that designates farming and farming-related activities as the primary land use for areas of the Township designated as Central Agricultural Use. The density of residential development in this zone shall be no greater than one dwelling unit per five acres.

2. Maintain a secondary Agricultural (A-2) zoning district that designates farming and farming-related activities as the primary land use for agricultural areas of the Township outside the Central Agricultural Use Area. The density of residential development in this zone shall be no greater than one dwelling unit per two acres.
3. Encourage applications for the state P.A. 116 program, and donation of conservation easements and development rights to local land conservancies.
4. Support farmer participation in purchase of development rights (PDR) programs to permit farmers to realize income from the development rights of portions or all of their farmland land while retaining agricultural or open space values.
5. Support farmer participation in a transfer of development rights (TDR) program to permit farmers to realize income from the development rights of portions or all of their farmland land while retaining agricultural or open space values.
6. Establish conservation subdivision regulations that provide incentives for clustering houses on smaller lots than otherwise permitted in that zone in order to maximize the amount of farmland open space preserved.
7. Adopt assessment policies that reflect the agricultural value of land in agricultural use by designating farmed parcels in the agricultural land classification. Promote a change in state legislation to permit use value assessment of agricultural land.
8. Adopt a Capital Improvement Plan that allocates no funds for paving roads serving agricultural lands or extending public sanitary sewer or water lines into agricultural zones (A-1 or A-2).
9. The Township Planning Coordinator shall perform the following tasks:
 - a. Monitor the conversion of land in the agricultural districts and annually report to the Planning Commission and Township Board the number, size of lot, and use of all land splits and conversions.
 - b. Maintain a map of new residential lots in the Agricultural districts (A-1 and A-2).
 - c. Monitor the application of all pertinent zoning regulations in the Agricultural Districts (A-1 and A-2).

- d. Maintain a record of all complaints by landowners and farmers associated with development in or adjacent to the agricultural lands districts.
- e. Establish a clearinghouse for farmers who wish to buy, rent, or sell farmland to other farmers.
- f. Request Washtenaw County to establish the following clearinghouse services:
 - 1. develop a model growth impact assessment process for use by the townships to improve zoning and increase awareness of the consequences of poorly-controlled growth, especially its detrimental effect on agriculture;
 - 2. develop a model agricultural impact assessment process for use by the townships;
 - 3. conduct an intensified public information campaign to increase public awareness of the importance of farmland and of agriculture to Michigan's economy and the public welfare, and of the adverse consequences of farmland conversion;
 - 4. develop a county-wide program to assist farmers who want to buy, sell, or rent farmland;
 - 5. monitor and analyze State legislation and work with concerned legislators to bring about recommended changes in State legislation affecting agriculture and to initiate legislation that would benefit the agricultural industry, in particular this includes use value assessment, adoption of agricultural security areas legislation, TDR, funding for PDR, and stronger State support for local farmland protection efforts;
 - 6. encourage the State of Michigan to treat agriculture as a target industry for economic and job development; to develop new agricultural markets; to encourage food processing businesses in the State; to upgrade railroad and port facilities to increase the ability to handle farm products; and to take other forceful action to improve Michigan agriculture; and
 - 7. encourage Michigan State University to conduct more research on sustainable agriculture, value-added agriculture, greenhouse production for Michigan's winter-time food needs, new crops, farming on small tracts, management of small woodlots, ways to make Michigan more self-sufficient in food products, and development of a State or regional food policy plan.

RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

GOAL

A variety of housing types, located within desirable residential settings, to ensure a maximum choice of dwelling units and a mix of population within the Township.

I. OBJECTIVE: ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

Natural features, including wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, woodlands, streams, hedgerows, slopes, interconnected greenspace, and agricultural lands, shall be protected from adverse developmental impact, and where feasible, shall be enhanced.

POLICIES

A. Avoid Agricultural Land Use

Residential development shall be encouraged to locate away from the Township's agricultural lands. See Agricultural Land Use Section of this Chapter.

B. Land Capacity

Land capacity shall be considered when determining the appropriate density of development. Land capacity considers soil suitability for septics, basements, slope, the presence of sensitive natural features, and other factors. The density shall be established at a level that will neither damage environmental features nor intrude upon agricultural lands. See Natural Features and Agricultural Land Use Sections of this Chapter.

C. Natural Feature Preservation

1. Dwelling units shall be placed on portions of the site most suited to development in order to preserve natural features. See Natural Features Land Use Section of this Chapter.
2. Measures that protect the environment during and after development shall be instituted and implemented. Examples include soil erosion and sedimentation control measures and fencing off important vegetation prior to construction.



Photo 5-14:
Neighborhoods should
develop individual
identities.

II. OBJECTIVE: NEIGHBORHOOD AND COMMUNITY IDENTITY

Strong, cohesive neighborhoods of rural, suburban, and urban densities and design characteristics that contribute to a positive community identity.

POLICIES

A. Community Stability

New residential development shall be compatible in density and character with existing residences and neighborhoods in the immediate area.

B. Neighborhood Design

1. Residential development shall be organized around natural features or recreational amenities, such as interconnected greenspace and greenway trails. Site and architectural design that will create neighborhoods of lasting value and stability shall be encouraged.
2. All residential development that occurs at a density of one dwelling unit or more per acre, and that consists of 20 net acres or greater, shall be developed under a planned community or similar zone, thereby providing its own open space and recreational facilities. These open spaces shall be located to help provide a natural vegetative roadside view and connected to greenspaces and greenway trails on adjacent parcels or developments.
3. Density incentives may be offered to encourage provision of permanent, significant open spaces in new residential developments of less than 20 net acres.

C. Vehicular Circulation

See Circulation Section of this Chapter.

D. Pedestrian Circulation

See Circulation Section of this Chapter.

E. Density Calculations and Exclusions

The following shall be excluded from the total acreage used in calculating the density of dwelling units:

1. Existing rights-of-way and easements;
2. Rights-of-way and easements of proposed public and private roadways, and rights-of-way of local and collector streets;
3. Flood plains, swamps, and other wetlands, and stream corridors; and
4. Lands to be purchased for public use.

F. Rural Housing

Definition:

Rural housing may vary in density from an average of one dwelling unit per two acres to one dwelling unit per five acres. The specific densities applicable to an individual property shall be as specified in the Zoning Ordinance. Wherever natural features are pervasive and the principal objective is to preserve such features, the primary concern should be the preservation of natural features and not the development of rural housing. Rural housing should be permitted only as a means of permitting a reasonable use of the land.

G. Suburban Housing

Definition:

1. Housing on a minimum one-acre lot in platted subdivisions, planned community developments, or site condominiums, generally with paved roads that have surface stormwater drainage, and generally with private water and septic systems.
2. Low density suburban housing with a minimum lot area requirement of two acres. This type of housing should be used in those areas in which low density suburban housing is the desired use but some natural features exist, such as wooded areas or steep slopes. Such features could be damaged or destroyed by low density suburban residential development at densities of greater than one dwelling unit per two acres.

Policies:

1. New suburban housing shall be located near existing areas of suburban development and between areas of rural housing and urban residential areas. These lots may need to be larger than one acre if required by the Washtenaw County Environmental Health Division. The site shall be evaluated for septic suitability prior to development approval.
2. Additional development of low density suburban housing may be permitted to complete pockets of existing low density suburban housing to logical boundaries.
3. Development of low density suburban housing projects shall be discouraged in the A-1 and A-2 Districts.

H. Urban Housing

Definition: Housing at a density greater than one dwelling unit per acre, including single-family, multi-family, modular housing, and manufactured housing in platted subdivisions, planned community developments, planned manufactured housing communities, site condominiums, or traditional neighborhood developments, and having public water and sewer, paved roads with curbs and gutters, and street lights, as required.

Policies:

1. A variety of urban housing types shall be encouraged.
2. A pattern of strong, cohesive single-family neighborhoods and multi-family housing developments should be established.
3. Development of traditional neighborhoods that include a mix of housing types and densities, and planned community developments, which may include pedestrian-scaled institutional, office, or neighborhood commercial uses, and open space. The zoning should:
 - a. permit clustering that maintains overall site density in order to provide permanent open space for recreational or environmental conservation use;
 - b. require comprehensive pedestrian circulation systems;
 - c. require organization of residential development around focal points such as open spaces or village greens;
 - d. require open space buffers from adjacent suburban, rural, or agricultural land uses and along roads; and
 - e. specify the density permitted by zone and specify the amount of open space required per acre.
4. Parking areas shall be located, designed, and landscaped to minimize the visual impact, with preference given to placement at the side or rear of the site.
5. All public streetlights and lighted signs shall be downshielded and all private yardlights shall be encouraged to be downshielded or movement- or sound-activated in order to preserve the night sky.

III. OBJECTIVE: SUPERIOR GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Land uses best suited to the land and existing conditions, at a rate of growth that:

- can be financially absorbed by the Township government;
- restricts the potential for an urban sprawl development pattern;

- takes into full account the inventory of existing improved lots and structures for the type of land use proposed;
- protects the value and desirability of existing housing;
- ensures adequate public funds are available to support necessary public services; and
- prevents the oversupply of new housing units and/or vacant residential lots.

POLICIES

A. Cost of Community Services

1. Provision of new residential housing at various densities, types of housing, and price ranges shall follow a balanced approach to limit the potential for excessive residential development to create additional financial demands on the Township government and taxpayers.
2. Provision of new residential housing in the Urban Service Area shall be balanced against new non-residential employment center development and conservation of agricultural lands and rural open space in private ownership to provide a diversified base of financial support for necessary public services provided by the Township.

B. Utilities and Infrastructure

1. Urban housing shall be permitted only where the road system is adequate to serve the anticipated traffic.
2. Urban housing shall be located in the designated Urban Service Area only where publicly owned and operated water and sanitary sewer systems are available.
3. Urban housing shall be restricted to locations within the designated Urban Service Area of the Township (See Utilities Section of this Chapter and Chapter 6, Growth Management Strategies).

C. Supply of New Housing

1. Sound regional planning dictates that a duplication of development that could result in vacant buildings and abandoned or partially completed development sites should be avoided.
2. Urban housing shall not be located in areas of the Township where the existing or planned infrastructure is insufficient to support such development.
3. New urban housing shall be permitted only in response to a showing of a need that cannot be better met by existing housing stock, or developments already approved or under construction.

4. Where an oversupply of new housing or improved lots is found by the Planning Commission to exist, this determination can be used as a reason to reject rezoning of additional land for urban housing until it is demonstrated to the Commission that the oversupply has been absorbed by the market.
5. The Township shall ensure that developers of new housing provide adequate financial guarantees for completion or necessary paving, landscaping, utilities, and other site improvements; abatement of construction debris and other unsecured construction site hazards; and basic site maintenance and security in the event the developer is unable to complete the project in accordance with approved plans and/or development agreements.
6. Where a development has stalled or been abandoned due to an oversupply of the planned housing type(s), the Township will consider alternative development proposals and land use options for the site that are consistent with this Plan.



Photo 5-15: Multi-family housing will remain an important option in Superior Township.

IV. OBJECTIVE: HOUSING OPTIONS

A variety of housing types to meet housing needs for varied population groups.

POLICIES

A. Owner-Occupied Housing

1. For the long-term stability of residential neighborhoods, development of neighborhoods with primarily owner-occupied housing units is preferred.
2. In established neighborhoods, conversion of owner-occupied housing units to rental properties shall be discouraged. Such rental units should be periodically inspected to verify

compliance with Township codes and ordinances (See Objective VI. – Vibrant Neighborhoods).

B. Wide Mix of Housing

1. Encourage both multiple- and single-family housing of a wide variety of types and at densities appropriate to the location.
2. Promote the preservation of historic houses and other historic structures.

C. Aging-In-Place

Improve the ability of Township residents of all ages, including the elderly, to remain in their homes and/or continue to live in the Township by:

1. Encouraging the development of additional senior housing options to serve Township residents.
2. Encouraging area churches, regional agencies, and service providers to establish and/or expand support services to senior and elderly Township residents, including daily telephone check-ins, meals on wheels, exercise programs, and senior center activities.
3. Also see the Public Transportation section of this Chapter.

D. Affordable Housing

1. The Township will maintain and enhance its stock of affordable housing units.
2. The inclusion of affordable housing as an integral part of residential neighborhoods shall be encouraged.
3. A population and housing mix should be encouraged that will result in residential neighborhoods that will be stable over a long period of time.
4. Affordable housing targeted to the needs of seniors shall be encouraged.

VI. OBJECTIVE: VIBRANT NEIGHBORHOODS

Preserve and strengthen existing residential neighborhoods, and ensure that existing housing stock in the Township is generally sound and weatherproofed, with modern mechanical, electrical, potable water, and wastewater treatment systems.

POLICIES

A. Neighborhood Associations

To foster improvement of older residential areas, the Township should encourage Township residents to establish and/or re-

activate neighborhood or subdivision associations in older residential neighborhoods to serve as volunteer problem-solving and community organization groups.

B. Rental Housing Inspection

The Township should consider establishing an ordinance and certification process to require periodic private inspection and recertification of single- and multiple-family rental properties in the Township, including sewage disposal, electrical, fire safety, and mechanical systems.

C. Neighborhood Stabilization

The Township should actively seek out and apply for grant funding to rehabilitate blighted housing stock, stabilize older neighborhoods, and demolish and redevelop dilapidated and unsafe structures.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. See Natural Features Section of this Chapter for environmental protection policies and implementation strategies.
2. Encourage local civic groups and organizations to participate in the annual “Ypsilanti Pride Day” spring neighborhood clean-up day.
3. Adopt zoning provisions that:
 - a. reflect the ability of the land to support residential development without damaging natural features;
 - b. reflect the definitions and policies presented in the Residential Land Use Section of this Chapter;
 - c. encourage and/or require the use of planned community zoning, where appropriate to the character of the area, to protect natural features and provide neighborhood recreational facilities;
 - d. consider innovative housing designs and zoning techniques such as clustering, single-family attached, zero lot line, traditional neighborhood design, mixed use and semi-detached housing units, where appropriate to the character of the area, to protect natural features and provide neighborhood recreational facilities; and
 - e. encourage the development of affordable housing, preferably as a part of larger, mixed value developments instead of in separated enclaves.

COMMERCIAL LAND USE

GOAL

Commercial land uses integrated with surrounding land uses to serve the needs of Township residents.

I. DEFINITIONS AND POLICIES: COMMERCIAL LAND USES

A. Neighborhood Commercial

Definition: Small, residential-scale commercial enterprises that serve the day-to-day convenience needs of a localized market generally consisting of the surrounding neighborhoods. The type of businesses may include convenience stores, dry cleaners, laundromats, day-care centers, beauty and barber shops, and other similar small-scale establishments.

Policy

1. Dixboro

Commercial development within Dixboro shall be made within the parameters defined by the Dixboro sub-area plan of this Master Plan and the Dixboro zoning categories. Development within Dixboro should enhance the pedestrian environment and incorporate, where feasible, residential uses with new commercial development.

3. Other Areas

Neighborhood commercial development in other areas shall be compatible with surrounding land uses, with landscape and sign design to minimize visual impact and with access managed to reduce congestion and automobile and pedestrian conflicts.

B. General Commercial

Definition: Retail establishments, including those in the neighborhood commercial areas and those oriented to comparison shopping, including clothing, department, furniture and appliance stores; medical and dental offices and related laboratories; funeral homes, agricultural sales, automobile and other large equipment services, and trade offices; commercial recreation, such as theaters, bowling alleys, and miniature golf courses; and radio and television broadcast studios. General commercial may also include small-scale offices targeted to professionals and businesses that serve area residents.



Photo 5-16: Superior Township will continue to be served by small neighborhood commercial establishments in a few appropriate locations.

1. Location of General Commercial

At the present time there is no demonstrated need for any general commercial development within Superior Charter Township as the need for general commercial development is amply being met by the dozens of large general commercial facilities within five miles of the Township in three directions. It is also not likely that significant general commercial development within the Township could challenge the market dominance of existing adjacent commercial developments, nor is it sound regional planning policy to encourage duplication of services that can result in vacant office and retail commercial space as well as unnecessary expansion of expensive infrastructure.

Similarly, the need for general commercial development by the planned residential development in the Township within the next five years can also be amply met in adjoining communities. This issue should be reexamined in five years and this policy adjusted if necessary.

C. Highway Commercial

Definition: Commercial establishments that are intended to serve the motoring public or larger region, such as automobile service stations, hotels, “big box” commercial land uses, shopping centers, and restaurants. This category does not include facilities whose primary purpose is to serve the trucking industry, such as truck stops, transfer facilities, or warehouses.

Policy:

1. Location of Highway Commercial

No highway commercial development shall be established in Superior Township because: 1) there is not a demonstrated need and areas of Superior Charter Township that have proximity to major highways are relatively few, and 2) land uses in those areas have largely been developed with scattered rural housing on parcels of several acres. This scattered rural residential development is, for the most part, incompatible with highway commercial land uses. In addition, the motoring public is well-served at this time and in the foreseeable future by substantial highway commercial developments in surrounding communities. 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, and this policy adjusted if necessary.

D. Agricultural Commercial, Nurseries, and Landscaping

Commercial establishments that serve as agricultural outlets, including markets, orchards, nurseries, greenhouses, self-harvest, and agricultural co-ops.

Policies:

1. In Agricultural Zones

Agricultural commercial land uses, such as small-scale roadside stands or small-scale open-air farmers' markets and similar value-added agricultural pursuits that primarily market products grown in the Township may be permitted in all agricultural zones. Such uses shall not involve extensive trucking activities nor shall they intrude upon adjacent agricultural or rural residential uses.

2. Ford Road

The development of agricultural commercial land uses and nurseries may be permitted along Ford Road from Napier to the point where Ford Road becomes a divided highway just west of Frains Lake Road.

3. Gotfredson and Plymouth Roads

Continued operation and expansion of nursery and agriculturally-oriented commercial activities should be permitted on land at or near this intersection that is currently used for commercial and/or office purposes. This area shall not be expanded for general commercial use.

4. Nurseries and Landscaping

Landscaping Operation. Nursery operations which include operations necessary to install and maintain plant materials off-site, including storage of trucks for transportation of plants, soils, and other landscaping materials; grading equipment; and tree-moving equipment. Commercial snow-removal equipment, construction equipment, or road-maintenance is not considered to be a part of a landscaping business.

Landscaping/Maintenance Operation. Uses that include the use of commercial vehicles and/or equipment not permitted in nursery or landscape operations. Landscaping/Maintenance Operations may be characterized by the use and storage of large vehicles and equipment, including road graders, tree-moving and installation equipment, landscape maintenance vehicles, and commercial snowplows.

Nursery Operation. The use of land or greenhouses to grow plants intended to be transplanted for use in agriculture, forestry, or landscaping, or a space or structure, where live trees, shrubs, or other plants used for gardening and landscaping are propagated or stored.

Policies:

- a. Nursery operations may be permitted in all agricultural zones, provided the operation does not pose an environmental hazard or intrude upon surrounding agricultural or rural residential land uses.
- b. Landscaping operations and landscaping/maintenance operations may be permitted in agricultural zones by conditional use permit where the business has direct access to paved roads; where the nature of the business will not negatively impact adjacent uses; where equipment and/or materials storage can be adequately screened or housed; and provided the business does not pose an environmental hazard.
- c. The location of nurseries on Ford Road between Napier Road to the point where Ford Road becomes a divided highway just west of Frains Lake Road should be encouraged.
- d. Landscaping operations and landscaping/maintenance operations may be permitted where the business has direct access to adequate paved roads or a suitable gravel road, where the nature of the business will not negatively impact surrounding land uses.



Photo 5-17: Superior Township is home to several landscape nursery businesses.

E. Special Use Centers

Definition: Support services, including retail food and convenience services, to meet the needs of businesses and employees of planned office, industrial, and commercial centers.

Policy:

1. Integration of Commercial Uses

Self-sufficiency of employment centers shall be encouraged by permitting the provision of commercial support services, including retail food and convenience services, in employment centers to meet the needs of employment center businesses and employees. These support services shall not be intended or designed to serve the general public.

II. OBJECTIVE: LOCATION

Commercial land uses located to maximize their benefit to the Township and to minimize potential adverse impacts on the Township and its environment.

POLICIES

A. Natural Features

1. Commercial land uses shall be permitted only where adverse impact to natural features will be avoided. See Natural Features Section of this Chapter.
2. Where commercial development can occur without causing adverse impact on existing natural features, these existing natural features shall be integrated into the site design.

B. Roads

Commercial land uses shall be permitted only where roads are paved and the road system is adequate to serve anticipated traffic.

C. Utilities

Commercial land uses shall be located only where public water and sanitary sewer systems are available, except for the following:

1. Commercial land uses within Dixboro shall be located in accordance with the parameters defined in the Dixboro sub-area plan of this Master Plan and the Dixboro zoning categories in the Zoning Ordinance; and
2. Neighborhood commercial land uses may be located outside of the public water and sanitary sewer area if adequate well and septic systems can be provided, if located on a paved county primary road or state highway, if the land is suitably zoned for such use, and if the other special land use standards of the Zoning Ordinance can be met.

D. Adjacent Land Uses

1. Locations for commercial land uses should be provided when and if existing or planned commercial developments, including those in adjacent communities, no longer adequately serve the needs of Township residents. Such locations shall be convenient to urban and suburban neighborhoods and/or employment centers.
2. Development of uncoordinated commercial establishments lining Township roads shall be prohibited.

E. Existing Commercial

Existing commercial establishments located in areas not designated in this plan and zoned for commercial land use or which may be authorized by a special use permit, may be permitted to continue, but shall not be permitted to become nuclei for expansion of the commercial district.

III. OBJECTIVE: CHARACTER OF COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Commercial development should reflect the character of and be integrated with adjoining residential areas.

POLICIES

A. Scale and Character

1. Commercial development should be organized into compact, unified commercial centers that complement the scale and character of existing development or that promote the desired character for areas where new development is planned.
2. Piecemeal or scattered commercial development should 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 to public roads.

B. Circulation and Site Patterns

1. New commercial development should be organized in compact, unified centers designed to create a pleasant and safe pedestrian environment.
2. Circulation patterns shall be integrated with the circulation systems (vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian) of adjacent properties.
3. To the extent sites permit, commercial developments should feature buildings and landscaping that is attractive as viewed from the road, with the view of parking minimized by placement at the sides or behind the main buildings.

C. Mixed Land Use

Where appropriate, commercial, office, and residential components should be coordinated within Planned Community zoning so as to create a diverse, pedestrian-oriented environment.

D. Parking

1. Parking areas for new commercial development shall meet the parking requirements as stated in the Zoning Ordinance. Alternative arrangements to meet peak demands shall be encouraged.
2. Parking areas shall be located, designed, and landscaped to minimize the visual impact, with preference given to placement of parking at the side or rear of the site.

E. Other Environmental Characteristics

1. Commercial development 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. The overall design of each commercial development should be in keeping with the existing and planned future visual character of the surrounding areas, which includes an emphasis on natural/native vegetation along roads.
2. All public streetlights, commercial lighting, and lighted signs shall be downshielded or movement- or sound-activated in order to preserve the night sky.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. Designate areas for general commercial districts on the Zoning Map only where the roads are paved and have capacity to serve additional development, and only where public sanitary sewer and water are available to the property.
2. Zone existing commercial areas to reflect the long-term desired land use for each area.
3. Retain Village Center Zoning and the Design Review Board for the Dixboro area. Evaluate expansion of these districts and the jurisdiction of the Design Review Board to cover adjacent areas that are logical extensions of Dixboro.
4. Adopt and enforce zoning requirements that:
 - a. permit integration of commercial, residential, and office land uses when the proposed plan provides the necessary amenities to create a viable pedestrian environment while minimizing conflicts between the various land uses;
 - b. organize the site to facilitate pedestrian circulation on the site and to adjacent sites;
 - c. create landscape buffers between parking and streets and require parking in side yards or in the rear of the principal structure;
 - d. provide landscaping within parking areas;
 - e. limit the number of separate driveways accessing major roads;
 - f. require coordination of vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle systems within adjacent commercial properties and surrounding areas (see Circulation Section of this Chapter); and
 - g. buffer adjacent land uses, especially residential, from high volumes of vehicular circulation, heat, and glare from parking lots, noise, trash, and night lighting of commercial land uses.
5. Coordinate the location of community facilities within pedestrian-oriented commercial centers.
6. Establish or retain sign ordinance standards to:
 - a. limit the size, height, and quantity of signs;
 - b. regulate free-standing signs; and
 - c. regulate the lighting of signs.

EMPLOYMENT CENTER LAND USE

GOAL

Employment centers that are integrated with surrounding land uses to serve the demonstrated needs of Township residents, and that neither create hazards for the Township's environment nor create adverse impacts on existing or proposed residential or agricultural uses.

I. TYPES OF EMPLOYMENT CENTER USES: DEFINITIONS AND POLICIES

A. Office

Definition: Business and professional offices, such as legal, engineering, financial, insurance, accounting, and stenographic services; executive and administrative offices; medical and dental offices and related laboratories; government offices; non-profit organization offices; and financial institutions but not including drive-up windows.

Policy: Office development shall be permitted in areas designated for use as employment centers. Within employment centers, office development shall be encouraged as a buffer between adjacent residential and agricultural areas and other employment center uses. Such uses shall not create hazards for the Township's environment or adverse impacts on existing or proposed residential or agricultural uses or roads. Where the zoning permits, office development could be included as part of a mixed-use development that included residential (not mixed-use employment center– see Subsection G).

B. High Technology Research

Definition: Research activities that produce an insignificant amount of heat, noise, glare, offensive odors, and similar environmental disturbances and that do not present a pollution hazard for the Township's environment, including office and prototype manufacturing operations in support of and incidental to the research activity.

Policy: High technology research facilities shall be permitted in areas designated as employment centers. Such uses shall not create hazards for the Township's environment or adverse impacts on existing or proposed residential or agricultural uses or roads.

C. Light Industrial

Definition: Light manufacturing and non-manufacturing industrial operations that:

1. emit a minimum of noise, vibration, smoke, dust, dirt, gasses, offensive odors, glare, or radiation;
2. do not involve substantial storage or handling of explosive or highly flammable gases or liquids as regulated by the Zoning Ordinance;
3. do not involve significant use, storage or handling of radioactive materials or biohazards; and
4. do not store materials, supplies, products, equipment, or refuse outdoors.

Policy: The location of light industrial uses within the Township is permitted within the Planned Manufacturing zone. Such uses shall not create hazards for the environment or adverse impacts on existing or proposed residential or agricultural uses or roads.

D. Moderate and Heavy Industrial

Definition: Manufacturing and non-manufacturing industrial activities that may:

1. emit (within prescribed limits) noise, vibration, smoke, dust, dirt, gases, offensive odors, glare, or radiation;
2. involve storage or handling of explosive or highly flammable gases or liquid; and/or
3. store materials, supplies, products, equipment, and refuse outdoors.

Policy: The regional demand for industrial land over the next five years can be met by existing industrial parks and vacant land planned or zoned for such uses in adjoining communities. At the present time there is no demonstrated need for any moderate or heavy industrial uses within the Township. It is not sound regional planning policy to create an oversupply of available sites within the region suitable for moderate or heavy industrial development.

The location of moderate or heavy industrial uses within the Township shall only be permitted after determinations by the Planning Commission that there is a demonstrated need for such uses within the Township, and that there is adequate road, utility, and other necessary infrastructure to support such uses.

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, and this policy adjusted if necessary.

E. Commercial Support Services

Definition: Support services, including retail food and convenience services, to meet the needs of businesses and employees of employment centers.

Policy: Self-sufficiency of employment centers shall be encouraged by permitting the provision of commercial support services, including retail food and convenience services, within employment centers to meet the needs of employment center businesses and employees. These support services shall not be intended or designed to serve the general public. Employment centers should be largely self-contained to reduce development pressures on the surrounding lands and roads leading to the centers. Such uses shall not create hazards for the Township's environment or adverse impacts on existing or proposed residential or agricultural uses.

F. Mixed Use Employment Center

Definition: A combination of compatible office, high technology research, light industrial, and/or commercial support service uses.

Policy: The development of mixed-use employment centers may be permitted within employment centers planned to function as cohesive units under Planned Community or Planned Manufacturing zoning. Such uses shall not create hazards for the Township's environment or adverse impacts on existing or proposed residential or agricultural uses or roads.

G. St. Joseph Mercy Health System ("SJMHS")

Definition: The SJMHS area is defined for the purpose of this Plan as the SJMHS site south and west of the Huron River.

Policies:

1. The SJMHS area is intended to continue to develop as a regional center with subcenters of complementary activities surrounding the main core. High density residential uses may be permitted in this area to take advantage of the proximity of jobs, public transportation on Huron River Drive, and the campuses of Washtenaw Community College, Concordia University, and Eastern Michigan University.

2. The steep slope in the river frontage area should be preserved as open space.

H. Technology Center

The employment center in the LeForge/Geddes Roads intersection area includes the new Hyundai – Kia Motors North American Technical Center.

Policy: The size of the Technology Center area should be re-evaluated as part of the five (5) year Plan review required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act to determine whether additional land along LeForge Road and/or Geddes Road within the Urban Service Area should be planned for employment center land uses.

I. Other Employment Centers

Infrastructure constraints within Superior Township, including the location of public sanitary sewer and water systems only in the south end of the Township and highway access only in the north end, limit the potential for development of other employment centers.

II. OBJECTIVE: LOCATION

Employment centers are located to maximize their benefit to the Township and to minimize potential adverse impacts on the Township and its environment.

POLICIES

A. Natural Features

1. Employment centers shall be permitted only where adverse impact to natural features will be avoided. See Natural Features Section of this Chapter.
2. Where employment centers can be located on sites without causing adverse impact on existing natural features, those natural features shall be preserved and shall be integrated into the site design.

B. Utilities and Infrastructure

1. Employment centers shall be permitted only where the road system is adequate to serve the anticipated traffic.
2. Employment centers shall be located only within the designated Urban Service Area (See Chapter 6).
3. It is the desire and intent of the Township to prevent urban or suburban sprawl. The employment center needs of Township residents are currently adequately served by the

existing employment centers in the Township, and by employment centers in surrounding communities. In addition, many communities in the surrounding area have adequate existing and planned infrastructure that would support future employment centers.

Sound regional planning dictates that a duplication of services that could result in vacant and unused office, commercial, and/or industrial space, as well as unnecessary expansion of expensive infrastructure, be avoided. Employment centers shall not, therefore, be located in areas of the Township where the existing or planned infrastructure is insufficient to support such centers. In addition, employment centers shall be permitted only in response to a showing of a regional need that cannot be better met in surrounding communities.

C. Adjacent Land Uses

Employment centers shall be located only in areas of the Township where adverse impacts on existing or proposed residential or agricultural areas or roads will be avoided.

III. OBJECTIVE: CHARACTER OF DEVELOPMENT

Employment centers in campus-type settings that are compatible with adjoining residential areas.

POLICIES

A. Site Design

Employment centers shall be located within planned centers in campus-type settings that include large open spaces, extensive landscaping, and preserved natural features. A minimum parcel of 300-400 contiguous acres is generally necessary to achieve this objective.

Open spaces, sidewalks, and bicycle trails at employment centers should connect with Township and regional greenspaces and greenways.

B. Buffers

Landscaping and/or natural feature buffers shall be provided between employment centers and adjacent agricultural or residential land uses and between developed portions of the campus and roads in the Township. These buffers should be of native vegetation or natural landscape character.

C. Circulation Patterns

1. Pedestrian and bicycle systems shall be provided and shall be integrated with the circulation systems (vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian) of adjacent properties.
2. See Circulation Section of this Chapter for public transportation issues.

D. Other Environmental Characteristics

Negative impacts of employment centers, including noise, air pollution, glare from night lights, and the visual impact of large parking lots, shall be minimized. All lighting shall be down-shielded, or movement- or sound-activated in order to preserve the night sky, and shall comply with Township ordinance standards.

IV. OBJECTIVE: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A local strategy for diversifying the Township’s tax base by attracting new business operations to designated employment centers that are consistent with the character of the Township.

POLICIES

A. Economic Development Strategic Plan

In cooperation with Ann Arbor SPARK, Washtenaw County, and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC):

1. Develop a strategic plan and shared vision for local economic development efforts in the Township.
2. Identify preferred sites for future development of employment center land uses, and develop a database of site information to make available to site selectors and new businesses.
3. Consider development of a business retention/expansion program for the Township.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. Designate areas for future development as employment centers on Map 6-2, Growth Management Strategies Map only where the roads are adequate to serve the development and where public water and sanitary sewer systems are available to the property.
2. Zone for planned employment centers only in areas of the Township’s Urban Service Area designated for future development as employment centers, and only in response to a showing of a demonstrated need that cannot be better met in surrounding communities.
3. Zone existing industrial areas to reflect the long-term desired land use for each area.

4. Enforce Zoning Ordinance site design requirements to achieve the character of development described in Objective III above.
5. Work with landowners and developers to communicate Township standards and expectations early in the development process.
6. Work with the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) and other applicable agencies for sound regional planning to protect and enhance the quality of life and economic stability of Superior Charter Township, Washtenaw County, and the greater southeast Michigan area.

INFRASTRUCTURE

CIRCULATION SYSTEMS

GOAL

A safe, efficient transportation system of “complete streets” that facilitate movement of people and goods by an integrated system of vehicular, pedestrian, and non-motorized means of transportation within the Township, while minimizing adverse impacts of traffic, especially of regional traffic, flowing through the Township.

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. 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.

I. OBJECTIVE: HIERARCHY OF ROADWAYS

A hierarchy of roadways to provide convenient vehicular circulation, to minimize congestion, and to minimize traffic on gravel roads.

POLICIES

Roadways should be designed and constructed according to the following functional classification system:

A. Primary Roadways

Definition: Primary roadways carry the highest traffic volumes in the Township and serve both regional and local traffic. Primary roadways connect local roadways with the interstate system and major roadways in adjoining communities. Some primary roadways also serve as special corridors. (See Special Corridors below.)

Policies:

1. The following design standards should be established for primary roadways:
 - a. 120-foot right-of-way (R.O.W.), with exceptions as noted below;
 - b. two paved lanes minimum;
 - c. use of shared driveways and access roads, where feasible, to minimize access points to primary roadways; and

- d. driveways that conform with access management standards of the Michigan Department of Transportation and Washtenaw County Road Commission.
2. Primary roadways and recommended R.O.W. widths should be designated as follows:
 - a. East/West:
 - 1) Clark Road east of LeForge (120' R.O.W.);
 - 2) Ford Road from Napier to M-14 (120' R.O.W.);
 - 3) Geddes Road from the east Township border to the west Township border (66' R.O.W. from west border to Superior Road; 120' R.O.W. from Superior Road to east border); and
 - 4) Plymouth Road (66' R.O.W. except through Dixboro, where it varies).
 - b. North/South:
 - 1) Curtis Road (66' R.O.W.);
 - 2) Dixboro Road (minimum of 66' R.O.W.; and
 - 3) Prospect Road from Clark Road to Ford Road (120' R.O.W.); and
 - 4) Gotfredson Road north of Plymouth Road.

B. Collector Roadways

Definition: Collector roadways primarily serve local traffic and distribute traffic from local roadways to primary roadways. Some collector roadways also serve as special corridors. (See Special Corridors below.)

Policies:

1. The following design standards should be established for collector roadways:
 - a. 66- to 120-foot R.O.W.;
 - b. two paved lanes minimum; and
 - c. minimal access to individual lots.
2. The following streets should be designated as collector roadways in Superior Township:
 - a. Clark Road west of Superior Road;
 - b. Ford Road from Prospect Road to Plymouth Road;
 - c. Harris Road from MacArthur Boulevard to Geddes Road;
 - d. LeForge Road south of Geddes Road;
 - e. MacArthur Boulevard;
 - f. Ridge Road;

- g. Superior Road; and
- h. Wiard Road.

C. Local Roadways

Definition: The primary function of local roadways is to provide access to abutting properties. Local roadways are intended to primarily serve local traffic, rather than regional or through traffic. Some local roadways also serve as special corridors. (See Special Corridors below.)

Policies:

1. The following standards should be established for local roadways:
 - a. 66-foot R.O.W.;
 - b. two lanes paved in new developments;
 - c. two lanes gravel at least 24 feet total in width in rural areas; and
 - d. two lanes gravel in very low density residential developments with private roads.

2. The following roadways should be designated as local:
 - a. East/West:
 1. Cherry Hill Road;
 2. Joy Road;
 3. Vreeland Road;
 4. Warren Road from Dixboro Road to Curtis Road;
 5. Warren Road from Berry Road to Napier Road;
 - and
 6. all other east/west roadways.

 - b. North/South:
 1. Berry Road;
 2. Frains Lake Road;
 3. Gale Road;
 4. Gotfredson Road south of Plymouth Road;
 5. Harris Road north of Geddes Road;
 6. Hickman Road;
 7. LeForge Road north of Geddes Road;
 8. Stommel Road;
 9. Vorhies Road; and
 10. all other north/south roadways.

Photo 5-18: Management of road corridors is important for safety and the visual character of Superior Township.



3. A system of low-speed, low-traffic roads should be retained to preserve the rural character of the Township.
4. Gravel roads with average traffic volumes more than 400 vehicles/day but less than 1000 vehicles/day shall be improved per the improvement standards of the Washtenaw County Road Commission to accommodate the traffic from any new development that will exceed 400 vehicles/day but not exceed 1000 vehicles/day.
5. Gravel roads shall remain gravel unless average traffic volumes exceed 1000 vehicles/day, at which time they should be included in the Township Capital Improvement Plan for paving.
6. New development with primary access from a gravel road shall not be permitted unless: (1) a thorough traffic impact study has been conducted; (2) there is determined to be sufficient unused capacity to accommodate the projected traffic from the new development; and (3) the developer, following a traffic impact study, shall make satisfactory arrangements with the Washtenaw County Road Commission to have the gravel road improved to County Road Commission standards if the study recommends it.

D. Special Corridors

Definition: Special corridors are roadways that have a recognized scenic or historic character that should be protected (see Map 3-10 Roads in Superior Township) and other roadways, such as Township entrances, that require special treatment. All roadway improvements shall use established context-sensitive designs.

Policies:

1. The character of special corridors shall be protected during maintenance. The roadways within special corridors shall not be improved, unless necessary to address safety concerns, and such improvements to the extent possible, shall not alter the character of the special corridor.
2. The natural landscape shall be preserved or enhanced along Natural Beauty Roads that are designated by the Washtenaw County Road Commission (WCRC). Natural Beauty Roads in Superior Township are:
 - a. Gale Road;
 - b. Warren Road from Dixboro Road east to M-14; and
 - c. Napier Road between Warren Road and Plymouth/Ann Arbor Road.
3. Preservation or enhancement of the natural landscape shall be encouraged along scenic roads. Scenic roads in Superior Charter Township include:
 - a. Berry Road;
 - b. Cherry Hill Road from west of Gale Road to Prospect Road;
 - c. Geddes Road west of Superior Road;
 - d. Gotfredson Road from Plymouth Road to Geddes;
 - e. Stommel Road; and
 - f. Warren Road from Berry Road to Napier Road.



Photo 5-19: This segment of Napier Road is designated as a Natural Beauty Road.

4. Natural character landscaping should be encouraged and/or required outside of the right-of-way to retain a scenic quality along Special Landscape Corridors (see Map 3-10 and “Major Tree Plantings” section.) Special Landscape Corridors in Superior Charter Township include:
 - a. Geddes Road east of Superior Road; and

- b. Prospect Road south of Ford Road.
5. Historic sites and structures should be protected from adverse impact from traffic and road improvements. Roads that traverse areas of the Township where high-quality historic structures and sites are concentrated include:
 - a. Dixboro Road adjacent to the Dixboro community; and
 - b. Plymouth Road throughout the Township.
6. The character of the major entrances to the Township shall be protected and enhanced with native vegetation. Entrances of particular concern are:
 - a. Ford Road at M-14 and Napier Road;
 - b. Geddes Road at both ends of the Township;
 - c. Plymouth Road at both ends of the Township;
 - d. Prospect Road at Clark Road; and
 - e. Superior Road at the Huron River.



Photo 5-20: It will be important to protect historic structures along roadways.

II. OBJECTIVE: IMPROVEMENTS TO EXISTING ROAD SYSTEM

Safe and convenient vehicular circulation with minimal negative impacts on existing land uses.

POLICIES

The following text describes the character and land use within the major road corridors in Superior Township and recommends modest improvements.

A M-14

This divided state highway passes through the rural, northern part of Superior Township from east to west, connecting Plymouth and

areas to the east with US-23 and Ann Arbor. It is heavily traveled at commuting rush hours and can become congested.

MDOT is encouraged to add a lane in each direction to improve capacity of M-14 and to divert travel from other roads in the Township, such as Plymouth and Ford Roads.

B. Plymouth Road

This east-west County road parallels M-14 and connects the City of Plymouth with the City of Ann Arbor. It passes through the rural northern part of Superior Township, but is itself more highly developed. Due to congestion on M-14, Plymouth Road receives commuters looking for a quicker alternative. As a very old route, it has many historic homes. Because they were built so long ago, they are relatively close to the road.

Congestion is becoming a problem along all of Plymouth Road. The problem is acute in Dixboro, where traffic from Plymouth Road joins that from Old Ford Road, Cherry Hill Road, and Dixboro Road.

Plymouth Road should not receive capacity improvements, such as additional traffic lanes, but does need traffic-calming improvements through Dixboro. Additional intersection improvements to improve traffic flow and safety should also be considered at Old Ford Road, M-153 (Ford Road), Curtis Road, Gotfredson Road, and Napier Road. The Washtenaw County Road Commission has proposed to reconstruct the Plymouth Road/Old Ford Road intersection using a roundabout design, and to make intersection improvements at the Church Street and Cherry Hill Road intersections in Dixboro.



Photo 5-21: Plymouth Road and Dixboro Road form a major intersection that handles a high traffic load.

C. Ford Road

Ford Road is a major east-west route somewhat south of and parallel to Plymouth Road. It connects with Plymouth Road near Dixboro. It is a paved, two-lane state highway that passes through rural residential, wooded areas. Most of the homes along Ford Road and the “Old Ford Road” link to Dixboro are on ten acre or larger parcels, although there are some small tracts.

Ford Road should be studied for the potential of intersection improvements at Plymouth Road, M-14, Berry Road, Gotfredson Road, and Napier Road to improve traffic safety and flow. It should not receive capacity improvements.

D. Geddes Road

This east-west, paved, two-lane County road is the northern border to the urban area of Superior Township. Presently, the land to the south of the road is urban or urbanizing and the land to the north is mostly in farming or open space.

Geddes Road is a major arterial connecting southern Canton Township to Ann Arbor and experiences substantial levels of through traffic. Safety and congestion during peak periods are present concerns at intersections along the corridor.

Geddes Road east of the Superior Road intersection is generally flat and straight with a two or three lane cross section. However, west of Superior Road the character of the road changes as it generally parallels the course of the Huron River through a more rolling landscape. Through this section, which extends into Ann Arbor Township to the Huron River crossing, topographic characteristics and the proximity of structures would make expansion beyond the existing two-lane cross-section difficult.

Geddes Road received a major intersection redesign and reconstruction at Superior Road in 2008-09, with the installation of a new roundabout. The intersection at LeForge Road has also been improved at that same time with new turning lanes and a traffic signal.

Major intersection improvements are planned in 2010 for the Geddes Road interchange with US-23 west of Superior Township, including a new pedestrian crossing and two roundabouts. Intersection improvements to improve traffic flow and increase safety should also be made at Harris Road, Ridge Road, and Gotfredson Road within the Township. A roundabout design may

be appropriate for the Ridge Road intersection, to address traffic coming from Canton Township.

Because of the openness of the landscape on especially the north side of Geddes Road, trees should be planted where feasible on both sides following the guidelines in Subsection G.



Photo 5-22: The Geddes Road/Superior Road intersection BEFORE (left) and AFTER reconstruction (right).

E. Prospect Road

Prospect is a north-south, paved, two-lane road in the middle of Superior Township. The Township Hall is on the corner of Prospect Road and Cherry Hill Road, and a new Fire Station recently opened at the Ford Road intersection. Prospect serves to connect portions of Ypsilanti with Ford Road and the M-14 interchange. The land on either side of Prospect Road is commercial and high density residential in the southern section of Superior Township and agricultural, open space and rural residential north of Geddes Road.

Prospect Road should receive additional intersection improvements to improve pedestrian safety and access at Clark Road and Geddes Road. Improvements at Cherry Hill Road are also needed to improve traffic safety and flow, and for improved pedestrian access between the Township Hall and park properties on the northeast and southwest corners of the intersection.

A major tree planting effort should also be made along Prospect Road through the open agricultural landscape and rural residential area.



Photo 5-23: Prospect Road needs tree plantings.

F. Gotfredson Road

Gotfredson Road begins at Geddes Road and extends north as a gravel road to near the Plymouth Road intersection where it has a two-lane asphalt cross-section. North of the Township is the M-14/Gotfredson Road interchange, and the road ends just north of N. Territorial Road in Salem Township. The Washtenaw County Road Commission has in the past indicated long-term plans to extend Gotfredson Road further north through Salem Township.

Intersection improvements were completed in 2009 at the intersection Plymouth Road/Gotfredson Road intersection. Gotfredson Road should also receive intersection improvements to improve traffic safety at Ford Road. Other than these intersection improvements, the section of Gotfredson Road south of Plymouth Road and the Plymouth Nursery property should remain a gravel road with a rural character.

G. Major Tree Plantings

Trees should be planted in the near future along Geddes Road and Prospect Road to enhance the rural character of Superior Township. Abutting landowners should be strongly encouraged to voluntarily participate in this effort for the traffic calming benefits that parallel rows of trees provide along a road corridor. Characteristics of these tree plantings should include two rows of trees planted at different distances, and outside the right-of-way. This will help ensure that trees play a major role in the roadside landscape. One row of trees should be planted at about 90 feet from the existing center line of the road and the next about 130 feet from the centerline. Tree plantings should reflect native or naturally occurring species, and could be in thicket form, as discussed below and in the greenspace section and other pertinent sections in this Plan.

One row of trees should be planted along all other County roads in the Township in the near future at a distance of 130 feet from the

existing centerline of the road. This is outside the right-of-way and is intended to ensure a rural, tree-lined character far into the future. Tree plantings should reflect native or naturally occurring species, and could be in thicket form as discussed below and in the greenspace section and other pertinent sections in this Plan.

All tree plantings should also adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Tree selection should be matched to the soil. Many species are adapted to particular soil types. For example, many Oak trees prefer a well-drained, drier soil, while many Maples prefer more moisture and Sycamores thrive in floodplain conditions.
2. It is important not to plant the same tree species in long rows. Several tree species should be planted in a mix in any one area. This approach decreases the possibility of loss to disease or a pest that attacks a single species.
3. Species selection should favor native species and those growing naturally in Superior Township. The goal is to achieve a natural, rural landscape, so obviously ornamental varieties should be avoided. Some of the most readily available trees, such as Norway Maple, are not necessarily long-lived and should be avoided.
4. It would be better to plant irregular rows and thickets of large trees, small trees, and large shrubs in order to achieve a more natural, rural landscape appearance. Future development would occur behind those plantings.
5. As these plantings are all outside the public right-of-way, it will be important to engage in a significant public education and involvement campaign to build support for this program, which is based on voluntary landowner participation. Partnering with other entities should be strongly considered, such as the local soil conservation district, county Water Resources Commissioner, local farm groups, neighborhood groups, private nurseries, and similar entities.

III. OBJECTIVE: ROAD SYSTEMS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT: STATEMENT OF POLICIES

All new development shall provide safe and convenient vehicular circulation that is properly integrated with existing or planned abutting public and private roads.

POLICIES

A. Impact on Existing Road System

1. Because of the limited availability of State and Federal funding for road improvements, the Township is unable to

ensure that proposed new development will have adequate and convenient vehicular access. Budgetary limitations should be taken into consideration during the planning process, and new developments should be appropriately scaled to then-existing road conditions.

2. New developments shall be required to provide street improvements that conform to Washtenaw County Road Commission standards on county roads, and MDOT standards along state highways, as well as applicable standards in the Zoning Ordinance to ensure safe and convenient traffic flow.

B. Access

1. The number of curb cuts to primary streets shall be restricted.
2. Joint drives or frontage roads shall be required, where feasible, to reduce the number of curb cuts.
3. Access patterns should be designed to encourage placement of buildings to face primary and collector streets with parking to the side or behind buildings.
4. Access to new development shall be from the public road best able to accommodate the additional traffic in the safest manner.
5. The design of new development projects should conform to the concepts and standards outlined in the MDOT Access Management Guidebook, and as required by either the Michigan Department of Transportation or the Washtenaw County Road Commission.

C. Residential Road System

1. 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 public street system or to provide adequate vehicular access to interior lands.
2. Residential areas should be interconnected by public streets. Residential developments that are 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.
3. Residential areas should be interconnected with local commercial areas in planned developments unless such connection disrupts the pedestrian environment or encourages through traffic in the residential area.
4. Access to new development shall be from paved roads wherever feasible.

5. Residential development with more than 30 dwelling units shall be served by at least two means of regular public ingress and egress. Where natural conditions or abutting existing development preclude a second means of access and the development has more than 30 but less than 40 dwelling units, the second means of access may be designed and used only by emergency vehicles. For any residential development with more than 40 dwelling units, a second means of access is desirable.
6. No public or private road shall extend longer than 800 feet without branching or terminating in a cul-de-sac unless approved pursuant to standards in the Zoning Ordinance allowing a longer road.
7. Abutting lots or parcels may be served by a shared drive, provided it is constructed pursuant to requirements in the Zoning Ordinance.
8. Private roads shall not be approved unless a maintenance agreement conforming with the Zoning Ordinance or a separate Private Roads Ordinance has been approved and a copy thereof is attached to the property record of all parcels affected by the maintenance agreement as recorded with the County Register of Deeds.

D. Through Traffic

Through traffic should be routed around and not through agricultural land use areas. Through and local traffic should be separated by the design of the street system.



Photo 5-24: Through traffic should not be routed through agricultural areas.

E. Road Standards

Roadways in new urban and suburban developments shall meet appropriate Washtenaw County Road Commission standards and specifications, as well as those in the Township Zoning Ordinance.

F. Financing Road Improvements

Roads within new developments shall be funded through developer financing with subsequent dedication to the public. Private roads may be allowed if special circumstances are determined to exist and if in conformance with all applicable Township ordinances.

IV. OBJECTIVE: PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLE CIRCULATION

Bicycle and pedestrian circulation systems to connect adjacent residential areas, residential areas with local commercial areas, residential areas with recreation facilities, and employment centers with supporting commercial areas. See also Greenspace System section of this Chapter.

POLICIES

A. Urban Developments

Sidewalks should be required as an integral component of the circulation system in urban development areas. They should:

1. be provided along all existing and new urban streets;
2. be separated from streets by landscaping or other amenities to provide for safety and pedestrian comfort;
3. be barrier-free and wheelchair accessible;
4. be coordinated with a bicycle system to connect to existing pedestrian pathways; and
5. be at least four feet in width.

B. Suburban and Rural Developments

A cohesive pedestrian and/or bicycle circulation system should be required within residential developments. An approved bicycle path or trail can substitute for sidewalks under certain circumstances and if approved by the Township.

C. Bicycle/Non-Motorized Paths

The Township should continue to develop and expand a safe, comprehensive non-motorized transportation network to link areas of the Township with each other and with similar systems in adjacent communities.

1. Bicycle trails should be constructed, where feasible, to connect parks and open space areas. See Recreational Land Use Section of this Chapter.
2. The Township should encourage the Washtenaw County Road Commission and MDOT to include paved shoulders for use as on-road bicycle lanes as part of any major road paving or resurfacing project in the Township. Such bicycle

paths shall be separately striped and at least four feet in width.

3. Where bicycle paths are separated from the roadway by at least six feet, they shall be at least eight feet in width, and paved along state highways and County primary roads.

D. Greenway Trails

A system of greenway trails should be developed that connects settlement areas of the Township with each other, parks and recreation facilities, commercial areas, employment centers, and regional trails. See the greenspace and recreation sections of the this Chapter.

Because the greenway trail system is intended to provide non-motorized transportation and recreation and to bring people closer to nature, it is not expected that all of the greenway trail system would be paved.

Trails on which equestrian use is allowed shall be clearly marked as such, along with the circumstances under which use is not allowed. Trails shall be at least eight feet in width.

E. Bicycle Parking Facilities

Facilities for bicycle parking should be included as part of any new multiple-family residential, office, and/or commercial development project which abuts or is located within 500 feet of an existing or planned non-motorized pathway or paved shoulder designed for use as an on-road bicycle lane.



Photo 5-25: Examples of bicycle parking facilities.

V. OBJECTIVE: PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Public transportation options are available to commercial centers and employment centers from urban residential areas.



Photo 5-26: Public transportation provides an important means of travel that reduces traffic congestion.

POLICIES

A. Bus Access

The circulation systems and site layout for developments within the Township’s designated Urban Service Area should be designed to accommodate public bus transit as follows:

1. to provide locations for bus stop sites along primary streets, at employment centers, and at commercial centers;
2. to provide convenient, barrier-free access from non-residential building entrances and sidewalks to potential bus stops;
3. to separate bus stops from traffic flow with sufficient space to provide a safe, sheltered waiting area or facility; and
4. to orient buildings and public entrances with public transit and pedestrian access in mind.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. Work with coordinators of the Washtenaw Area Transportation Study (WATS) to ensure public transportation is provided in Superior Township consistent with this Plan and any other pertinent adopted Township policy.
2. Coordinate with the Washtenaw County Road Commission to:
 - a. provide designated rights-of-way for all public roadways;
 - b. minimize the number of curb cuts requiring access from all County roadways;
 - c. support designation and cooperate in protection of natural beauty roads; and
 - d. develop bicycle paths or lanes along Township roadways (See Objective IV, Policy C).

3. Adopt criteria for landscape treatment along Special Corridors that promotes a natural landscape character (See Major Tree Planting Section, Objective II, Policy G).
4. Require construction of public sidewalks or bicycle paths along public rights-of-way for all new development in urban areas, and, where applicable, along collector and primary roads. Install sidewalks in all existing residential developments south of Geddes Road that presently do not have them.
5. Coordinate with the Ann Arbor Transportation Authority to ensure that all plans for development in urban areas meet requirements for eventual bus service.
6. Adopt site design standards for urban areas that accommodate public bus transit.

UTILITIES

GOAL

Utilities that serve the public health, safety, and welfare, and that serve to protect the Township's environment.

I. OBJECTIVE: PUBLICLY OWNED AND OPERATED SANITARY SEWERAGE SYSTEM

Management of the public sanitary sewer system to direct development to areas designated for urban development and away from areas designated for agricultural and rural and suburban residential land uses.

POLICIES

A. Sanitary Sewer Service Area

Sanitary sewer service shall be restricted to the designated urban service area of Superior Charter Township (See Map 6-3 and the “Urban Service Area” section of Chapter 6). Service to any other area shall require prior amendment of the Master Plan.

Extension of sanitary sewer service into the Dixboro area shall be prohibited unless such service is necessary to address health and safety issues for existing development.

B. Phasing of Sanitary Sewer Expansion

The Township shall establish phasing of sanitary sewer service through an annually updated Capital Improvement Plan.

C. Financing System Extensions

Extensions of the sewer system should be constructed with developer financing or through user fees, but shall not be constructed with ad valorem taxes.

D. Financial Impact

Extension of the sewer system shall be permitted only if such extension will not adversely affect the financial and functional integrity of the Township and the sewer service districts.

E. Lift Stations

Long-term maintenance costs shall be restricted by prohibiting construction of lift stations when gravity alternatives are available.

F. Private Septic Systems in Urban Areas

All new development in urban areas shall be required to connect to a publicly owned and operated sanitary sewerage system if available. However, a private, on-site septic system may be permitted as an interim facility for an individual lot where publicly owned sanitary sewer lines will not be available for a significant period of time.

Any lot permitted to develop with a private, on-site septic system in the designated service areas shall be required to connect with the publicly owned sanitary sewer lines when these become available.

Photo 5-27: The higher density area south of Geddes Road is served by public sewer and water.



II. OBJECTIVE: PRIVATE COMMUNITY WASTEWATER SYSTEMS

A private community wastewater disposal system (PCWS) is a facility owned by a non-governmental entity and intended to serve more than one structure for the transportation, collection, processing or treatment of sanitary sewage. Those areas outside the Township’s designated Urban Service Area are intended by the Township to be served primarily by individual, on-site septic

systems. However, a PCWS may be appropriate under limited circumstances to facilitate clustering of development and preservation of significant agricultural areas or open space areas within the Township.

POLICIES

A. Location

A PCWS should only be allowed in the limited areas of the Township located outside of the designated Urban Service Area (as depicted on Map 6-3), which are planned for future Rural Residential uses (as depicted on Map 6-4). A PCWS should not be used to allow residential development at densities that would otherwise be impermissible under the Zoning Ordinance.

B. Character of Development

A PCWS should only be allowed as part of a Planned Community (PC) development that consists of a single land use type, as categorized by the Washtenaw County Environmental Health Division.

C. Open Space Preservation

A PCWS may be allowed only where significant preservation of important wetlands, natural features, open spaces or agricultural lands in the Township may be accomplished. “Significant preservation” should include, at a minimum, the permanent conservation of fifty percent (50%) of the land proposed for development.

D. Operation

To minimize downstream impacts on the Huron River and Rouge River watersheds, discharge of treated wastewater into the surface waters of the Township should be prohibited. PCWS facilities in the Township should be restricted to subsurface discharge at locations where soil and other site conditions are conducive to such discharge without impacting groundwater resources.

E. Adequate Reserve

The Township should require an adequate replacement reserve for the PCWS should the services of a PCWS fail or improperly function, since the extension of public sewer systems may not be possible under contracts with the Township of Ann Arbor and the Ypsilanti Community Utilities Authority (YCUA). This should include a bond, letter

of credit or similar 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 for the PCWS.

F. Buffering

The PCWS should be buffered from all abutting properties to minimize noise, light, and odor impacts from the operation of the PCWS. Buffering should include both adequate separation distance and provision of fencing and extensive landscaping using plant materials with year-round screening characteristics.

The PCWS should be also separated from drinking water wells and groundwater recharge areas by an adequate isolation distance to prevent contamination or degradation of groundwater.

G. Liability

The Township should be indemnified from any costs or liability in connection with the design, construction, operation, maintenance, repair and/or replacement of a PCWS.

H. Removal

The Township should retain the right to require abandonment and removal of a PCWS upon extension of publicly owned sanitary sewer lines to the development.

III. OBJECTIVE: PUBLIC WATER

Management of the public water system to direct development to areas designated for urban development and away from areas designated for agricultural and suburban or rural residential land uses.

POLICIES

A. Water Service Area

The water service area should coincide with the sanitary sewer service area. Thus, public water service shall be restricted to the designated Urban Service Area of Superior Charter Township. (See Map 6-3.) Service to any other area shall require prior amendment of the Master Plan.

Extension of water service into the Dixboro area shall be prohibited unless such service is necessary to address health and safety issues for existing development.

B. Phasing of Public Water Service Expansion

The Township shall establish phasing of water service through an annually updated Capital Improvement Plan.

C. Financing System Extensions

Extensions of the public water service system should be constructed with developer financing or through user fees, but shall not be constructed with ad valorem taxes.

D. Financial Impact

Extension of the public water system shall be permitted only if such extension will not adversely affect the financial and functional integrity of the Township and sewer service districts. All water should be provided through the Ypsilanti Community Utilities Authority (YCUA). The Geddes Glen and Towsley Farms subdivisions may continue to be served through agreement with Ann Arbor Township.

E. Looping

Transmission and distribution lines should be looped to ensure adequate pressure and continuity of service.

F. Private Wells in Urban Areas

1. All new development in urban areas shall be required to connect to public water systems if available. However, private wells may be permitted as interim facilities for individual parcels where public water systems will not be available for a significant period of time.
2. Any property permitted to develop with a private well in the designated water service areas shall be required to connect with public water when it becomes available, and the private well shall then be closed and properly capped to prevent potential contamination of groundwater.
3. Private wells for irrigation purposes shall be permitted.

G. Private Community Wells

Community wells shall be prohibited.

IV. OBJECTIVE: STORM DRAINAGE

A storm drainage system that manages stormwater runoff in a safe, sanitary, and environmentally sound manner, and that limits

stormwater runoff from any development area to that which existed under undeveloped, natural conditions, in terms of volume, velocity, temperature and water quality.

POLICIES

A. Site Evaluation

Storm drainage shall be included when evaluating the suitability of a site for development and when determining the appropriate density of development.

Where a site has existing field drains left over from farming, the impact of severing those drains through development shall be addressed in the site plan.



Photo 5-28: The stormwater drainage system needs to be carefully managed.

B. Drainage System Design

Drainage systems shall meet at least the following criteria:

1. All drainage systems shall be designed to meet, at a minimum, the standards of the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner.
2. All drainage systems within residential developments shall be dedicated to the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner, subject to the approval and conditions of the Water Resources Commissioner.
3. In the event a drainage system is not dedicated to the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner, the developer or his/her agents shall provide a maintenance plan for the drainage system outlining necessary procedures to maintain the system in proper working order, along with a description of the entity that shall be responsible for such maintenance.
4. On-site drainage systems shall be adequate to deliver surface runoff to established drainage courses.

5. Drainage systems shall be located, designed, and operated to prevent sediments and pollutants in surface runoff from entering water courses and groundwater aquifers.
6. Generally, impervious surfaces should not be connected to drainage systems. Runoff should be routed over grassy swales, naturally vegetated areas, or similar areas that help to filter runoff. The energy of runoff from impervious surfaces should be dissipated prior to the runoff reaching unpaved surfaces to prevent erosion.
7. 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.
8. Open and natural drainage courses should be landscaped to enhance the open space or landscape scheme of the site or area, or be designed to function as stormwater retention and purification wetlands.
9. 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 runoff shall be prohibited.
10. Development in the R-C, A-1, A-2, and R-1 zoning districts shall not exceed ten percent impervious surface.

C. Stormwater Management

Excess stormwater generated on a newly developed site shall be retained on-site, with retention facilities meeting at least the following criteria.

1. Stormwater retention shall be incorporated into the development plan for each project on private property, or as part of an area-wide drainage system, or as a combination of the two.
2. Natural water storage areas (wetlands) shall be preserved in their natural form and condition. Each storage area, including its fringe vegetation, shall be protected from encroachment from development and adverse impact from excessive stormwater flow, including quantity, quality, temperature of runoff, and rate of flow.
3. Retention/detention basins shall be designed with a shape and with plantings that contributes to a natural landscape character.

V. OBJECTIVE: CABLE AND FIBER OPTIC INFRASTRUCTURE

An underground system of electricity, telephone, cable television, and fiber optic lines.

POLICIES

A. Urban and Suburban Service

Distribution lines servicing urban and suburban development should be placed underground.

B. Rural Service

Overhead lines servicing low density (one dwelling unit or less per acre) rural residential development may be permitted provided that their alignment and visual and physical impact does not adversely affect the Township's natural or aesthetic environment, especially the roadside view.

C. Transmission Lines

Overhead lines for transmission and major distribution may be permitted provided that their alignment and visual and physical impact does not adversely affect the Township's natural or aesthetic environment.

D. Design Standards

All distribution systems, including overhead lines and all easements or rights-of-way for overhead or underground cables, shall meet the following criteria.

1. They shall be located so as to avoid disruption of tree stands, specimen trees, significant fence rows, wetlands, or other natural features.
2. They shall be located so as to avoid unwise or inappropriate division of land use or parcel ownership.
3. Surface-mounted equipment shall be judiciously placed as part of a landscape design so as to be attractively and effectively screened.
4. Substations shall be located, designed, and landscaped to fit the character of the surrounding areas.

E. Shared Distribution Systems

Joint use of trenches for all underground cable utilities shall be encouraged to minimize construction costs, and joint use of poles for all overhead utilities shall be encouraged to minimize visual clutter.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. Adopt and periodically update a Capital Improvement Plan that adequately addresses the sanitary sewer needs of the Township.

2. Adopt and periodically update a Capital Improvement Plan that adequately addresses the public water needs of the Township.
3. Work with the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner to periodically update standards and requirements and to incorporate appropriate standards within the zoning and site plan review ordinances.
4. Incorporate the criteria and standards listed in this Section into the zoning and site plan review ordinances.

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND COMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE

GOAL

Adequate public facilities and communication infrastructure to serve Township residents and to protect the public health, safety, and welfare.

I. OBJECTIVE: FIRE AND POLICE PROTECTION

Provision of fire stations and police or Washtenaw County Sheriff substations located to efficiently serve the Township.



Photo 5-29: The Township's newest fire station is located at Ford Road and N. Prospect Road.

POLICIES

A. Existing and New Facilities

1. A new fire station will be built in or adjacent to the designated Urban Service Area to serve the southern portion of the Township.
2. The existing fire station at MacArthur Boulevard and Harris Road) will be converted for use as a branch library and

possibly a police substation, once a new Urban Service Area fire station is complete.

3. The existing Washtenaw County Sheriff substation (in the former main fire station adjacent to the Township Hall at Prospect and Cherry Hill Roads) will be retained and expanded as needed to accommodate police operations in the Township.

B. Future Needs

Other sites for new fire stations and police substations (e.g., in the St. Joseph Mercy Health System area) should be periodically evaluated as the need may arise. The need for new facilities may be met instead by cooperative agreements or shared facilities.

II. OBJECTIVE: GOVERNMENT FACILITIES

A government and civic activity center augmented by substations.

POLICIES

A. Township Facilities

The existing Township Hall shall be retained as the center of government and civic activities in the Township (See Map 3-13), supplemented by the Township utility department’s maintenance facility and business office locations.

B. Community Centers

Where feasible, future fire or police substations should be developed as neighborhood activity centers by providing facilities such as meeting rooms and recreation areas.

C. Schools, Parks and Other Facilities

The Township’s MacArthur Blvd. fire substation should be renovated for use as an expanded branch library when a new south fire station is constructed. Also see Public Schools Objective below and Recreational Land Use Section of this Chapter.

III. OBJECTIVE: PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Provision of school sites to serve Township residents.

POLICIES

A. Neighborhood Schools

The Township should work with private schools, charter schools, and public school districts to retain neighborhood schools and to develop new neighborhood schools as required to serve areas of concentrated residential development.

B. School Sites

School sites should be reserved in areas of concentrated residential development instead of in rural settings away from residential areas. Existing sites in Dixboro and the area south of Geddes Road in the Willow Run School District are expected to meet the potential needs for these areas. The Ypsilanti School District also owns a parcel south of Geddes Road, which could be used as a future school site. School sites shall be included on the Public Facilities Map (Map 3-13) and no new school shall be constructed without first being included on the official Public Facilities Map and meeting the applicable zoning standards.

C. Multi-Use of School Facilities

The Township should work with the school boards to encourage development of school facilities as neighborhood activity centers by permitting their use for civic, educational, and recreational activities.



Photo 5-30: The Cheney Academy is one of the educational facilities serving Superior Township.

D. Safe Routes to School

All residential developments subject to review under the Township’s Zoning Ordinance shall be designed with lot and road layouts that facilitate safe movement of pedestrians and bicyclists within the development, with special attention to safe pedestrian crossings and the safety of children living within the development. The Township should also work with the school boards and officials to provide options that allow all children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school safely.

E. Bus Stops

All residential developments subject to review under the Township’s Zoning Ordinance shall include safe and convenient locations for school buses to stop and pick-up/drop-off children within the neighborhood. Each location shall meet minimum road design, site distance, and bus-maneuvering requirements as proscribed or requested by the school district.

IV. OBJECTIVE: COMMUNICATION FACILITIES

Communication facilities (such as emergency and commercial radio, cellular telephone, and broadband wireless Internet) that serve the public health, safety, and welfare, and the communication needs of Township residents and businesses.

POLICIES

A. Broadband Internet Access

Encourage private Internet service providers to develop robust capacity for wireless broadband Internet access to all Township residents and businesses.

B. Cellular Telephone Service

1. Encourage private cellular telephone service providers to collocate new antennae on the network of existing towers and tall structures in the Township to maximize service options and signal strength available to Township residents and businesses.
2. The Township should consider developing a tower master plan to have an accurate inventory of existing towers, available antenna sites, and appropriate locations for future towers to serve Township residents and businesses.

C. Commercial Radio Stations

1. Work with local radio station operators with broadcast antennae in the Township to identify development-related issues and possible mitigation measures that can be taken by developers of land adjacent to existing radio towers.
2. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to establish Signal Interference Zones and minimum open space setback requirements for new development from existing radio towers in the Township.
3. Amend the Zoning Ordinance site plan review section to add requirements for development within designated Signal Interference Zones to demonstrate how potential issues of radio signal interference or degradation will be mitigated.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. Work with the school districts to identify areas where additional school sites will be needed prior to approval of major residential developments.
2. Work with developers to provide school sites when need has been identified by the school district.
3. Evaluate the need for additional public facilities when significant developments are under consideration.
4. Work with the fire chief, Township Board, and developers to establish sites for additional fire stations in areas where need for such facilities has been determined.

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

GOAL

New development in the Township showcases the best practices in environment-friendly and energy efficient site and building design, infrastructure, and construction methods and materials. New construction and renovations to existing buildings successfully protect and enhance the overall health and quality of life of Township residents, and the natural and built environment of the Township, by incorporating smart growth strategies, green building techniques, and efficient site designs into each project.

I. OBJECTIVE: ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Incorporation of environment-friendly and energy efficient site and building design, infrastructure, and construction methods and materials into all new development projects in the Township.

POLICIES

A. LEED CERTIFICATION

1. Encourage developers of new buildings to seek LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification from the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) to identify and implement practical and measurable “green” building design, construction, operations and maintenance solutions.
2. Consider amending the Zoning Ordinance to add development incentives for LEED certification as part of a Planned Community or other Special District development project.
3. Consider amending the Township’s land development ordinances to incorporate elements of the LEED-ND (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for Neighborhood Development) site design solutions.

B. ALTERNATIVE ENERGY

1. Consider amending the Zoning Ordinance to add standards for siting of solar energy facilities, both roof-mounted and freestanding.
2. Encourage local homeowners and condominium associations to permit small-scale alternative energy systems on homes in existing residential neighborhoods.
3. Educate farmers and large rural landowners in the Township about Zoning Ordinance provisions and the approval process for agricultural wind energy conversion systems (wind turbines).

C. SMART GROWTH

1. Continue to incorporate the principles of smart growth (see below) into Township land use and infrastructure planning and development.
2. Encourage developers to apply the principles of smart growth to new development projects in the Township.

PRINCIPLES OF SMART GROWTH

1. **Create Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices:** Providing quality housing for people of all income levels is an integral component in any smart growth strategy.
2. **Create Walkable Neighborhoods:** Walkable communities are desirable places to live, work, learn, worship and play, and therefore a key component of smart growth.
3. **Encourage Community and Stakeholder Collaboration:** Growth can create great places to live, work and play -- if it responds to a community's own sense of how and where it wants to grow.
4. **Foster Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place:** Smart growth encourages communities to craft a vision and set standards for development and construction which respond to community values of architectural beauty and distinctiveness, as well as expanded choices in housing and transportation.
5. **Make Development Decisions Predictable, Fair and Cost Effective:** For a community to be successful in implementing smart growth, it must be embraced by the private sector.
6. **Mix Land Uses:** Smart growth supports the integration of mixed land uses into communities as a critical component of achieving better places to live.
7. **Preserve Open Space, Farmland, Natural Beauty and Critical Environmental Areas:** Open space preservation supports smart growth goals by bolstering local economies, preserving critical environmental areas, improving our communities quality of life, and guiding new growth into existing communities.
8. **Provide a Variety of Transportation Choices:** Providing people with more choices in housing, shopping, communities, and transportation is a key aim of smart growth.
9. **Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities:** Smart growth directs development towards existing communities already served by infrastructure, seeking to utilize the resources that existing neighborhoods offer, and conserve open space and irreplaceable natural resources on the urban fringe.
10. **Take Advantage of Compact Building Design:** Smart growth provides a means for communities to incorporate more compact building design as an alternative to conventional, land consumptive development.

D. STATE CONSTRUCTION CODE

The Township should encourage the State of Michigan to adopt revisions to the State Construction Code to minimize water use, improve energy efficiency and indoor environmental quality, and reduce material use and the building’s overall impact.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Revise the Township Zoning Ordinance’s Planned Community Special District provisions to add development incentives for new Planned Community projects that meet the following requirements:

1. The developer has provided a statement of energy efficiency as part of Area Plan and Final Site Plan approval 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.
2. The proposed features exceed the minimum requirements of the State Construction Code, Michigan Uniform Energy Code, and/or other applicable codes and ordinances enforced by the Township.
3. The project may also include other exemplary project design elements in the area of energy or environmental design, as accepted by the Planning Commission.

Chapter 6 GROWTH MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Introduction

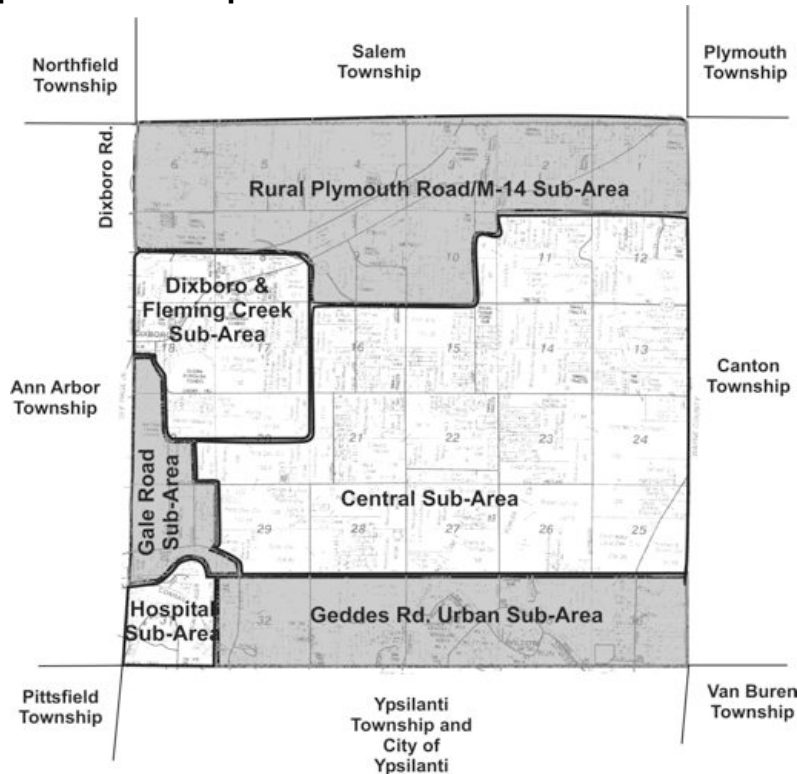
This Chapter opens with a general description of the major planning sub-areas of the Township. It is followed by the Growth Management Strategy and Future Land Use sections. The last section lays the foundation for a Greenspace Plan for the Township.

PLANNING SUB-AREAS

For planning purposes, the Township is divided into six geographic sub-areas. These are depicted on Map 6-1. They are referred to by the following names (clockwise from the south):

- Geddes Road Urban Sub-area
- Hospital Sub-area
- Gale Road Sub-area
- Dixboro & Fleming Creek Sub-area
- Rural Plymouth Road/M-14 Sub-area
- Central Sub-area

Map 6-1 Superior Township Sub-areas



Each sub-area has common physical and land use characteristics. The Growth Management Strategy uses these sub-areas to describe future land use and major public improvements in different parts of the Township over the next 20 years. More detailed sub-area plans were previously prepared for Dixboro and the Fleming Creek Impoundment Area. These sub-area plans have been updated and are combined into the Dixboro Area Plan Amendment (see Chapter 9 of this Plan). If the need develops, more detailed separate plans may also be prepared for other sub-areas. The most likely of these would be a sub-area plan for the Geddes Road Urban Sub-area.

Map 6-1 also lists the name and location of units of local government that share a border with Superior Charter Township. Considerable effort was made to ensure that proposed future land use along the perimeter of the Township recognizes existing and planned future land use in adjoining jurisdictions. The key elements of this analysis are presented in the Future Land Use section of this Chapter.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Introduction

This section sets forth the key elements of the Growth Management Strategy of Superior Charter Township. This strategy has not changed significantly for at least 35 years, although substantial land use and infrastructure activity has occurred consistent with the strategy.

Key Strategies to Reach Vision

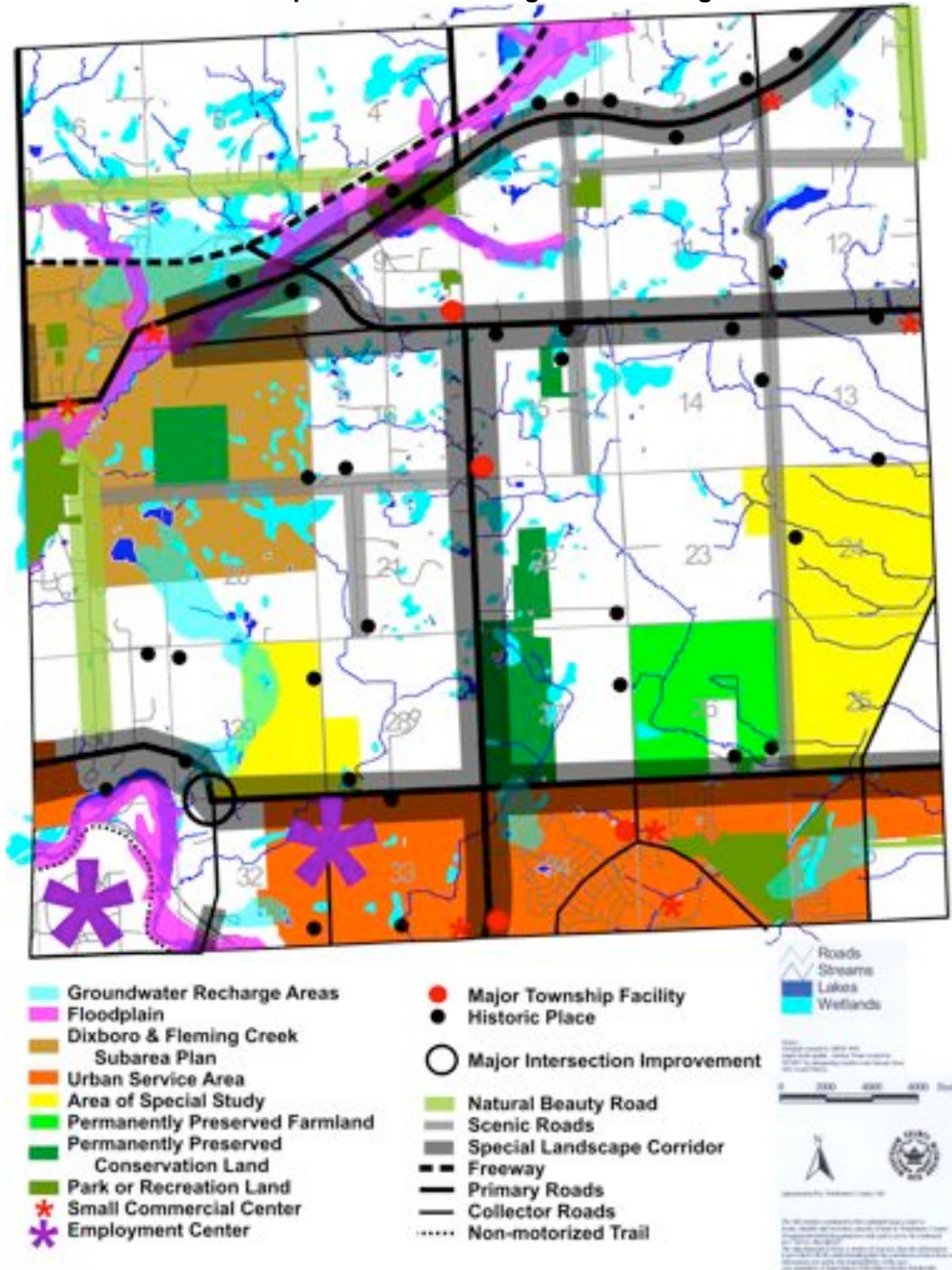
Following is a description of the key strategies that will continue to be followed in order to achieve the Vision, Goals, and Policies set forth in Chapter 5. The core elements of these strategies are illustrated on Map 6-2, Growth Management Strategies. All of the key policies related to these strategies are described in detail in Chapter 5. The reader should carefully refer to those policies before drawing any conclusions from the following text or Map 6-2.

**KEY TENETS OF THE
TOWNSHIP'S GROWTH MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

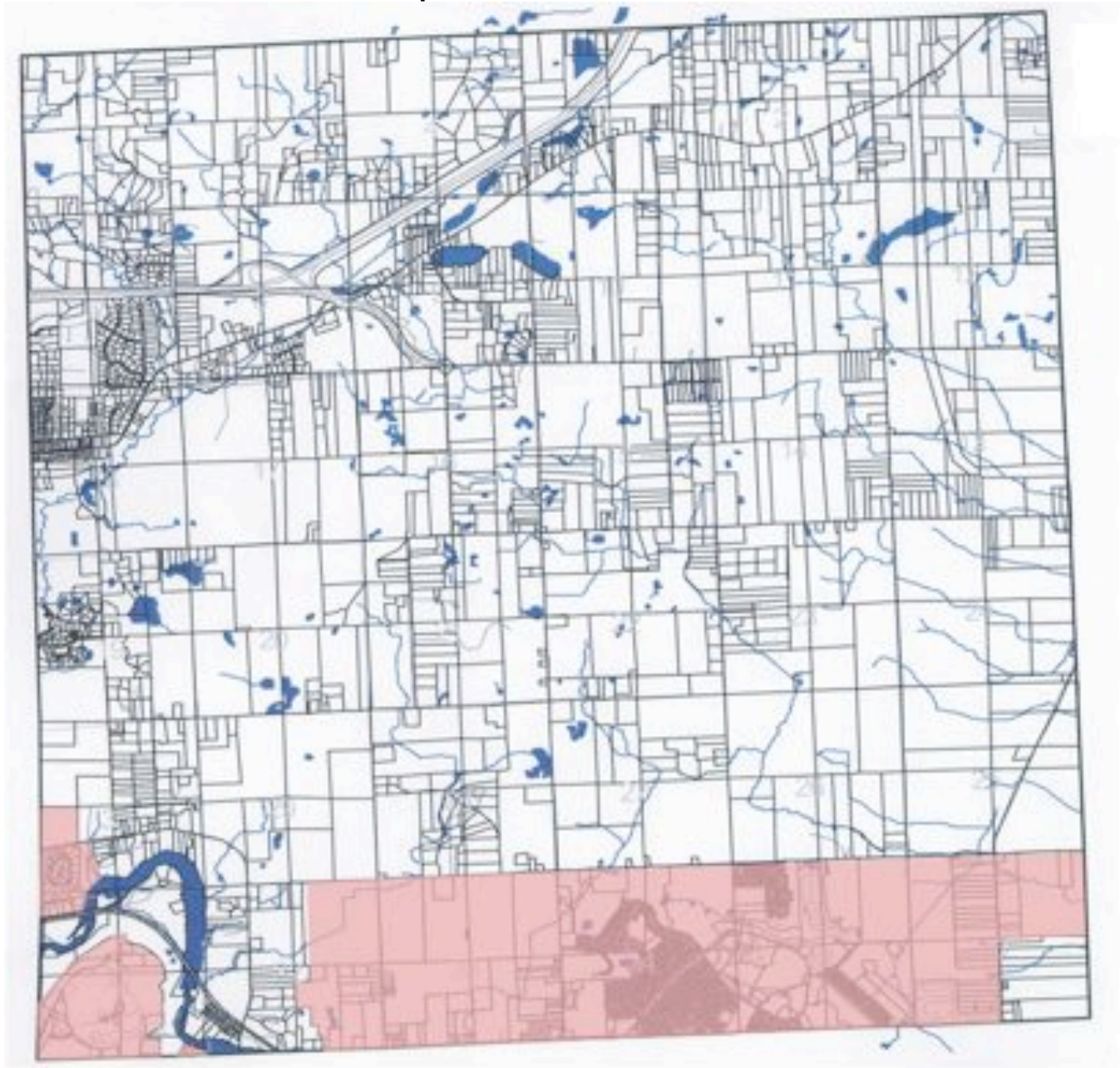
- (1) Provision of an Urban Service Area for future public sewer and water service and urban-scale land uses (as designated on Map 6-3);**
- (2) Preservation of agricultural lands and conservation of rural open space in the Central Sub-area of the Township;**
- (3) The supply of land suitable for urban development within the designated Urban Service Area is more than adequate to satisfy future demand within the 20 year planning period of this Master Plan; and**
- (4) Establishment of a prioritized approach to residential development within the Urban Service Area that:**
 - As a first priority, focuses on stabilizing and strengthening existing residential neighborhoods through rehabilitation of older dwellings and infill development of new homes on vacant lots; and**
 - Secondly, emphasizes completion of stalled or partially completed housing developments that have already received preliminary or final approval from the Township; before**
 - Finally, considering the need for development of additional urban housing options within the Urban Service Area.**
- (5) Promotion of the Township's designated Employment Centers (see Map 6-4) as locations for new and expanded business operations that complement and enhance the desired character of the Township, as expressed in this Plan.**
- (6) Village density residential development in and around Dixboro and a mix of agriculture and low-density rural residential development comprise most of the balance of the land in the Township.**

Generalized Future Land Use is illustrated on Map 6-4. More specific classifications of land use and density are found in the Township's Zoning Ordinance.

Map 6-2 Growth Management Strategies




Map 6-3 Urban Service Area



 Roads
Streams
Lakes

Source:
Surface Water owned by WCDPC by designating
public water bodies from 2007 Aerial Photos
2007 parcel base from Washington County
Registration Dept.

 **Planned Area to be
Served by Public
Sewer and Water**

 0 2000 4000 6000 Feet

Map prepared by: Professional Planning, Inc.
An unlicensed contractor shall not be held liable for
errors, omissions, or negligence in the preparation,
reproduction, or distribution of this map. The
Superior Charter Township Board of Trustees
is not responsible for the accuracy or completeness
of the information shown on this map. The
information shown on this map is for informational
purposes only.

Geddes Road Urban Sub-area

This area of about one mile by four and one-half miles contains about 65% of the Township population in a mix of single-family, multi-family, and manufactured housing. There is also a small commercial area along the southern border of Superior Township, adjacent to the northern edge of the City of Ypsilanti and Ypsilanti Township, and another small commercial area across from the Township Fire Hall on Harris near MacArthur. This sub-area also includes the majority of land designated as the Urban Service Area of the Township (see Map 6-3).

Existing dwelling unit densities in some locations within the designated Urban Service Area range up to eight dwelling units per acre. Most of the undeveloped land is planned at a maximum density of approximately four dwelling units per acre to stay within available utility capacity, based on:

- (1) the amount of developable land in the Urban Service Area; and
- (2) the size and capacity of utility infrastructure and the main sewer interceptor pipe; and
- (3) anticipated flow rates and infiltration of groundwater into the system.

Housing ranges in age from many decades old to new construction and also varies in size from small apartment units to large homes. This sub-area is very important to the Township as it provides a variety of housing types in a range of densities with public sewer and water service. This option is not available elsewhere in the Township.

The Township will continue to focus on improvements in this area. Among the most immediate of these improvements will be stabilizing and strengthening existing residential neighborhoods. This will be accomplished through:

- enforcement of property maintenance and building codes;
- support for resident-led initiatives to form or reactivate neighborhood groups or homeowners associations; and
- encouragement of public and private sector projects to remove blighted structures, rehabilitate older dwellings, and construct new infill dwellings on vacant lots.

In addition, the Township expects that stalled or partially completed housing developments in this sub-area, which have already received preliminary or final approval from the Township, will be completed before development of additional urban residential lots may be approved.

The Township will also focus on further installation of sidewalks and paved bicycle/pedestrian pathways in those developed parts of the sub-area that do not have them, and requiring all new development in the sub-area to put in sidewalks or an acceptable pedestrian/bike trail system.

Also see the “Urban Service Area” section of this Chapter.

Gale Road Sub-area

The Superior Road portion of this sub-area contains active farms and very low-density residential development. To the north and east of the Huron River, the banks rise steeply to wooded lots, some of which have large homes. This area is nearly fully developed.

The Gale Road portion of the sub-area surrounds the designated Gale Road Natural Beauty Road. It is a narrow, unimproved road and is lined with mature trees forming a complete canopy over much of its length between Geddes Road and Cherry Hill Road. Homes are on large lots, generally set far back from the road.

The area is hilly, which provides extra interest to the varied landscape of fields and woodlands. Trees that define the character of the area have extraordinarily sensitive root systems, so modification of the road or placement of utilities will doom the natural beauty designation. Generally, homes are single-family on large lots but there is a small planned community development tucked to the west off the road in Section 19.

This sub-area provides two different kinds of transition. First, the Superior Road portion is planned as a low-density rural residential area between higher density residential development on the east and floodplains of the Huron River on the south and west. The Township does not have sufficient sewer and water capacity to include this area in the designated Urban Service Area. Much of the land has already been fragmented for single-family homes, making it poorly suited to economical urban development. The Gale Road portion provides a very rural, wooded transition between golf course subdivisions and high tech development in Ann Arbor Township to the west and farms to the east.

In order for the Gale Road area to retain its natural beauty, traffic volumes must remain low as higher volumes would require road improvements that would spoil the character of the area. It is also important to ensure that the road and roadside vegetation are maintained in their present state. Along the eastern edge of this sub-area is an extensive groundwater recharge area (See Map 3-4) within the

Central Sub-area. These factors strongly support retention of a very low-density rural character to this area.

Hospital Sub-area

This is the southwestern corner of Superior Township, enclosed by the Huron River. Conrail railroad tracks bisect the area, crossing the Huron River twice. Tucked between the railroad and the river are residential lots. Southwest of the railroad tracks is the hospital campus of the St. Joseph Mercy Health System (SJMHS), and adjacent to that is a portion of Washtenaw Community College.

This is intended to be an intensively developed high-tech area that has full urban services, with most development in campus-like settings with lots of green landscaping. This sub-area is also suitable for development of a small commercial center within or adjacent to the hospital campus to serve the medical center, associated office uses, and Washtenaw Community College employees and students.

Commercial uses would be of a scale and intensity appropriate to serve the day-to-day convenience needs of a localized market, generally consisting of employees and visitors from SJMHS and adjacent medical offices, along with students and faculty at Washtenaw Community College. The type of businesses may include beauty and barber shops, delicatessens and cafes, convenience stores, and similar small-scale establishments. This small commercial center shall be compatible with surrounding land uses, with landscape and sign design to minimize visual impact and access managed to reduce congestion and automobile and pedestrian conflicts.

The intensity of development in this area is expected to remain about the same over the next 20 years, and the Township will continue to ensure that urban services are available through appropriate agreements with other adjacent governmental units.

Also see the “Urban Service Area” section of this Chapter.

Dixboro & Fleming Creek Sub-area

The centerpiece of this sub-area is the historic settlement of Dixboro along Plymouth Road between Dixboro Road and Ford Road. It has houses dating to the 1830's. There are more historic structures in Dixboro to depict on Map 6-2 than there is space, so none are depicted there (**See Chapter 9, Dixboro Area Plan Amendment**).

There are a few commercial establishments and offices on Plymouth and at the Plymouth and Ford Road intersection. The settlement is on a grid pattern with a “village green” and an adjacent church as the focus. Surrounding Dixboro are two large subdivisions of late 20th century and very early 21st century vintage. The adjacent subdivisions are more spread out on curvilinear streets with large lots.

Nature is an important element of the southeast part of the sub-area. Fleming Creek parallels Plymouth Road in this area, flowing northeast to southwest, just to the south of Dixboro. In the southeast part of this sub-area is the “Cherry Hill Nature Preserve” - a 160-acre Township-owned parcel. The Township has a separate sub-area plan detailing future development parameters in the Dixboro & Fleming Creek Sub-area. The general thrust of that sub-area plan is:

- preservation of the water quality of the Fleming Creek and the natural character of abutting lands;
- preservation of the historic character of Dixboro; and
- traffic calming on Plymouth Road as it goes through Dixboro.

Rural Plymouth Road/M14 Sub-area

This sub-area has scattered homes on parcels carved from former farms. Among these homes are a number of historic houses on Plymouth Road. Many of the lots are five to ten acres in size although there are larger parcels and a few small platted subdivisions and site condominium developments. There is a small residential hamlet at Frains Lake.

While portions of this area have open, active farm fields or grassy pastures that are no longer actively farmed, there are also many wooded areas. A few ponds, small lakes, and wetlands dot the area, as well as some publicly-owned recreation land, including the new Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission “Staebler Farm” property in Sections 9 and 4, a new Township park in Section 9, and Schroeter Park in Section 11.

The northeast part of this sub-area predominantly consists of large lot residential dwellings along Plymouth, Ford, and Gotfredson Roads north of Plymouth Road that may be impacted by additional traffic from potential future development of Salem Township’s urban services district on Gotfredson Road at the M-14 interchange.

Some parcels around the Plymouth Road and Gotfredson Road intersection are planned and zoned for commercial and office land uses. However, more land is presently zoned for commercial use in this area than is needed to meet neighborhood commercial shopping needs. The

total area zoned commercial should be reduced in size in the future if feasible, or a mixed use development that combines neighborhood commercial with residential development should be encouraged; provided the land is suitable to accommodate the rate of septic waste that would be generated by mixed use at that location.

Central Sub-area

This area is the heartland of Superior Township and the area Township residents most rely on to provide nature, open space, and rural character. Many of the primary roads in the Township cut through or border this sub-area. It is also the largest and lowest density sub-area of the Township and it is proposed to remain that way, permanently. It is primarily a farming area, although rural homes on large lots are scattered throughout the sub-area. Landscape nurseries, private stables and riding arenas, wetlands, woodlands, and permanently preserved open space are also found within this sub-area.

The southern and eastern part of this area is generally flat, with many farm fields, pastures, and woodlots. Small creeks flow from north to south in this area, dividing between the Rouge River and Huron River watersheds.

The northern and western parts of this area are more rolling and there are more woods and rural homes on five- to twenty-acre lots. This area also contains about a half dozen historic homes. Nearly 2,000 acres of farms and natural areas have been permanently protected in this area (See Map 3-14). The majority of this preserved land is identified on the Township's Official Zoning Map as part of the Open Space Preservation Overlay District (OSP).

The Township will continue to protect farming and open spaces in the center of the Township, leaving this area with a natural character, viable wildlife habitat, and relatively undeveloped. Because the protection of farming and open space will not happen without the Township being proactive, the Township will develop and implement a Greenspace Plan. See the last Section of this Chapter for more detail.

Township residents are very active in farmland and open space preservation in this sub-area and as the opportunity arises, further preservation will be pursued. Most land is zoned for and used for agriculture and low density residential use at densities of 1 dwelling unit per 2 to 5 acres. Where land is developed in the future, clustering to preserve large amounts of open space will be strongly encouraged.

The larger agricultural parcels are well-suited for participation in federal, state, or county purchase of development rights (PDR) or transfer of development rights (TDR) programs. Landowners and Township officials will continue to encourage enrollment in these voluntary programs, as well as in the State PA 116, Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program. These efforts will be initiated consistent with the Greenspace Plan.

Transportation Improvements

Parts of Superior Township serve as a bedroom community for residents working at job centers outside of the Township. At the same time, Superior Township lies in the middle of intensively developed areas to the west, south, and east. As a result, many residents of Superior Township and surrounding communities commute to nearby cities. This results in tremendous pass-through traffic for Superior Township.

Chapter 5 describes the policies related to transportation improvements in the Township in detail. Map 6-2 illustrates a few of the most important improvements and the desired visual character along roads in the Township. Some of the most significant proposed changes are listed below:

- M-14 should be widened to add another lane in each direction to help take some through traffic off of roads going east-west through the Township.
- Preservation and enhancement of the rural character of Geddes and Prospect Roads is critical to achievement of the vision of this Master Plan. Deep structure setbacks and extensive tree planting will help maintain and improve the rural character along these roads (See the Infrastructure, Circulation Section in Chapter 5).
- Several other roads have a special landscape character that should also be preserved and enhanced (See Map 3-10). In particular, these include:
 - Plymouth Road
 - Ford Road
 - Warren Road
 - Stommel Road
 - Berry Road
 - Northern portions of Gotfredson Road
- Unpaved gravel roads in the Township serve low density development and should remain unpaved.
- The success of the new roundabout at the Superior Road and Geddes Road intersection should be considered as part of future improvements at other Geddes Road intersections, such as Ridge Road. Use of a roundabout design at other intersections may

- improve safety and preserve rural character, while accommodating anticipated traffic levels on Geddes. A number of other intersections in the Township would also benefit from improvements as listed in the Infrastructure, Circulation Section in Chapter 5.
- The Plymouth Road/Old Ford Road intersection should be improved using a roundabout design, in conjunction with intersection improvements at the Church Street and Cherry Hill Road intersections and related road improvements along Plymouth Road in Dixboro.
 - No other capacity improvements are desired on roads within the Township over the next 20 years. Prior to any capacity improvements, detailed right-of-way plans should be prepared for all arterial roads in the Township. These plans should address safety, capacity, and rural character issues consistent with the vision of the Master Plan.
 - New on-road bicycle lanes and/or separate bicycle/pedestrian pathways should be constructed along primary paved roads in the Township (See the “Circulation Systems” section of Chapter 5).
 - New development within the designated Urban Service Area should be designed to accommodate extension of public transit within the Township.

Other Public Facilities

Other Township public facilities will be improved as the need exists, including:

- Park and recreation facility improvements in accordance with the Township Park and Recreation Plan.
- Improvements to Township fire fighting, police, and general government facilities, as needed and funds are available.
- The location of new Township facilities consistent with the policies of this Plan and with the adopted Capital Improvement Plan of the Township.
- Conversion of the existing fire substation at Harris Road and McArthur Blvd. into an expanded branch library and possibly a police substation.
- A new Township fire hall to replace the existing fire substation at Harris Road and McArthur Blvd. is planned for the southern portion of the Township. The Fire Department will evaluate requests for services periodically as growth occurs and will make recommendations for additional apparatus and structures as needed.

URBAN SERVICE AREA

Over thirty years ago, the Township determined that the careful extension of publicly-owned and operated sanitary sewer and public water lines within a defined area south of Geddes Road, at a rate consistent with market demand and within the quantity limits of a service agreement with the Ypsilanti Community Utilities Authority (YCUA), made the most sense. This strategy:

- Allowed for managed expansion of urban development contiguous to Ypsilanti;
- prevented leapfrog sprawl;
- provided for higher density and lower cost per lot development opportunities to new residents from a wide variety of incomes; and
- permitted the Township to expand fire, police, park, and recreation services without overextending either the Township budget or taxpayers.

This careful management of urban services was recognized in 2003 by bond attorneys in Chicago, who rewarded the Township with a very favorable AA bond rating. They commented that the rating reflected the careful management of growth and expansion of public facilities by the Township.

Urban Service Area Defined

The designated Superior Township Urban Service Area is delineated on Map 6-3 of this Plan. The Township has no current plans to provide urban services to lands outside the Urban Service Area during the planning period. For more on this topic, see the “Areas of Special Study” section of this Chapter.

Residential Development Potential

A large amount of land remains to be developed in this designated Urban Service Area (See Map 6-3). East of Prospect and south of Geddes Roads, the undeveloped land will predominantly be used for residential development of new neighborhoods that are predominantly urban residential in character. A special effort will be made to ensure preservation of open space and significant natural features in this area as it is developed. Some approved projects have multi-year buildout plans. The average density of new development in this area will be about four (4) dwelling units per acre.

Based on recent projected rates of growth and the current oversupply in new residential construction and vacant residential lots ready for

development [See Table 4-1, Inventory of Approved but Un-built Residential Units (2009)], it is anticipated that existing undeveloped land designated for residential development within the Township's Urban Service Area (as shown on Maps 6-3 and 6-4)

- is more than adequate to serve the future demand for urban residential development in the Township; and
- will not be fully developed or built out within the 20 year timeframe of this Plan (also referred to as "the planning period" of this Master Plan).

Technology Center Development Potential

The portion of the Urban Service Area south of Geddes Road and centered around the LeForge Road intersection is the Township's "Technology Center," and is intended to serve as an "employment center" for the Township (See Map 6-4, Future Land Use). The Hyundai-Kia Motors North American Technical Center occupies 55 acres on the west side of LeForge Road, with additional land reserved for future expansion of this facility.

Future development of this Technology Center is intended to establish an integrated, campus-like development pattern consistent with the desired character of the Urban Service Area. Development of this area will take place in a coordinated manner, with preservation of significant natural features in accordance with Township Zoning Ordinance requirements, provision of an integrated road network, pedestrian and vehicular connections between sites, and extension of public utilities only in accordance with Township utility plans and the "Urban Service Area" section of this Master Plan.

Planned future land uses include research and development (R & D) operations, high technology operations, light manufacturing associated with R & D, and accessory support businesses intended to serve the needs of employees in the area. Such support businesses are intended to be subordinate to the principal "Technology Center" operations, and should be clustered and arranged to support such operations. This portion of the Urban Service Area is not intended to become a principal commercial center. Examples of such support businesses include limited-scale retail, food services, offices, and personal services (such as dry cleaning pick-up/drop-off, cafes and coffeehouses, and financial services).

When combined with surrounding land to the east and south within the Urban Service Area that is planned for urban residential land uses, there is potential to develop an integrated, "live/work" neighborhood

development pattern tailored to the specific needs of Technology Center employees and businesses. The Township Zoning Ordinance's updated Special District regulations should be utilized in the future development of this portion of the Urban Service Area.

Medical Center Development Potential

The portion of the Urban Service Area in the southwest corner of the Township adjacent to Clark Road and Huron River Drive is the Township's "Medical Center," and is intended to serve as an "employment center" for the Township (See Map 6-4, Future Land Use). The majority of land in this area is occupied by St. Joseph Mercy Hospital. Planned future development in this area includes medical clinics, facilities, and offices associated with the hospital, and accessory support businesses intended to serve the needs of employees in the area.

This area is also suitable for development of a small commercial center within or adjacent to the hospital campus to serve the medical center, associated office uses, and Washtenaw Community College employees and students (See "Hospital sub-area" section of this Chapter).

AREAS OF SPECIAL STUDY

The Township presently provides public sanitary sewerage and public water services to several square miles in the area south of Geddes Road within the designated Urban Service Area shown on Map 6-3. However, as part of the 2004 Growth Management Plan update, the following "Areas of Special Study" adjacent to but outside of the Urban Service Area were also included in the Plan (also see Map 6-2, Growth Management Strategies):

2004 Plan: Purpose of Special Study Areas

The 2004 Growth Management Plan included the following language describing the intent of these Areas of Special Study:

"(If prior to development of all land in the urban services area south of Geddes Road, market demand for new development occurs in the areas shown in yellow on Map 6-2 for uses at a density/intensity greater than that provided for in this Plan and in the Zoning Ordinance, and if such uses or density would require public sewer and water, then a special study will be necessary prior to any decision on such a request. The study will have to ascertain whether the Township has any remaining sewer and water capacity at that time, and if not, the means the developer

proposes to use to provide public sewer and water to the property.”

“The projected impact of new development in these special study areas on abutting lands, as well as on Township finances, taxpayers, and on new public service obligations will all have to be carefully examined. (See especially policy D in the Infrastructure, Utilities Section of Chapter 5.) If as a result of this study, the Township decides it is important to accommodate more urban development in the areas shown in yellow, the Township would need to amend Maps 6-2, 6-3, and 6-4 in this Chapter, and accompanying text in this Chapter and Chapter 5. In addition, appropriate changes to the Zoning Ordinance would also be necessary.”

Special Study Area A

In the early 1980s, an ambitious plan was proposed to develop a total of 515 acres of land in the Township, centered on the Geddes Road/LeForge Road intersection, as the Superior Technology Center (also known as the “Geddes Center”). Area A was part of phase two of this proposed development.

No development has taken place within Area A, which remains zoned and used for agricultural production, woodlands, and rural open space.



Special Study Area B

Much of the land in Area B was planned for manufacturing and zoned for intensive industrial uses in the early 1960s. No development has taken place within Area B, except for a short period in the mid to late-1970s when a portion served as the temporary test track for the People Mover (automated trains running on a three mile long elevated loop through downtown Detroit, Michigan).

The industrial zoning was replaced in 1997 by an agricultural zoning classification, as part of a comprehensive zoning map update. The predominant uses of the site are agricultural production and open space.



As part of this current Master Plan update, the Planning Commission and Township Board re-evaluated these Areas of Special Study based on development and land use history, anticipated capacity of the designated Urban Service Area to accommodate future development of an urban scale and intensity, and the existing and planned capacity of area roads, public utilities, and other public services that serve the Urban Service Area of the Township.

2009 Update: Special Study Area Designations Removed

The Planning Commission and Township Board have made the following findings and conclusions with regards to the two (2) Areas of Special Study:

1. Development and land use: Other than the temporary People Mover test track on Area B more than 30 years ago (removed after completion of the project), these Areas of Special Study have remained predominantly in agricultural and rural open space land uses. No development activity has taken place on either site, and there are no approved site plans or Special District Area Plans for future development. The Special Study Areas are located in the portion of the Township planned for future agricultural uses and open space preservation (See “Central Sub-area” section of this Chapter).
2. Urban Service Area: The designated Urban Service Area shown on Map 6-3 has more than adequate capacity available for anticipated future development (See “Urban Service Area” section of this Chapter). These two (2) Special Study Area designations are no longer necessary, based upon anticipated future population growth in the Township during the planning period.
3. Not consistent with other adopted plans: Retaining these Special Study Areas in the Master Plan would not be consistent with adopted transportation plans, the Township’s agricultural preservation plans, and planned public utility capacity for the Urban Service Area.
4. Fails to meet Master Plan rezoning guidelines: The Planning Commission has evaluated the Special Study Areas using the Master Plan’s recommended rezoning criteria (See “Phasing of Zoning Map Changes” section of Chapter 7, Zoning Plan), and has determined that rezoning of land outside of the designated Urban Service Area to urban residential zoning districts or to

permit urban housing would not be consistent with the goals, objectives, policies, and vision of this Plan (See Chapter 5).

5. Conflicts with open space conservation trends: Expansion of urban housing outside of the designated Urban Service Area would create land use conflicts within the agricultural Central Sub-area of the Township, and would conflict with the trend towards permanent conservation of agricultural lands and rural open space in this sub-area (See Map 3-14).
6. Cost of Community Services: The Township Board has determined that expansion of urban housing outside of the designated Urban Service Area has the potential to create an “urban sprawl” development pattern, leading to potentially excessive financial demands on the Township government and taxpayers (See “Objective: Superior Growth Management” subsection under Residential Land Use in Chapter 5).
7. Geddes Road: Geddes Road is a rural arterial road with a predominantly two-lane cross-section. Recent intersection improvements at LeForge Road and Superior Road have alleviated safety deficiencies and improved traffic capacity at these intersections. However, west of Superior Road there are design and environmental challenges from existing topography and natural features that significantly limit the potential for expansion of the roadway. With additional planned improvements (See the Geddes Road subsection under Circulation Systems in Chapter 5), the road will be adequate to serve the needs of residential and employment center land uses within the designated Urban Service Area.
8. Gotfredson Road: The M-14 expressway was extended eastward across the north side of the Township during late 1970s, including an interchange at Gotfredson Road. Transportation plans from this period identified Gotfredson Road as future north-south major arterial highway through the Township, potentially extending south to US-12/Michigan Ave. and north through Salem Township.

However, these plans were never realized, and Gotfredson Road south of Plymouth Road is now planned as a local rural roadway and scenic road (See Map 3-10). Design and environmental challenges and new residential development south of Geddes Road effectively preclude expansion of Gotfredson Road into a major arterial roadway.

The Township has no current plans to provide urban services outside the Urban Service Area during the planning period, and does not anticipate studying change in land use or intensity of development except at the statutorily required five-year Plan review intervals.

FUTURE LAND USE

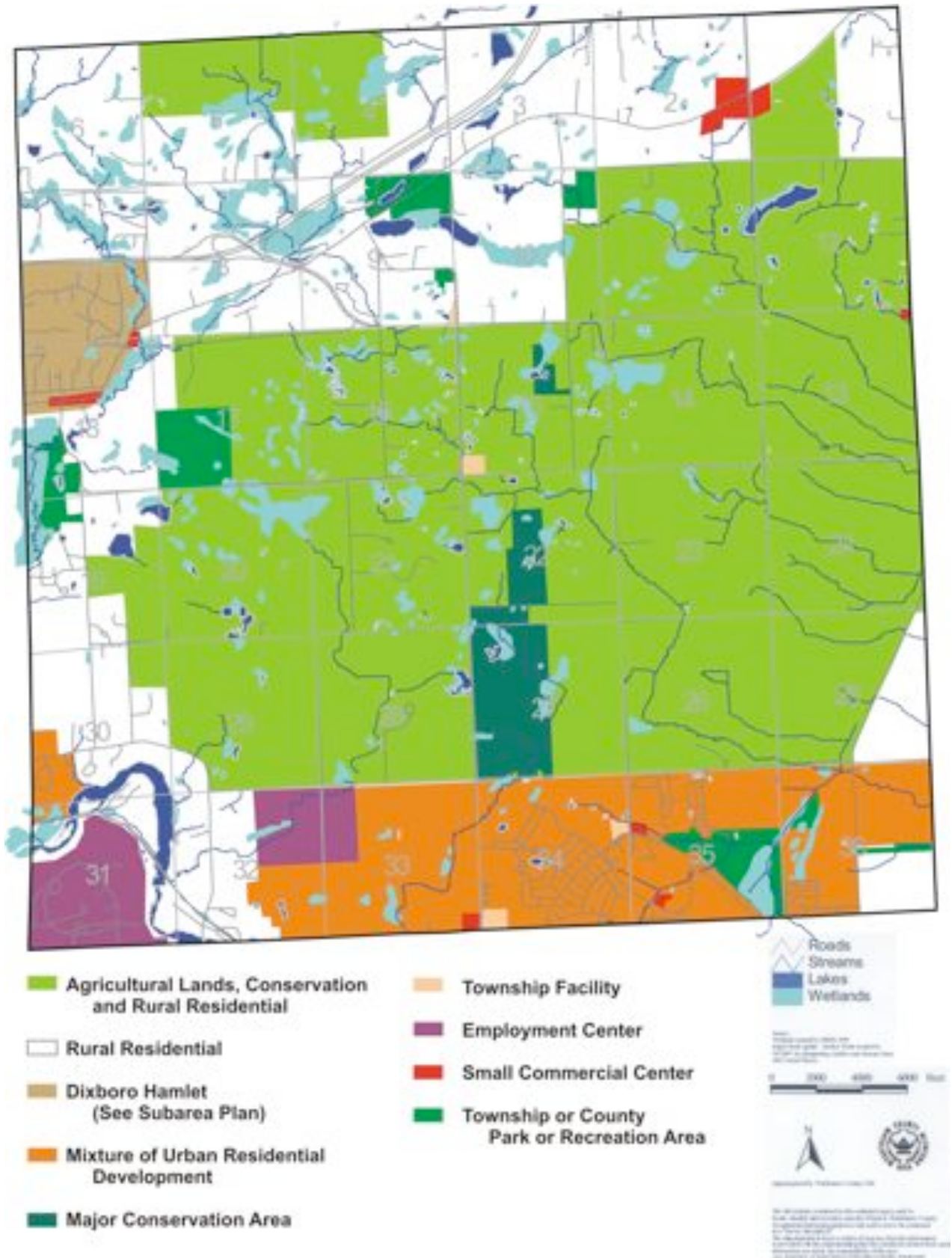
Introduction

This section describes the key elements of Map 6-4, Future Land Use. This is a generalized map that depicts a range of desirable future land uses. Each general category is described in the accompanying text. Policies to guide decisions on future land uses are found in Chapter 5. More specific classifications of land use and density are found on the Zoning Map and in the text of the Zoning Ordinance.

Elements of the Future Land Use Map

Following is a brief description of each of the major elements of Map 6-4, Future Land Use.

Map 6-4 Future Land Use



Agricultural, Conservation, and Rural Residential

The lime green color represents agricultural, conservation, and rural residential lands in the central part of the Township. This is the area planned for long-term preservation of farmland, wetlands, woodlands, and other open spaces. Most of the land in this area is zoned for agricultural and low density residential use. A few small old plats, large-lot site-condo developments, and concentrated metes-and-bounds residential areas are also included.

Major Conservation Areas

The dark (olive) green areas are lands that are managed for long term conservation and presently owned by land conservancies, the Township or Washtenaw County. As the opportunity presents itself, many more lands in the lime green area are expected to become permanently preserved conservation or agricultural areas. Most of Section 26 is already protected by permanent enrollment of the farmland in the state PDR program.

Rural Residential

The white areas around the western and northern parts of the Township are principally used for large lot rural residential development with a few farms along the border with Salem Township. A mixture of agricultural, rural residential, and resource conservation zones are present. This pattern is encouraged to continue.

Dixboro Hamlet

Most of the land in the light tan color on Map 6-4 is already developed for single-family residences in the hamlet of Dixboro. Undeveloped lands are encouraged to continue to develop according to the mixture of residential densities provided on the Official Zoning Map for this area.

Mixture of Urban Residential Densities

The urban area in orange south of Geddes Road is, and is expected to remain, a mixture of residential zoning classifications and densities. New residential development is expected at a density of four dwelling units per acre and is likely to occur via the Planned Community zoning classification (a form of planned unit development) where there are sensitive natural features, and via traditional subdivision or site condominium development designs in other areas.

Employment Centers

The lavender/purple areas are existing or planned major employment centers. The hospital area in the southwest corner of the Township and the Hyundai – Kia Motors North American Technical Center on Geddes Road at LeForge Road comprise the long planned employment centers in

the Township. The Hyundai property is zoned Planned Manufacturing and the hospital area has both Medical Services and Planned Community zoning classifications.

Small Commercial Centers

The small red areas in the Hamlet of Dixboro and in the Urban Service Area south of Geddes Road are existing neighborhood commercial areas that may experience change during the planning period, but the area affected is not expected to be expanded. The nonresidential areas near the Plymouth Road and Gotfredson Road intersection represent existing commercial and office zoned properties (See “Rural Plymouth Road/M14 Sub-area” section of this Chapter).

Township Facilities

The lands in cream color represent lands currently used for major Township facilities.

Township or County Park or Recreation Area

Existing and planned Township and County parks are depicted on Map 6-4 in olive green. As land develops south of Geddes, additional parkland will be needed there. The Township Park and Recreation Commission will continue to monitor this need and acquire property for parks as the need and opportunity arise. The Township Park and Recreation Plan will continue to reflect the location of existing and planned parkland, and this Plan will be periodically amended to reflect those decisions.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Important economic development-related goals of the Superior Township Master Plan include integrating employment centers with surrounding land uses in a manner that serves the demonstrated needs of Township residents; strengthening the rural economy of the Township; and diversifying the Township’s tax base. To achieve these goals, the Township will focus on the following economic development strategies:

Technology Center

The Township will continue to work in cooperation with county and state economic development agencies to encourage development of the Township’s designated “Technology Center” (see the “Urban Service Area” section of this Chapter). The economic development potential of the immediate “employment center” area for high technology and research-based operations has been enhanced by:

- Completion of road capacity and intersection improvements employing a roundabout design at the Geddes Road/Superior Road intersection (2008);
- Completion of intersection improvements at LeForge and Geddes Roads (2008); and
- Michigan Department of Transportation plans to substantially increase the capacity of the nearby Geddes Road/US-23 interchange, including roundabouts for traffic movement and a dedicated pedestrian crossing (planned for 2010).
- Washtenaw County Road Commission plans to repave Geddes Road, including possible provision of partially-paved shoulder areas for bike lanes.

Future development of this Technology Center will be consistent with the goals, objectives, policies, and growth management strategies of this Master Plan.

Medical Center

The Township will continue to work in cooperation with St. Joseph Mercy Hospital officials to encourage development of the Township's designated "Medical Center" (see the "Urban Service Area" section of this Chapter).

Dixboro Hamlet

The Township will promote and encourage the development of the Dixboro hamlet area in accordance with the policies and desired character described in the Dixboro Area Plan Amendment (Chapter 9 of this Plan).

Rural Economic Development

The Township will continue to encourage the purchase and donation of development rights to permanently preserve agricultural land. The Township will also encourage farmers to diversify their income sources through development of value-added agricultural tourism and entertainment activities consistent with Zoning Ordinance requirements.

Home Occupations

There has been a revival in home entrepreneurship over the past decade. The expansion of broadband Internet and cellular telephone access, combined with significant changes in the character of American corporate workplaces makes home occupations, telecommuting, and "virtual offices" feasible.

Home occupations are those where the entrepreneur works from home, and can, within certain limitations, be almost any type of business. Some develop as people perform services elsewhere, but use part of their home as an office. Many tend to be service or direct marketing/sales

oriented, and an increasing number are Internet-based businesses. Starting up a new business from home offers cost savings, and may increase the potential for success.

The economic impact of a home-based business is like that of any other successful business operation, even if on a smaller scale. Sales of products and services generate income from which supplies, equipment, and labor are purchased and increased disposable income becomes available to spend in the Township. Since owners of home occupations work in the Township, it is likely that more purchases will also be made locally, which benefits other area businesses.

Recent updates to the “home occupation” provisions of the Township’s Zoning Ordinance have made it easier to operate a variety of small-scale home occupations in residential zoning districts. The Township will continue to permit limited business activities that do not adversely impact the residential character of the property or neighborhood.

The Township will also encourage owners of highly successful and growing home occupations to relocate their operations to nearby office and commercial zoning districts when they exceed zoning limitations in the residential districts.

GREENSPACE PLAN

An important goal of the Superior Township Master Plan is to establish a linked greenspace system in Superior Township. The elements of this system and implementation approaches will be specified in a separate Greenspace Plan. A greenspace system would include:

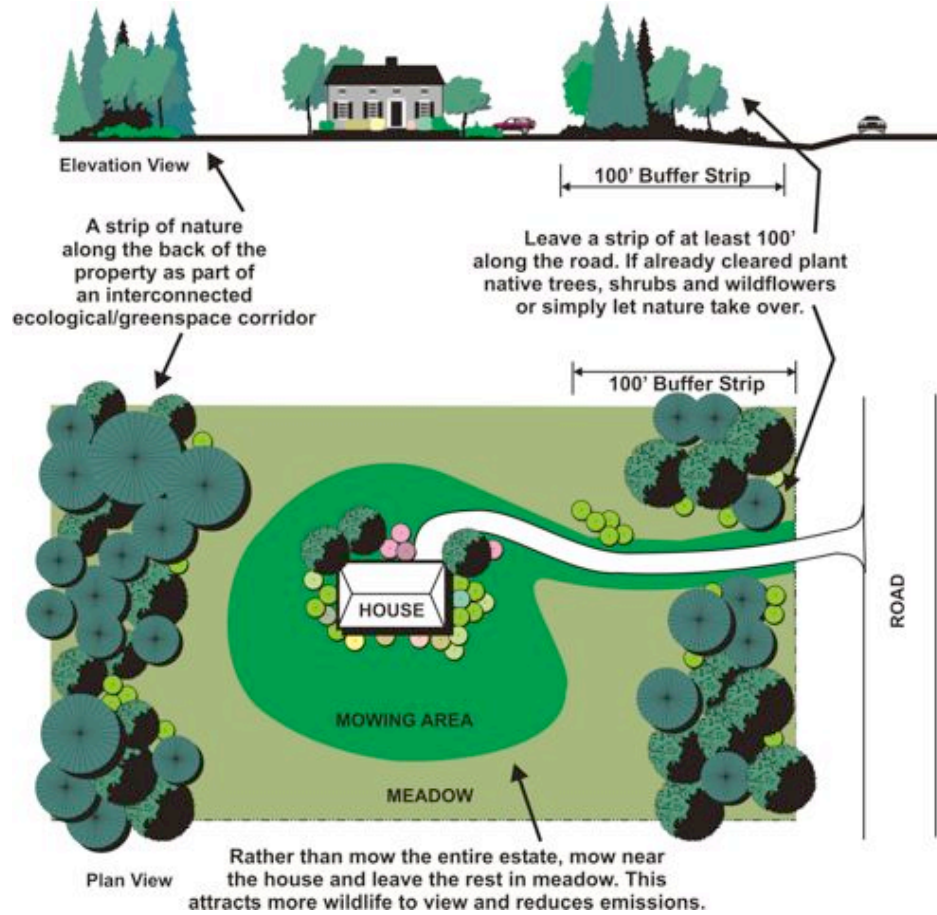
- Interconnected open space that serves as ecological corridors to help protect and foster animal and plant wildlife and as a community amenity that preserves rural character. Ecological corridors would have no public access except for portions of public parks and preserves dedicated for such use.
- Recreational greenway trails to encourage walking and bike riding for exercise, to experience the outdoors, and as an alternative to automobile travel within the Township and surrounding communities. Residents could travel to parks, schools, and other places of interest without needing to use the car. Greenway trails would provide access from all other sub-areas to parks and other nature preserves intended to be open to the public.
- Protected rural character along rural roads with a special focus on vegetated buffers and trees lining most roads.

Establishment of a greenspace system usually requires volunteer action by property owners to manage select portions of their properties as open space, acquisition of easements or property from willing sellers, and the dedication of appropriate portions of new developments to open space. One way landowners can voluntarily contribute to the greenspace system and to rural character in general is to retain open space on their properties.

A common approach is illustrated in Figure 6-1.

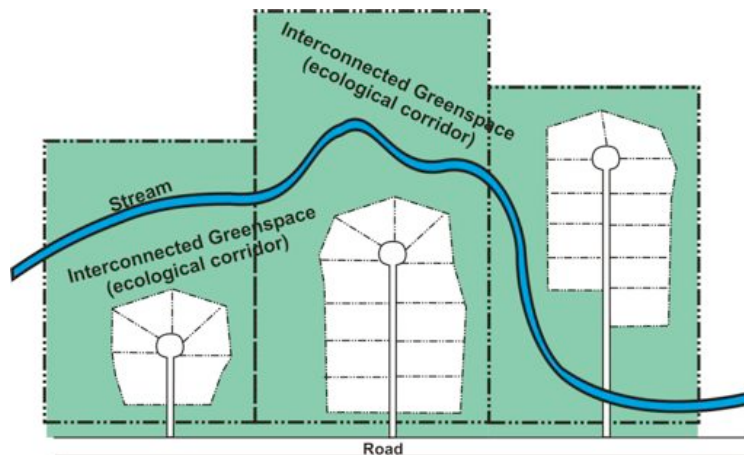
As very large parcels are developed for residential subdivisions, dedicated open space should be located along the roads and in areas of the parcel that will connect to open space on adjacent parcels. (See Figure 6-2.) Site plan review standards in the Zoning Ordinance can aid in coordinating this process but a Greenspace Plan is needed to document open space assets that should be included in interconnected open space and to provide direction to developers.

Figure 6-1 How Large Lot Landowners Can Help Protect Open Space



Source: Adapted from the Benzie County Open Space and Natural Resources Protection Plan.

Figure 6-2 Interconnected Greenspace (ecological corridors) Preserved on Three Separate Residential Developments



Source: Adapted from the Benzie County Open Space and Natural Resources Protection Plan

Developing an integrated greenspace system will require preparing a Greenspace Plan and then implementing it. The Greenspace Plan will take some time to prepare. It should be prepared by a committee made up of members of the Township Planning Commission, Township Parks and Recreation Commission, and Township Board. The public should be active participants in its preparation.

In general, the desirable elements of an interconnected open space system include floodplains, wetlands, woodlands, streams, drains, and steep slopes. These are areas that should be protected from intensive development, and connecting them with undeveloped corridors will be important in preserving the desired character in Superior Township as it develops in the future. Those elements are depicted on Map 6-5. Parks and recreation sites and other protected areas that would be desirable to include in the greenspace system or would be attractive places for greenway trails to reach are also depicted on Map 6-5.

Map 6-5 contains the foundation for a Greenspace Plan for Superior Township, but much work remains to be done before it can be finalized as a separate supporting plan to this Master Plan. First, greenway trail routes will need to be identified. Some of these should be routed cross-country while others will need to be placed in road rights-of-way with support of the appropriate road authorities. Trails will need to be designated for use by intended users which will vary depending on the trail. For example, horses will likely only be permitted on some trails, whereas pedestrians and bikes will likely be allowed on all trails.

Second, much of the Greenspace Plan will consist of interconnected natural areas without public trails. It often takes time to identify the key existing natural wildlife corridors, and even more effort to solicit participation from the private landowners for long-term preservation of such natural wildlife corridors.

Third, much of the land area in white, north of Geddes Road, is presently in agricultural use. Those farms that are ultimately permanently protected through a PDR, TDR, conservation easement, or donation will be a part of the adopted Greenspace Plan.

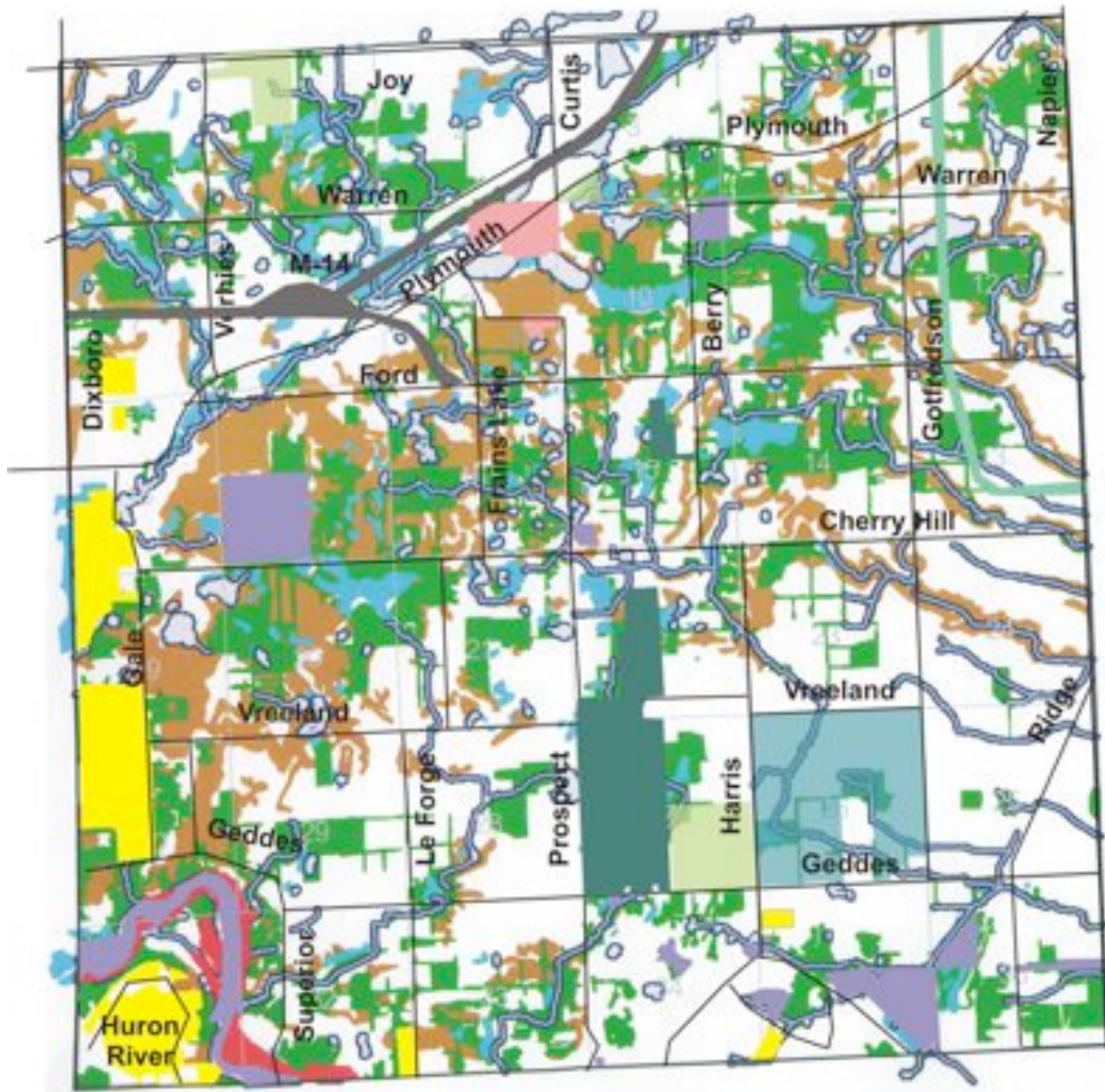
Implementation elements of the Greenspace Plan are likely to include:

- The identification of priority open spaces and recreational greenways for acquisition and coordination with developers.
- Methods for acquiring ownership or purchase of easements in open space and recreation property by purchase and donation. The Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy and the Superior Land Conservancy have already begun to do this. Their efforts should be encouraged and coordinated. Adoption of a millage to help fund

- Township acquisition should be considered. Informational assistance should be provided to landowners regarding the benefits and tools for land preservation.
- In new development projects, open space and recreational space should be provided and protected, consistent with the Greenspace Plan and coordinated between adjoining properties to make useful links.
 - Encouraging more clustered residential development.
 - A major tree planting initiative along roads in the Township.
 - Vigilant protection of the character of designated natural beauty roads.
 - Protection of rural character along roads in the Township.
 - The construction of a Township trail system linked to the sidewalk system in the urban parts of the Township.
 - Provision of greenway trail connections between the Township and adjoining jurisdictions.

A greenspace system can take decades to implement, but the longer preparation of a Greenspace Plan is delayed, the more difficult it will become. Each new development presents new opportunities and potentially new threats to implementation of a Greenspace Plan. Thus, the initiative to create a Greenspace Plan in Superior Township should begin as soon as this Plan update is adopted.

Map 6-5 Elements to Consider in Developing a Greenspace Plan



- | | |
|---|---|
|  Floodplain |  Township Recreation Facility or Property |
|  100' Buffer of Surface Water |  County Recreation Facility |
|  Wetlands |  Hospital/School/University Facility or Property |
|  Woodlands |  Development Rights Purchased in State PDR Program |
|  Erodeble Soils and Steep Slopes 12 % and over |  Protected under State PA 116 Program |
| |  Utility Easement |



Chapter 7 ZONING PLAN

Introduction

Zoning is the division of a community into districts 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 the Superior Charter Township 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.”

The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act requires a zoning plan be prepared as the basis for the zoning ordinance. It must be based on an inventory of conditions pertinent to zoning in the township and the purposes for which zoning may be adopted. The zoning plan identifies the zoning districts and their purposes, as well as the basic standards proposed to control the height, area, bulk, location, and use of buildings and premises in the Township.

These matters are regulated by the specific terms in the Zoning Ordinance.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE MASTER PLAN

This Master Plan sets forth the goals, objectives, and policies for future growth and development in the Township. It includes specific strategies for managing growth and change in land uses and infrastructure in the Township, and will be periodically reviewed and updated at least once each five (5) years.

This Chapter is the Zoning Plan, which, along with the rest of the relevant parts of this Plan, is intended to guide the implementation of and future changes to the Township Zoning Ordinance.

ZONING DISTRICTS

Table 7-1 lists the nineteen (19) proposed zoning districts in the Township Zoning Ordinance:

Table 7-1 – Zoning Districts

Type of District	Zoning District Name	Symbol
Rural	Recreation-Conservation District	R-C
	Agricultural District	A-1
	Agricultural District	A-2
Rural Residential	Single-Family Residential District	R-1
	Single-Family Residential District	R-2
Urban Residential	Single-Family Residential District	R-3
	Single-Family Residential District	R-4
	Manufactured Housing Park District	R-6
	Multiple-Family Residential District	R-7
Business	Neighborhood Commercial District	C-1
	General Commercial District	C-2
	Office District	O-1
Other	Public/Semi-Public Services District	PSP
Special	Planned Community District	PC
	Neighborhood Shopping Center District	NSC
	Village Center District	VC
	Medical Services District	MS
	Planned Manufacturing District	PM
	Open Space Preservation Overlay District	OSP

Following are descriptions and general purposes of the six (6) general categories within which the 19 zoning districts in the Superior Charter Township Zoning Ordinance are organized. The specific purposes of each district are described in Article 2 (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. Gravel roads serve most of the land in these districts, and there are no plans to pave these roads. The land zoned within these districts generally conforms to the area designated as “agricultural lands, conservation or rural residential” or “rural residential” on Map 6-4, Future Land Use.

Rural Residential Districts

The principal purpose of the Rural Residential District designation is to accommodate the large demand for land suited for large-lot single-family use served by septic systems and private wells. Most of this land was formerly farmed, and some of it still is in agriculture, which is a permitted use. Dwellings are permitted on individual lots ranging in density from one dwelling unit per two (2) acres to one (1) dwelling unit per acre. The land zoned within these districts generally conforms to the area designated as “agricultural lands, conservation or rural residential” or “rural residential” on Map 6-4, Future Land Use.

Urban Residential Districts

The principal purpose of the Urban Residential District designation is to provide for a range of residential dwelling types at urban densities within individual zones tailored for that specific use. Densities range from two (2) to eight (8) dwelling units per acre. The bulk of land zoned into one of these districts is located in the designated Urban Service Area south of Geddes Road, but there are some historic small lot subdivisions in the Hamlet of Dixboro that are also in these districts.

Business Districts

The principal purpose of the Business District designation is to provide opportunities for regulated commercial or office activities primarily serving a local market. There are few properties zoned into these zoning classifications and they are widely scattered throughout the Township. Most represent locations where commercial activity has been in place for many decades.

Other Districts

The principal purpose of the Other Districts designation is to include all zoning districts that do not fall under one of the other “Types of Districts” in Table 7-1.

Special Districts

The following zoning districts are designation as “special districts” in the Zoning Ordinance:

- Planned Community District (PC)
- Neighborhood Shopping Center District (NSC)
- Village Center District (VC)
- Medical Services District (MS)
- Planned Manufacturing District (PM)
- Open Space Preservation Overlay District (OSP)

These six (6) special districts use the planned unit development (PUD) authority authorized by the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (P.A. 110 of 2006, as amended). This option provides considerable flexibility to the land developer to provide opportunities for development designs that respect both the natural environment and efficiency in the provision of infrastructure and public facilities, and provide the Township with flexibility to ensure mitigation of negative impacts on adjoining properties.

A wide range of densities and lot sizes are provided, depending on the district and specific ordinance provisions. Most new development proposals in the Township are encouraged to use one of these special districts because of the design flexibility provided to the developer and the opportunity for the Township to help fashion a design that is compatible with adjoining properties.

DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS

Table 7-2 lists the proposed dimensional standards table for each district of the Zoning Ordinance. The supplemental regulations and standards are listed in the Zoning Ordinance.

Table 7-2 – Dimensional Standards

Dimensional Standards		Districts														Additional Standards					
		Rural			Rural Residential		Urban Residential			Business			Other	Special							
		R-C	A-1	A-2	R-1	R-2	R-3	R-4	R-6	R-7	C-1	C-2	O-1	PSP	PC		NSC	VC	MS	PM	OSP
Maximum Building Height	Feet	35	40	40	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	30	35		35	Section 3.201	
	Stories	2.5	3.0	3.0	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.0	2.5		3.0		
Lot Standards	Minimum Width (feet)	225	225	225	200	150	100	60		125	150	150	100	150		250	100		150	Section 3.202	
	Minimum Depth (feet)						150	120													
Minimum Area (acres or square-feet)		5.0 acres	5.0 acres	2.0 acres	2.0 acres	1.0 acre	21,780	7,200		21,780	10,500	20,000	20,000	20,000		3.0 acres	20,000		2.0 acres		
Yard/Setback Standards (feet)	Front Yard	Minimum	60	75	75	60	50	35	25		35	20	35	20	20		50	20		50	Section 3.203
		Maximum																35			
	Minimum Side Yard	One Side Yard	30	30	30	20	15	10	6		15	15	20	10	20		25	10		10	
		Total of Two	60	60	60	60	50	25	16		35	30	40	20	40		50	20		20	
Minimum Rear Yard		50	50	50	50	50	50	35		35	35	35	35	35		25	35		35		
Maximum Ground Floor Coverage (GFC)		5%	5%	5%	10%	15%	20%	25%		20%	20%	25%	25%	25%		20%	25%		20%	Section 3.203E	
Maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR)		0.05	0.05	0.05	0.10	0.15	0.25	0.40		0.30	0.30	0.50	0.50	0.50		0.20	0.50		0.40	Section 3.203E	
Maximum Net Dwelling Unit Density (units per acre)		0.2	0.2	0.5	0.5	1.0	2.0	4.0		8.0										Section 3.204	

RECOMMENDED ZONING ORDINANCE CHANGES

Because this Master Plan incorporates new policies on land uses, infrastructure improvements, and other measures related to further improving quality of life in the Township, there are changes to the Zoning Ordinance that should be made to make it fully consistent with this Plan. In other words, as the principal tool for implementing this Plan, policy of the Plan should be reflected in the zoning requirements.

Following is a list of recommended changes to the regulations and standards of the Zoning Ordinance in accordance with the policies of this Master Plan. These changes should be pursued as the need or opportunity presents itself, but before the Township initiates action to implement new Plan policies. In some cases, fuller public discussion of proposed zoning amendments on any of the elements listed below will result in the need to refine some of the language in this Plan. When that occurs, this Plan should be amended before the zoning amendments are adopted.

Energy and Environment:

1. Consider adding provisions to allow siting of small-scale solar energy facilities, both roof-mounted and freestanding.
2. Add incentives for inclusion of LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified buildings and facilities.

Site Design and Development:

3. Add standards to the site plan review section to ensure future residential development includes site designs that:
 - Employ low impact development techniques for stormwater management;
 - Minimize impacts on wildlife habitat and the natural links that facilitate movement of wildlife; and
 - Incorporate LEED-ND (LEED for Neighborhood Development) design solutions.
4. Add Zoning Ordinance provisions that would create incentives to encourage preservation and adaptive re-use of historic resources on sites where additional development is proposed.

5. Add access management standards to the Zoning Ordinance consistent with Washtenaw County Road Commission standards and the MDOT Access Management Guidebook.
6. Limit development on gravel roads to levels below the capacity of the road, unless the developer will contribute to paving the road and paving is otherwise warranted and in accordance with the Zoning Ordinance.
7. Add provisions requiring developments within the Urban Service Area to accommodate existing or future public bus transit service.
8. Establish standards for the design and construction of all new sidewalks and trails, and require every new development to provide sidewalks or approved trails that link to abutting properties.
9. Consider revising language to clarify that urban residential development subject to site plan review shall provide a minimum amount of dedicated active or passive recreation land and/or facilities for use by residents.

Land Use:

10. Consider amending the commercial zoning districts to allow for integration of a “mixed-use” development of commercial, office, and residential land uses where the proposed plan provides the necessary amenities to create a viable pedestrian environment while minimizing conflicts between land uses.
11. Consider expanding the accessory dwelling provisions to allow an integrated accessory dwelling unit as part of a single-family home, subject to specific conditions and limitations.
12. Require all public school buildings and facilities, as well as all other public buildings and facilities, to be subject to the Township Zoning Ordinance and site plan review if statutory or case law changes to permit such regulation.

Other:

13. Revise lot frontage requirements to permit limited use of shared driveways, and to prevent the creation of corner lots at the end of new private drives.
14. Add an exception process for the Zoning Board of Appeals to allow for location of accessory structures in front yards outside of the

- Urban Service Area, where the dwelling is set far back from the road.
15. Revise the temporary sales and display provisions to allow for administrative approval of such uses by the Zoning Inspector.
 16. Revise the sign requirements for the Medical Services (MS) District to allow for administrative approval of new, non building-mounted signage by the Zoning Inspector, where the proposed sign is in full compliance with the area, height, illumination, setback, and other applicable sign standards.

EXTENSIONS OF DEVELOPMENT APPROVAL

Development plan approval, including Special District Area Plan approval (Article 7) and preliminary/final site plan approval (Article 10), is required by the Zoning Ordinance. The purpose of the development review process is to verify that proposed developments are consistent with this Plan, and in compliance with the standards of the Zoning Ordinance and other applicable regulations. In recognition that site conditions and applicable standards can change over time, such approvals are limited to specific periods of time ranging from 365 calendar days to three (3) years (see Sections 7.107 and 10.08).

Sections 7.107 and 10.08 currently authorize the Planning Commission to grant an extension of development plan approval subject to the following:

1. **Written request by the applicant.**

2. **Showing of good cause by the applicant.** The Planning Commission shall consider the following factors in determining whether “good cause” exists to grant an extension of development plan approval:
 - The request shall not be based solely on macro-economic conditions generally affecting the state, region of the country, or the country as a whole.

 - The applicant has demonstrated that unforeseen local economic factors or economic conditions specific to the business or development have temporarily delayed the development project; and that such factors or conditions can be mitigated or resolved within the requested extension period.

 - The applicant has demonstrated that unforeseen delays in securing necessary infrastructure, road improvements, or outside agency approvals have temporarily delayed the development project; and that such delays can be resolved within the requested extension period.

 - The applicant has demonstrated that other unforeseen events, conditions, factors, or circumstances justify the extension.

- The Township’s interests are not adversely affected by the requested extension of approval.
- Documentation has been provided showing that all property taxes and required development review fees and escrow deposits associated with the project have been paid.
- Except where the Planning Commission finds that extraordinary events, conditions, factors, or circumstances warrant, an approved development plan shall not receive more than one (1) extension of approval.

3. **Confirmation that site conditions have not changed in a way that would affect the character, design or use of the site.** The Planning Commission shall consider the following factors in determining whether a change in site conditions would adversely affect an approved development plan:

- A change in the capacity of public sanitary sewer facilities, private community wastewater treatment system (PWS), or individual on-site septic system that would restrict the use or development of the site.
- A change in the capacity of public water facilities or a private well to provide potable water services that would restrict the use or development of the site.
- A change in road configuration, alignment, or access management standards that that would restrict or alter vehicular or pedestrian access to the site.
- A change in drainage patterns, extent of wetlands, or condition of other natural features on the site that would require alterations to the approved site plan to conform to the requirements of Township ordinances or state or federal environmental regulations.
- A reduction in the estimated capacity of soils, on- or off-site stormwater management facilities, or other elements of the site to support the proposed development, as determined by the Township Engineer.
- A change in the character, development or use of adjoining properties or road rights-of-way that would require

alterations to the approved site plan to comply with Zoning Ordinance requirements.

4. **Confirmation that the approved development plan remains in conformance with all applicable Zoning Ordinance provisions.**

REZONING TO IMPLEMENT THE MASTER PLAN

The land use classifications on the Future Land Use Map provide the basis for evaluating future rezoning requests. Zoning actions that are consistent with the Future Land Use Map usually receive deferential and favorable judicial review if challenged. The Master Plan should be the principal source of information in the investigation of all rezoning requests.

The Planning Commission should conduct a periodic appraisal of the Township Zoning Ordinance and Official Zoning Map with the assistance of the Township Planner. The review should ensure that environmental, land use, circulation, and all other elements of this Plan are adequately reflected in the ordinance text and map, and that no changes to the Plan or ordinance are necessary.

PHASING OF ZONING MAP CHANGES

Although Map 6-4 (Future Land Use) is not a zoning map, it will be used as a guide to future changes to the Township’s Official Zoning Map. A key to successful Plan implementation is the timing of such rezonings, as initiated by the Planning Commission or by petitioners.

When considering whether a rezoning request is consistent with this Master Plan, the Planning Commission and Township Board should keep in mind that this Plan is based upon a ten (10) to twenty (20) year planning period. While the Plan may identify certain Township lands for more intensive development, the time for such development (within the planning period) may not yet have arrived. More intensive or “urban” land uses should be phased-in over a period of time consistent with infrastructure and land capacity and the policies of this Plan.

A crucial component in implementing this Plan will be seen in rezoning applications subsequent to the adoption of the Plan. In addition to the provisions of Section 18.06 (Findings of Fact Required) of the Zoning Ordinance, the Planning Commission shall consider the following in making its findings and recommendations on proposed amendments to the Official Zoning Map:

1. **Evaluation of existing zoning and development pattern.**
Review the existing zoning and set of principal permitted and conditional land uses for compatibility with Master Plan policies, the surrounding development pattern, and site characteristics.

Determine whether there are conditions or circumstances that warrant a change or reasonably prevent the site from being developed or used as zoned. Consider whether the boundaries and size of the proposed district are compatible with the surrounding area and the scale of future development on the site.

- The requested rezoning should not create an isolated or incompatible zone in the area.
- Development within the designated Urban Service Area should occur as a natural extension of existing neighborhoods.

2. **The apparent demand for the types of uses permitted in the district(s).** Consider the apparent demand for the types of uses permitted in the district(s) in relation to the amount of land currently zoned and available in the Township and surrounding communities to accommodate the demand.

- Consider whether there is a demonstrated market demand for more land to be classified in the requested district; and if so, whether this is the most appropriate location.
- Consider the availability of land already planned and/or zoned for the types of land uses and intensity of development possible under the proposed zoning district.
- Consider the amount of land in the Township or adjoining jurisdictions that is already prepared and/or ready for development consistent with the proposed zoning district’s intent and list of permitted land uses. For rezoning requests to Urban Residential Districts, this evaluation should include review of the number of vacant residential lots ready for residential development in the designated Urban Service Area.

3. **Availability of public services and infrastructure to serve all of the potential land uses.** Rezoning of undeveloped land to a more intensive zoning district should only take place in conjunction with the availability of public services and infrastructure to serve all of the potential land uses in the proposed district.

- Capacity of available utilities and public services to accommodate the uses permitted in the district without compromising the health, safety, and welfare of Township

residents or burdening public entities or the Township with unplanned capital improvement or operational costs.

- Capacity of the existing road system to safely and efficiently accommodate the expected traffic generated by uses permitted in the zoning district.
- Capacity of existing police, fire, ambulance, schools, and other public services to serve all potential land uses on the site.
- Rezoning of undeveloped land outside of the designated Urban Service Area should only take place consistent with the policies of this Plan and after determination by the Township that the change in tax base or overall benefit coming to the community from potential land uses on the site would more than offset anticipated costs to the Township and other public entities for providing necessary public services.

4. **Compatibility with the surrounding area.** Evaluate the proposed district and existing zoning of surrounding properties in terms of all uses permitted and the district intent. Determine the adjacent uses and their general character. Consider the surrounding vicinity on both sides of the road and all sides of the site. Finally, determine whether development that could occur on the subject site is compatible with the surrounding character in terms of traffic, noise, scale, and types of uses in comparison to current activities in the area. Isolated and abrupt changes in land uses and densities not consistent with Master Plan objectives and policies are considered spot zoning and are not recommended planning and zoning practice.

5. **Consistency with Master Plan future land use recommendations.** Refer to Chapter 6 (Growth Management Strategies) of this Plan and determine whether the intent and all of the allowable uses within the requested zoning district are compatible with the future land use designation for the site.

- **Rezoning inconsistent with this Plan.** A rezoning inconsistent with this Master Plan should only be considered where specific findings are made that demonstrate conditions have changed significantly since the Plan was prepared, and/or new information supports a change. In

such cases, the Township may first consider an amendment to the Plan.

- **Phasing in of new development.** The future land use recommendations of this Master Plan are based upon a ten (10) to twenty (20) year timeframe. Consider whether the timing of the proposed rezoning is appropriate, given trends in the area, infrastructure capacity, and other factors.
- **Consistency with the Township’s policies on natural features.** Compatibility of all the potential uses allowed in the proposed zoning district(s) with the site’s physical, geological, hydrological, and other environmental features. If the subject site possesses significant natural features, ensure that the types of uses and the intent of the district will enable proper preservation of these areas in accordance with Master Plan policies and Zoning Ordinance requirements.

MORE ZONING TOOLS FOR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Following is a list of 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 and changes to existing sites are consistent with the goals and objectives of this Plan.

Planned Community Special District

The Planned Community (PC) District involves the use of special zoning requirements and review procedures that provide design and regulatory flexibility, so as to encourage innovation in land use planning and design. PC projects should achieve a higher quality of development than might otherwise be possible. Use of the PC option for large-scale residential developments and mixed-use projects is recommended to achieve development in accordance with the goals and objectives of this Plan.

Open Space Overlay Special District

The Open Space Overlay (OSP) District is intended to identify rural lands in the Township that have been permanently conserved or protected by deed restrictions, conservation easements or other methods, and to provide an additional layer of protection for such lands in accordance with the goals and objectives of this Plan.

Other Special Districts

The Planned Manufacturing (PM), Medical Services (MS), Village Center (VC), and Neighborhood Shopping Center (NSC) Districts involves the use of special zoning requirements and review procedures that provide design and regulatory flexibility for development consistent with the desired character of specific sub-areas of the Township, in accordance with the goals and objectives of this Plan.

Performance Standards

Rather than simply regulate development on the basis of dimensional standards, some communities are establishing performance standards to regulate development based on the permissible effects or impacts of a proposed use. Performance standards should be used to supplement conventional zoning standards for the purposes of regulating noise, dust, vibration, odor, light, glare and heat, safety hazards, and environmental impacts, such as air and water pollution. The complexity of the performance standards should be based in part on the capacity of Township officials to administer and enforce the standards. Performance standards can be particularly useful in achieving environmental and resource protection goals.

Incentive Zoning

Incentive zoning allows a developer to exceed the dimensional limitations in the Zoning Ordinance if the developer agrees to fulfill conditions specified in the Ordinance. Incentive zoning should be considered to promote innovative land planning techniques identified in the Plan. For example, a possible increase in density can be used as an incentive for developments that implement rural open space zoning standards.

Overlay Zoning

Overlay zoning allows the Township to impose a new set of regulations on a special area within an existing zoning district. In an area where an overlay zoning is established, the property is placed simultaneously in the two zones, and the property may be developed only under the applicable conditions and requirements of both zones. Thus, the overlay district regulations supplement the regulations of the underlying zoning district. Overlay zoning has been used in other communities to address special conditions and features, such as historic areas, wetlands, and

other environmentally sensitive areas, without disrupting the underlying zoning plan.

Site Design Standards

Beyond the standard regulations to implement the future land use plan, the ordinances can be revised to allow for more flexibility and creativity in design. Innovative site design involves the use of special zoning standards and review procedures that provide design and regulatory flexibility, so as to encourage innovation in land use planning and design. High quality developments that help to preserve and maintain the existing agricultural character in the Township can be implemented only if the regulations and standards are adopted which promote the most innovative and creative design techniques.

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 8 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

To be effective, this Plan must be used as part of daily decisionmaking in the Township. Policies in the Master Plan are implemented, for the most part, by day-to-day administrative actions of the Township officials and staff, decisions made by the Planning Commission, and the actions of the Board of Trustees. A government agency might undertake a major project called for in the plan, such as construction of a new bridge or acquisition of a tract of land for public use, but these are infrequent events and are not the primary means of policy implementation.

Although the Township may have responsibility to prepare and maintain this Plan, it is impossible for one unit of government to implement all elements of a plan alone. Plan implementation necessitates coordination with the various governmental entities with some jurisdiction in the Township. For this reason, the Superior Charter Township Master Plan should be viewed both as a communication tool and as a reference document for policy implementation.

CONTINUING COMMITMENT

As important a benchmark as this updated Master Plan represents, the initiatives proposed in this Plan will not implement themselves. It will take continued support and commitment for many years. The central ingredients to successful Plan implementation will be:

- Commitment by the Planning Commission, the Board of Trustees, and staff of the Township; and
- A citizenry better educated on the vision in this Plan.

Information about desired residential development patterns, the fiscal and land use constraints of extending urban services, farming methods, property rights, open space preservation, natural resource protection, and new tools to sustain the quality of life in Superior Township needs to reach citizens or they may not understand why and how local decision-making is directed to implementing this Plan.

FOCUSING ON PRIORITIES

As the body principally responsible for preparing and maintaining a land use plan for a community, but one which also has substantial responsibilities in review of proposed developments for zoning compliance, it is easy for a Planning Commission to become distracted with ongoing tasks or ad hoc, controversial issues. Still, the Commission needs to prioritize its tasks relative to implementation of this Plan. Time needs to be set aside for high priority items. These include the preparation of an annual report and work program for the next year, drafting updates to the Zoning Ordinance, assisting with the preparation of a capital improvement program, and the five-year Plan update. These are discussed below.

ANNUAL TASKS

An annual report on all activities undertaken by the Planning Commission with a special focus on actions taken to implement the Plan should continue to be made to the Board of Trustees. A proposed work program that identifies priorities and projected expenses for the next year should also be prepared and submitted in time to be included in the annual budget process. The Planning Commission should also assist the Supervisor and Board with the preparation and annual updating of a Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

TOP PRIORITIES

The Planning Commission cannot be expected to implement all of the measures listed Chapter 5 (Vision, Goals, Objectives, and Policies), Chapter 6 (Growth Management Strategy) and Chapter 7 (Zoning Plan) alone. Many of these can only be accomplished with support from the Township Board and with help from other agencies or groups. It is essential that discussions begin with each of these entities so that they understand the goals, find agreeable common ground where there are differences, and obtain a commitment to a common action.

Prioritization Guidelines

One approach to establishing priorities is to use the following guidelines:

- Establish as a high priority those actions that are the precursor to other actions or initiatives. One example is the action to develop a Greenspace Plan. This needs to happen before open space connections can be established and greenway trail links implemented.

- Those actions that are assigned to a particular group elsewhere in this Plan are a high priority.
- A lower priority may be those actions that are not assigned to a group or broadly identify the "Township" as the responsible party.
- If an action does not list a responsible party, it remains a lower priority until a group or agency steps forward.

Key Priorities for Plan Implementation

The following activities should be the key priorities of the Planning Commission for the next five years:

- Educate all citizens about the vision, goals, objectives, and policies of the updated Master Plan and provide technical assistance in the integration of these elements into property owner development and redevelopment efforts.
- Update the Township Zoning Ordinance to be consistent with this Plan as outlined in Chapter 7 (Zoning Plan).
- Review other land development regulations in the Township (such as land division and subdivision regulations) and update as necessary to be consistent with this Plan.
- A Township Greenspace Plan should be developed in conjunction with the Township Board and Park and Recreation Commission. This Plan would prioritize lands for open space preservation and greenway trails, identify and implement tools for acquisition of title or development rights from willing sellers, and set up funding mechanisms for implementation.
- Prepare additional sub-area plans to provide greater detail to desired development in each sub-area.
- Use this Plan in the analysis and review of proposed rezonings, zoning text amendments, site plans, and new or amended master plans of adjoining jurisdictions submitted to the Township for statutory review and comment.
- Exercise the inter-jurisdictional review authority of draft master plans and plan amendments in ways to improve regional decisionmaking, by guiding decisions toward integrated and coordinated solutions based on the core policies in this Plan.
- Monitor neighboring jurisdiction and County agency decisions, and periodically inform other local governments and the County Board of Commissioners on the status of efforts to implement the Superior Charter Township Master Plan.
- Join efforts with others outside the Township to pressure the state legislature to modernize state laws to provide new and expanded tools to manage growth and preserve open space.

- Design guidelines should be developed and promoted by the Planning Commission that illustrate a preferred development approach that protects scenic quality, open space, water quality, and sensitive environments on private residential, commercial, public and institutional properties.
- Assist with preparation of an annual capital improvements program to guide the location of future public facilities consistent with this Plan.
- At least once each five years, the Master Plan should be thoroughly reviewed and updated by the Planning Commission with support from the Township Board.

Additional Plan Implementation Tools

The following is a summary of additional Plan implementation tools available to the Township:

SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

The policies of this Master Plan can be implemented in part through careful review of proposed subdivision plat and site condominium development projects:

Subdividing, or platting, is a more complex method of land division and is regulated by the Land Division Act and any Township subdivision regulations. This method of subdividing involves technical review by the Township Planner and Township Engineer, 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 Township's review should be coordinated with those of county and state agencies. Subdivision review should be used as a means for the Township to ensure that proper infrastructure planning and construction occur without public expense and that natural features are protected.

The site condominium process is an alternative to the subdivision plat, 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.

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 as efficiently as possible, and most importantly - 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 (Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended), 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 1 or more other local units of government owns or operates a water supply or sewage disposal system." For this reason, Superior Charter Township is required to prepare a CIP.

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. A CIP helps to ensure that new public facilities and infrastructure improvements meet Master Plan goals and objectives; spreads large capital expenses over time and break large projects into phases; and brings plan recommendations for public facilities to reality.

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.

Also, the process of adopting and updating a CIP minimizes the potential for poorly planned or unnecessary public improvements and expenditures, and increases opportunities for public input on and public support for proposed capital improvements. Not every public project is a good idea, even if it seemed that way at first glance:

- 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. This usually becomes apparent during the CIP process.
- 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 Township Planner and Township Engineer will work with Township officials and staff to identify the most appropriate sources of grants and other revenues to supplement local funds.

The following are some examples of potential financing tools available to the Township:

Dedicated Millage

Special millages can be used to generate revenues for a specific purpose, such as a land or development rights acquisition or fund.

Special Assessments

Special assessments are compulsory contributions collected from the owners of property benefited by specific public improvements (paving, drainage improvements, streetlighting, utilities, etc.) to defray the costs of such improvements. Special assessments are 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.

MDNR Recreation Grant Programs

Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) and the Clean Michigan Initiative (CMI) grants may be available for park development and land acquisition.

PLAN MONITORING PROGRAM

To be effective, the planning process must be continuous, and must be part of the day-to-day decisions that affect the physical character of the Township. The Master Plan is a representation of the Township's policies for the future. If the Master Plan is to perform its proper function, it must be reviewed regularly and updated as conditions warrant.

The Master Plan must be evaluated regularly by the Planning Commission to ensure that Township policies are consistent with the objectives of the Master Plan. A comprehensive review of the Plan is required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act at intervals no longer than five (5) years. To better ensure that the Plan is kept current, periodic reviews are recommended on an annual or biennial basis.

Benefits of a Monitoring Program

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

1. The Master Plan will be kept up-to-date.
2. Regular review of the Plan by Township officials has the potential over time to broaden the area of community agreement on basic development policies. The process invites reconsideration of alternatives to major decisions and encourages exploration of new issues and secondary questions.
3. Regular review of the Master Plan will keep knowledge of the plan's policies and recommendations current in the minds of Township officials.
4. Along with the Master Plan's use in day-to-day decision-making, a regular review process will ensure that the Plan is a living document, and that its policies will not be frozen in time.
5. A regular monitoring program will show the extent to which the Township is actually implementing the policies of the Master Plan;

and will help to determine whether the Plan’s policies are still desirable and appropriate in light of changing circumstances.

Description of the Program

The basis of the maintenance program will consist of an annual or biennial review by the Planning Commission. Such review might result in a change 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, along with recommendations for action, if needed. The following should be among the elements studied by the Commission:

1. Development proposals approved or denied, rezoning petitions, site plans, and subdivision plats.
2. Land use regulations, and Zoning Ordinance and subdivision ordinance amendments made or expected to be needed in the future.
3. Building permits issued for new construction by land use category, and estimates of the current Township population.
4. State equalized evaluation by the assessor’s categories; track changes in agricultural and development classifications.
5. Completed and planned transportation improvements.
6. Land divisions, other than in approved subdivision plats and condominium developments.□
7. Major zoning and land use or development changes in adjoining townships, and those that are likely to occur in the coming year.
8. Federal, state, and county policy changes that affect the Township, and that are likely to occur in the coming year.
9. Major land use-related decisions of the Township Board and Zoning Board of Appeals, recent changes in state land use legislation, and precedent-setting planning and development-related court decisions.
10. Other items of information, as determined by the Planning Commission and Township Board.

PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT

The necessity of citizen participation and understanding of the planning process and the 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 adoption of the Plan and the continued planning process.

Public education can be achieved through an informational program involving talks by the Township Planning Consultant and other experts, preparation of newspaper articles, 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.

TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

A planning tool growing in popularity for the preservation of natural features is “transfer of development rights” (TDR). In Michigan, this can be accomplished through use of the Planned Unit Development (PUD) process and the preservation of “off-site” open space within the areas of the Township designated on Map 3-2 as lands designated for agricultural preservation as part of a development project with the Township’s designated Urban Service Area.

Using TDR, a developer may, with Township agreement, develop a parcel at a higher density than zoned if they purchased the development rights from an owner of land designated for agricultural preservation on Map 3-2. An appropriate plan would set a cap on the density allowed, ensuring a landowner does not purchase a large amount of development rights and attempt to create a development not appropriate for the community.

There are many benefits related to the transfer of development rights:

- The agricultural landowner obtains the highest and best use of their land.
- The developer obtains the benefits of developing more residential units than would otherwise be permitted.

- The Township permanently preserves the agricultural and natural features of the Township, and future residential development in the community occurs in the areas that are prepared for higher density development.

PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

A local or county “purchase of development rights (PDR) ordinance” can be a useful tool to implement Master Plan policies associated with preservation of agricultural land and the rural economy. The intent is to preserve farmland by the public purchase of a landowner’s development rights in exchange for an agricultural conservation easement that permanently restricts development.

LAND ACQUISITION

Land acquisition is an important supplement to land use regulations as a means of managing growth and protecting natural resources. Land acquisition can be used to control the use of a specific acquired parcel, or it can be used to influence the general growth of the Township. Local land acquisition programs are generally funded either by local property taxes (such as a dedicated millage or general fund revenues) or by grant programs.

There are several approaches to acquiring interest in land to advance the goals of the Master Plan. Generally, the Township can take direct action to acquire property interest or it can rely on private voluntary land protection efforts.

Direct Action by the Township

If the Township takes direct action, it can acquire property in fee simple or it can acquire a partial interest through acquisition of easements. Fee simple acquisition provides the greatest level of control over the use of a parcel, but it also is the most expensive method of acquisition. In addition to the acquisition costs, fee simple acquisition removes property from the tax rolls, resulting in a decrease in property tax revenue.

Easements are distinct property rights that may be sold separately from other rights to the Township. Easements are effective for preserving sensitive lands, providing public access along rivers or greenways, and allowing property owners to obtain income, estate, and property tax benefits for land stewardship while they continue to live on their land.

There are two Michigan statutes that address the issue of conservation easements. The Farmland and Open Space Preservation Act (Public Act 116 of 1974) provides for dedication of an easement to a public entity, such as the Township or State. The Conservation and Historic Preservation Easement Act (Public Act 197 of 1980) gives a third party, such as a land trust, the right to enforce an easement. This act assumes that the easement will be perpetual.

Private Voluntary Land Protection Efforts

Instead of taking direct action, the Township can encourage and rely on private voluntary land protection efforts. Property owners can voluntarily donate land or easements in the interest of conserving natural resources or natural features; or to facilitate the natural resource protection program, private land trusts can be voluntarily established to make use of a variety of land acquisition and conservation techniques. Like local government, land trusts typically rely on fee simple acquisition and acquisition of easements. Other than acquisition at full market value, private tools available to preserve land include:

- Donation of land or bargain sale (acquisition at below full market value),
- Options to buy (often used to secure a parcel of land while funding is being obtained),
- Rights-of-first-refusal (used to tie up a parcel without having to purchase it immediately),
- Leases (temporary control without the expense of acquisition),
- Pre-acquisition by a land trust (the land trust serves as the intermediary for the public agency, such as the Township), and
- Conservation investment (in essence, a real estate syndication for the purpose of resource protection).

LAND CONSERVANCY INVOLVING THE GOVERNMENT

Private donations of land to the government

Landowners are sometimes willing simply to donate land to the Township for open space or natural area preservation purposes. The landowner has the satisfaction of seeing the parcel of land preserved, and also may obtain some benefits on income taxes, estate taxes, and property taxes. The Township obtains the benefit of preserving the land.

Private donations of conservation easements to the government

Landowners are sometimes willing to donate a conservation easement on a parcel of land, which involves the transfer to the government of a partial interest in a parcel of land for the purpose of preserving its natural amenities. The landowner might retain the right to continue to occupy the land, for example, but the right to use it for particular uses (e.g., to build houses on it or change its scenic character) has been donated to the government. The landowner would have the satisfaction of seeing the parcel of land preserved, and may also obtain some benefits on income taxes, estate taxes, and property taxes. The Township obtains the benefit of preserving the land, and avoids some of the costs of maintaining the property.

Private donation of land to the government, with the right to use the land until the donor's death

A landowner sometimes wants to retain full title to a parcel of land and be able to continue to use it, until his or her death, but wishes to have the land transferred to the government at that time (or some other specified time). The landowner can thereby gain some tax benefits, but continue to use the land until his or her death.

Governmental purchase of conservation easements

A landowner may not be willing to donate a conservation easement, but may be willing to sell such an easement to the government. The landowner might retain the right to continue to occupy the land, for example, but the right to use it for particular uses (e.g., to build houses on it or change its scenic character) has been sold to the government. The landowner would receive some payment for the easement, and may obtain some benefits on estate taxes and property taxes. This alternative would cost the Township some revenue, but the cost would be less than the purchase of all the rights to the land.

Governmental leasing of land

A landowner may not wish to lose permanent title to a parcel of land, but may be willing to lease it to the government for public use for a specified period of time.

Farmland and Open Space Preservation Act (PA 116 of 1974) or Conservation and Historic Preservation Easement Act (PA 197 of 1980).

These two state laws can be used by private citizens and local government to protect land for specified periods of time. The landowner can thereby reduce the property taxes on the land, and the government gains the benefit of maintaining the land as open space.

LAND CONSERVANCY THROUGH A PRIVATE ENTITY

Most of the transactions between a landowner and the government can also occur between the landowner and a private land conservancy organization such as The Nature Conservancy, the American Farmland Trust, and the Trust for Public Land. The conservancy organization would then either manage the land itself or convey it, at some future date, to a governmental agency when public funds become available.

Private donations of land to a conservancy organization

Landowners are sometimes willing to donate land to a conservancy organization for open space or natural area preservation purposes. The landowner has the satisfaction of seeing the parcel of land preserved, and also may obtain some benefits on income taxes, estate taxes, and property taxes. The conservancy organization obtains the benefit of preserving the land.

Private donations of conservation easements to a conservancy organization

Landowners are sometimes willing to donate a conservation easement on a parcel of land, which involves the transfer to a conservancy organization of a partial interest in a parcel of land for the purpose of preserving its natural amenities. The landowner might retain the right to continue to occupy the land, for example, but the right to use it for particular uses (e.g., to build houses on it or change its scenic character) has been donated to the conservancy organization. The landowner would have the satisfaction of seeing the parcel of land preserved, and may also obtain some benefits on income taxes, estate taxes, and property taxes. The conservancy organization obtains the benefit of preserving the land, and avoids some of the costs of maintaining the property.

Private donation of land to a conservancy organization, with the right to use the land until the donor's death

A landowner sometimes wants to retain full title to a parcel of land and be able to continue to use it until his or her death, but wishes to have the land transferred to a conservancy organization at that time (or some other specified time). The landowner can thereby gain some tax benefits, but continue to use the land until his or her death.

Conservancy organization purchase of conservation easements

A landowner may not be willing to donate a conservation easement but may be willing to sell such an easement to a conservancy organization. The landowner might retain the right to continue to occupy the land, for

example, but the right to use it for particular uses (e.g., to build houses on it or change its scenic character) has been sold. The landowner would receive payment for the easement, and may obtain some benefits on estate taxes and property taxes.

Conservancy organization leasing of land

A landowner may not wish to lose permanent title to a parcel of land, but may be willing to lease it to a conservancy organization for public use during a specified period of time.

Chapter 9 DIXBORO AREA PLAN AMENDMENT

- Dixboro Area Development Policy
 - Amendment to the Master Plan
 - Superior Charter Township

INTRODUCTION

Planning Area

The plan amendment covers the Dixboro community, which is delineated by the M14 freeway on the north, Voorhies Road on the east, Dixboro Road on the west and south of Ford Road, Fleming Creek and Fleming Creek impoundment, east of Cherry Hill and Gale Roads and including the western 1/2 of Section 17, portions of the eastern 1/2 of Section 18, the north-east 1/4 of Section 19 and the north-west 1/4 of Section 20. The area is designated as the Dixboro & Fleming Creek Sub-Area for detailed policies on Map 6.1 (Superior Township Sub-areas) of the Master Plan.

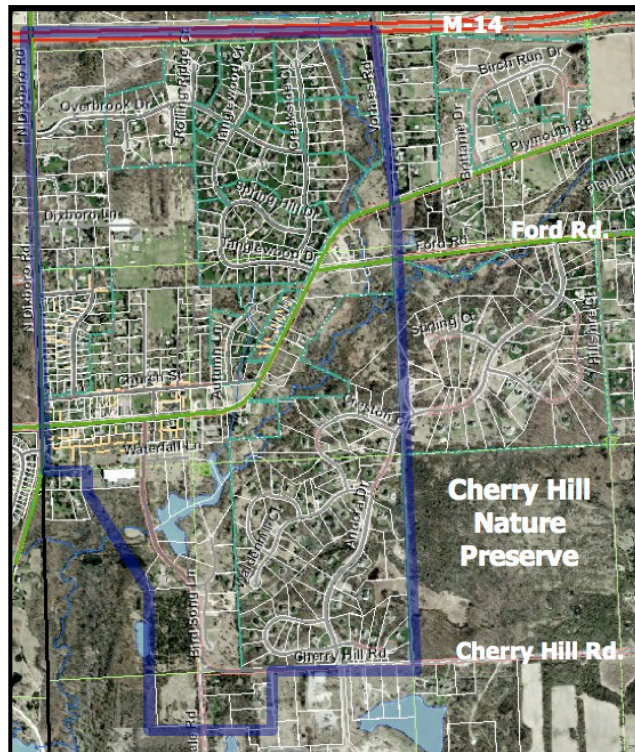


Photo 9-1: Dixboro Planning Area

History of the Dixboro Area Plan

The first Dixboro area amendment was part of the General Development Plan adopted in 1982. This area plan was adopted by reference in the Township’s 1992 Growth Management Plan (GMP). In 1993 an amendment to the Growth Management Plan was adopted described as the "The Cherry Hill Road/Gale Road/Fleming Creek Impoundment Area." These amendments were referenced and adopted as refinements of the policies of the 1992 GMP as they applied to the Dixboro and Fleming Creek areas.

The 1992 Growth Management Plan was revised in 2004. As part of this process, the two area plans referenced above were combined into a single comprehensive Dixboro Area Plan Amendment.

Description of Amendment

This "Dixboro Area Plan" has been revised from the 2004 Plan to comply with the new Michigan Planning Enabling Act. It is a part of the overall Master Plan but contains detailed policies for this specific area. In the event of a conflict between this area plan and the overall Master Plan, the policies in this area plan should control.

BACKGROUND

Review of the area plan amendment to the Dixboro area began in the Fall of 2002 when a "Futuring Session" was held with the residents of the Dixboro area. The purpose of this meeting was to identify a series of wide-ranging impressions of the Dixboro community. Those attending the meeting were asked to give their reactions to the following:

- *What are the "**Strengths**" of the Dixboro Community?*
- *What are the "**Weaknesses**" of the Dixboro Community?*
- *What are the "**Opportunities**" of the Dixboro Community?*
- *What are the "**Threats**" to the Dixboro Community?*

After discussing these questions, meeting attendees were asked to vote on the responses to the above questions in the order of importance. Following is a general listing of high-priority topics identified by the meeting attendees to be the most significant. A complete listing of the discussion items ranked by priority is contained within the addendum of this amendment.

Strengths Characterizing the Dixboro Community

- The community maintains a unified community appearance containing open space and mature trees with a small-town atmosphere, which is pedestrian friendly, with a historic character.
- The Methodist church, general store, and village green are the prominent focal points within the community.

Weaknesses Characterizing the Dixboro Community

- There is no traffic management plan for roadways experiencing speeding and excessive traffic through the community.
- The intersection of Ford and Plymouth Roads is considered dangerous and should be addressed.

- The excessive traffic has raised concerns for pedestrian safety and noise.
- Sidewalks, bike paths, and a vehicle-parking plan are considered essential along certain roadways.
- Currently there is no active public school within the community.

Opportunities of the Dixboro Community

- The opportunity exists to define the community boundaries, enhance the intimacy of the community, and retain the community character through implementation of the Dixboro Area Plan.
- An open space network, including Fleming Creek and a pedestrian/bike plan, can be identified and implemented throughout the community.
- Traffic impacts can be managed by implementing traffic-calming methods for certain roadways within the community.
- Emphasis can be placed on revitalizing the Freeman school as a community asset.
- The intimacy of the community can be enhanced by planting trees along roadways and incorporation of the Village Green into adjacent land uses through pedestrian walkways.
- Appropriate and compatible commercial development, as well as mixed uses with existing and future residential dwellings, can be developed to revitalize the integrity of the community.

Threats Facing the Dixboro Community

- The loss of existing community character and the potential of not implementing specific "strengths" outlined within the community "Futuring Session" through a comprehensive Dixboro Area Plan.
- The pressure of growth within adjacent communities could result in increased traffic impacts, possibly leading to the widening of Plymouth Road within the community.

AREA PLAN STRATEGY

The results of the "Futuring Session" served as a basis and an integral part of the Dixboro Community area plan planning process. Also considered in the planning process were the trends and pressures of the surrounding region and adjacent units of government. The Dixboro

Community will be faced with heightened challenges in the near future. Directions of growth will continue to be orientated towards transportation corridors within Superior Township and the immediate region, most of which pass through or are adjacent to the community. It is believed that supplementary pressures will escalate along M-14, Ford Road and Plymouth Road as these routes link the Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti area with developing areas of the greater Detroit metropolitan area.

Through the planning process and the establishment of goals, objectives, policies, and strategies, and with current regulatory ordinances to implement the Dixboro Area Plan, the distinguished character of the Dixboro Community will be preserved through awareness and measures taken to deal with the pressures, trends, and issues facing it.

This area plan revision therefore focuses upon recognizing the unique character and attributes of the Dixboro Community, the pressures and trends that confront the community, and methods to allow the community to maintain its identity and integrity and deal with the forces acting upon the community.

This Dixboro area plan amendment is the culmination of extensive study of the planning area, meetings with Dixboro community residents, and discussion of critical issues facing the community.

GOALS

The major purpose of this sub-area plan is to maintain and preserve the distinctive setting of the Dixboro community, the community identity and the social sense of community in Dixboro that results from this setting. Emphasis will be placed on guidelines that encourage and shape appropriate landscaping and structural improvements for developments within the Dixboro community:

- 1.0** The physical identity of the Dixboro area as a rural, village type of residential settlement with buildings of historical and cultural heritage that display a compactness and self-contained appearance, should be protected and strengthened.
 - Visual and physical techniques should be incorporated to increase community-focused awareness by the incorporation of boundary markers for separation of transportation, land use, pedestrian orientation, and the physical limits of the Community of Dixboro.

- Open space and very low-density residential will be maintained at the edges of the defined community, and a central spine of open spaces, public facilities, and walkways will be designed to tie the various parts of the community together.
 - New development in the area should be consistent with the rural, village character.
- 2.0** The exterior appearance and physical setting of existing historic buildings should be preserved.
- 3.0** The existing character of the Plymouth Road corridor, characterized by the visual cohesiveness of the village church, general store, old brick schoolhouse and various residences, distinctively define the village identity between Dixboro Road and Church Street and should be preserved.
- New buildings should be consistent with this visual and architectural character.
 - Existing buildings that are not consistent with this character should be remodeled to be consistent with it.
- 4.0** In the Plymouth Road frontages, maximum flexibility in types of uses should be permitted, so long as these uses are consistent with the established rural village character. Uses in the Plymouth Road frontages between Dixboro Road and the Church Street/Plymouth Road intersection should be consistent with the historic character of this area.
- 5.0** Action should be taken to acknowledge and lessen the impact of vehicle transit through the Dixboro Community. The impact of regional traffic flows through the community should be lessened using traffic-calming methods. A roadway system should be constructed through the Community of Dixboro that is scaled for characteristic uses (rather than being oversized and "over-engineered" to accommodate "worst-case scenarios").
- Plymouth Road will be de-emphasized between Dixboro Road and M-14/M-153, in order to discourage use of this segment of the road by regional traffic.
 - De-emphasis will be accomplished by incorporating curbing along the roadway through the community, allowing curb

parking, and other traffic-calming methods that offer a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere.

- 6.0** Stream corridors in the Dixboro area should be protected as a natural open space system. The corridors should be open for passive recreation where such use will not damage or threaten the natural character or functions of the corridors. The corridors should be a visual amenity for the community.
- 7.0** The historic Freeman Schoolhouse on the village green should be adapted for a community center or similar public use. The building should be maintained and used in a way that would permit a school use again in the future.
- 8.0** The historic Freeman schoolhouse and playground, the Methodist church, and the village green will be the focal points and social core of the Dixboro area, and will be the key parts of the internal structure for the physical organization of the community.
- The wooded area north of the school site, the Cherry Hill Road right-of-way south of Plymouth Road, the designated conservation area north of Cherry Hill Road, and the open space along Fleming Creek will be added to the other elements to enhance a continuous, central spine of facilities and areas through the community.
 - This continuous, central spine will help tie components of the community together, and will increase the attractiveness of the school, playground, church, and village green as social gathering places. The spine will provide pedestrian and bicycle facilities.
 - The village green will be the principal focal point of the community.
- 9.0** Wooded areas and fence rows should be preserved, where feasible, as natural features and visual amenities.
- 10.0** Each development proposal, such as a rezoning petition, site plan, or subdivision plat, should be reviewed in terms of its relation to the entire Dixboro community, in addition to the site's conditions and its relation to neighboring properties.
- 11.0** The Dixboro area should be protected from future development in the southwest quadrant of the Plymouth/Dixboro intersection, in

Ann Arbor Township. The impact of development in this area should not be permitted to spill over into the Dixboro community.

12.0 Pedestrian access should be provided for adjoining residential neighborhoods that can be physically a part of the town center.

13.0 Unless there are no alternatives and public health policies require it, publicly owned and operated water and sanitary sewer services will not be provided to the Dixboro area. Private community wastewater treatment and disposal systems (PCWS) are only permitted in Superior Township in accordance with the requirements of the policies of this Plan, the Zoning Ordinance, and other Township ordinances. Therefore, uses and densities will generally be permitted in Dixboro only if they can safely utilize individual wells and septic tanks/drain fields.

14.0 A special “Village Center” zoning district was created for the Plymouth Road area of Dixboro. This district was updated in 2008 to increase opportunities for a variety and mixture of uses, including dwellings with nonresidential uses. The recently completed “Village Green” development is an example of the types of commercial projects envisioned for this area.

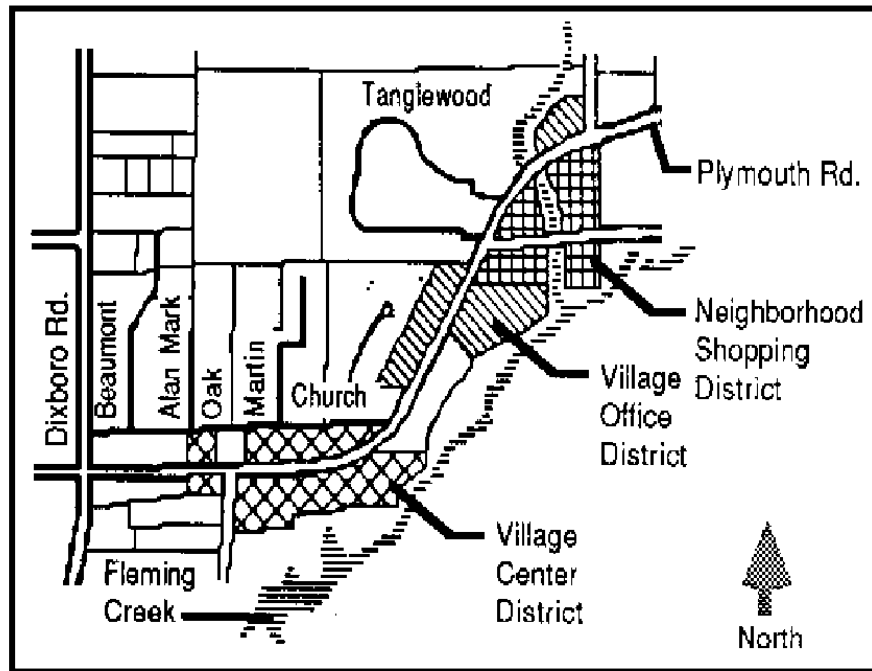
- The scale of uses and buildings will be kept small, to be consistent with the existing historic structures in the area, and a rural village character. The size of parking lots and the number of parking spaces will be limited, so that parking lots will not dominate the visual character of the area.
- Design review will continue to be required, in addition to site plan review, to ensure that buildings and landscaping will be consistent with the intended character of the historic area. Review standards have been previously provided and a design review commission established.

LAND USE POLICIES

This section provides specific recommendations regarding the development and the preservation of character concerning the Community of Dixboro. It is understood that many of the following policies could be initiated by Community residents individually or acting as a unified group. Also as new development is initiated within the Dixboro Community, the incorporation of these policies can be a part of the proposed development.

It is also recognized that the cooperation of outside governmental agencies may be necessary and that the costs of certain actions or recommendations may be beyond the ability of the Community alone. In such a case the capability to acquire outside funding, either separately or through a coordinating governmental agency, may be necessary.

Figure 9-1 – Community Development Designations



Community Development

- A. Village Center – The area designated as the village center along Plymouth Road should be gradually converted to a mixed-use area, with a village scale and character. The village center should be limited to lots that front onto Plymouth Road.

Uses permitted in the village center should be compatible with residential-type structures and a neighboring residential environment. Uses such as tea and dining rooms, craft shops and studios, bed and breakfast inns, gift shops, antique shops, and small professional offices are considered appropriate in this area, provided maximum sizes are established to ensure a residential scale. Drive-through operations should not be permitted. Single-family dwellings should be permitted in the area.

Existing residential structures should be retained, but may be converted to the types of non-residential uses listed above. New

buildings should be compatible in scale with the existing residential structures, and should have rooflines and architectural proportions and details that reflect existing houses. Exterior finish materials should be the same as commonly used on single-family dwellings; commercial-appearing materials, such as metal or glass curtain walls and concrete blocks, should not be used in this area. Building height should be limited to two floors and 30 feet.

The setting for buildings should be spacious, with setbacks and spacing between buildings to reflect the existing residential situation along Plymouth Road, west of Church Street. Parking for non-residential uses should not be permitted in front of buildings, and parking lots should be small, so that they will not dominate the appearance and character of sites. Existing non-residential structures should be remodeled to meet these standards, to the extent feasible.

Exterior lighting should be compatible with a residential atmosphere. Residential-type fixtures, not more than 20 feet high and down shielded, should be used.

- B.** Village Office - The existing office area at the east end of Dixboro continues to be a transition area between the commercial center at the intersection of Plymouth Road/Old Ford Road and the residential area and village center to the south and west. The designation for office use is also intended to permit reasonable, small-scale uses and has a mixture of residential and small commercial and office buildings and uses, similar to the Village Center designation.

The existing small-scale character of the area should be retained. Offices should be limited to small professional and personal service uses. Existing houses may be converted to non-residential use, and new office/commercial or mixed-use buildings could be added, either on undeveloped lots or as replacements for existing structures. Buildings should be subject to design review according to the Dixboro Design Review Guidelines.

- C.** Neighborhood Shopping Center -The area at the Plymouth/Ford intersection, east of Plymouth Road, should be developed as a neighborhood shopping center, with common driveways and parking facilities, where possible. The center should be limited to uses that provide convenience goods, such as food, drugs and sundries, and personal services that meet the needs of the immediate neighborhood trade area.

An overall design theme should be established for the center. The center should be designed to be an entry to the Dixboro community from the east. Buildings should be designed to have a residential scale and appearance, with residential types of exterior finish materials. The stream corridor should be retained as a landscape feature and should be utilized as a focus for the center.

The center should not focus on the adjacent roads. Pedestrian bridges should be provided across the stream corridor, to connect the two sides of the center. Existing trees should be preserved to the maximum feasible extent. All buildings in the center should be subject to the design review process.

The east edge of the center should have a landscape buffer strip at least 50 feet wide, to separate future residences to the east from the shopping center. The center should have a vehicular and pedestrian connection with the office area to the south.

Village Green

The village green should be maintained as an open space, to serve as the community's principal visual open space and as a place for people to gather. It should be developed as a part of the central pedestrian corridor and should have pedestrian paths around the perimeter of the space. Park benches should be provided.

A landscape plan should be prepared for the village green; ornamental trees and shrubs should be planted in the west and northwest parts of the site, to define the west edge and to screen the space from the properties to the west. Ornamental plantings and fencing should be provided east of Short Street, to strengthen the east edge of the space.

Church

The Methodist Church should be retained as a historic structure and a social and physical focal point of the community. The church site should be carefully integrated into the pedestrian corridor, when that facility is developed. The presence of the church should also be recognized in any design and development work on the village green and the historic center in the vicinity of the site.

Open Space

The historic Freeman schoolhouse/community center and village green are part of the open space system within the community. The open space systems, along with the proposed street system, are the most important elements in defining the Dixboro community and in preserving it from encroachment and domination by urban development in neighboring areas. The schoolhouse/community center, pedestrian corridor, and the

village green will provide an internal focus for the community, in both a physical and social sense.

The Fleming Creek corridor and its north tributary corridor should be retained as a natural boundary along the south and east edges of the community. The corridor along the main branch of the stream should be acquired for public use where possible, or retained in public ownership, as in the case of the University of Michigan property.

Where not acquired for public use, the stream and its frontage should be restricted in use so that its natural character is preserved and its continuity is protected. A landscape plan should be developed for the main branch corridor, so that existing natural features can be augmented. The north branch corridor need not be acquired for public use, but should be preserved in a natural condition.

Freeman Community Center

Although the historic Freeman elementary school on the village green closed, the building and site should be adapted and reopened as a community center or similar public use. Facilities for active recreation should be provided on the site.

Central Pedestrian Corridor

A pedestrian path should be developed to pass through the village green, follow Oak Street, and connect to Cherry Hill Road. The path’s crossing of Plymouth Road should be designed to emphasize pedestrian continuity and the safety of pedestrians.

Sanitary Sewer and Water Services

Public sanitary sewer and water lines will not be extended into the planning area, unless one or both services will be required by the County Environmental Health Division to remove a health problem. Therefore, all future development will have to utilize on-site water supply wells and sewage disposal systems. Proposals for uses and densities should recognize this policy.

Fire Protection

The new fire station at the Prospect Road and Ford Road intersection serves the Dixboro area. The Township anticipates that this station has the capability to serve the northwest part of Superior Township, including the Dixboro planning area, as future residential development occurs in the area.



Photo 9-2: Playground of the historic Freeman schoolhouse (with the Dixboro General Store in the background).

STREET POLICIES

The primary objective of the street plan is to help preserve the character of the Dixboro community with a traffic system that is characteristic of a village image. The key to achieving this objective is to prevent the build-up of regional traffic flows through the community. If such traffic is permitted to increase, the quiet residential character of the community will be lost to traffic noise, exhaust fumes, congestion, and hazards. Such traffic will also attract land use changes to serve the traveling public, which will replace existing residences that could not survive in a high-traffic-volume environment.

□

The Dixboro community may continue to experience substantial levels of regional traffic along Dixboro Road, Plymouth Road, Cherry Hill Road, and Old Ford Road. The policy of this plan is to address Plymouth Road with traffic-calming methods including roadway curbing, parallel parking, additional street trees, sidewalks, pedestrian crossings at designated intersections, and fencing along residential portions of the community. The following specific policies are intended to implement this policy.

□

Plymouth Road

Plymouth Road is the central transportation core of the Dixboro Community. It is also an arterial that carries regional traffic through Superior Township. The objective of policies contained within this area plan is to minimize the traffic impacts of Plymouth Road as it passes through the Dixboro Community. The integrity of the Dixboro Community can only be maintained by addressing the impacts created by Plymouth Road. The visual prospective of Plymouth Road should be of a village scale and character. This can be accomplished by incorporating the following methods:

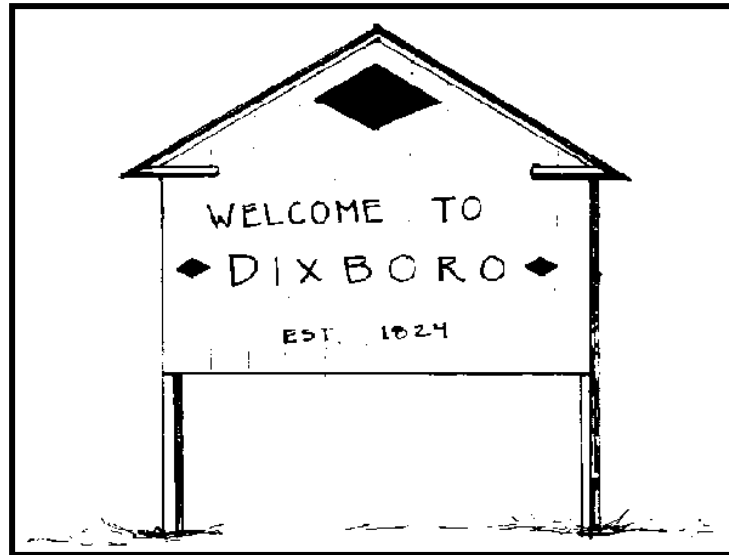
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- A.** The existing road should be maintained as a two-lane, minor collector road for the community, between the Dixboro Road and M153 (Ford Road).
- B.** The speed limit in the segment between Ford and Dixboro Roads should be reduced to 25 mph.
- C.** Designating Plymouth Road to serve the function of a local, property-access roadway.

Recommendations: The following recommendations are set forth for consideration based upon this understanding.

1. **Provide Entrance Signage at Each Entrance to the Community.**

Figure 9-2 – Entrance Signage



- Would serve as a visual element for vehicles occupants that they are approaching a community.
- Could be an architectural theme serving to identify the community.
- Could be combined with landscaping and other architectural features characteristic of the community.

□

□ 2. **Consider a Variety of Vehicle Traffic Calming Techniques Along Plymouth Road.**

- Would reduce the speed and noise of traffic through the Community of Dixboro.
- Would provide safer pedestrian traffic adjacent to Plymouth Road.

□

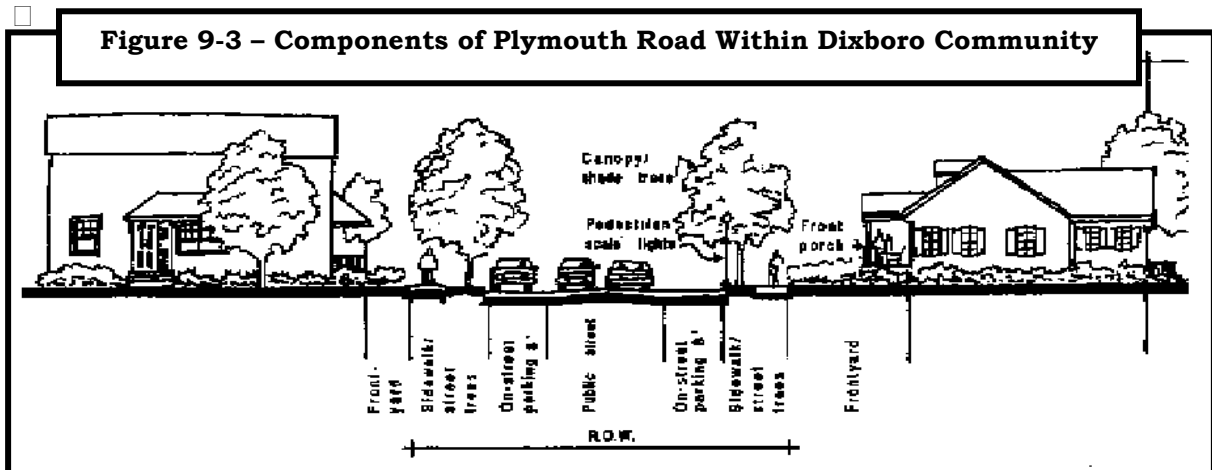


Figure 9-4 – Trees Adjacent to Plymouth Road



- 3. Provide Roadway Curbing Along Plymouth Road, and Cherry Hill Road north of Fleming Creek.**
 - Provides greater separation of roadway and adjacent parcels and land uses.
 - Provides for delineated areas of vehicle parking.
 - Physically separates roadway from non-roadway areas and activities.

- 4. Provide Sidewalks Adjacent to Plymouth Road, and a Paved Bicycle/Non-Motorized Pathway Adjacent to Cherry Hill Road from Plymouth Road south to the Humane Society of Huron Valley facility and the Cherry Hill Nature Preserve.**
 - Would allow greater pedestrian access to adjacent land uses.
 - Would provide structured pedestrian access corridors.
 - Would provide safer pedestrian travel and access to land uses and activities.
 - Would provide continuity structure and focus pedestrians along roadway corridors.
 - Could link to other pedestrian access points adjacent to the central community.
 - Would visually create a sense of community.
 - Would create greater opportunities for casual socializing within the Community.
 - Would provide a sense of Community.

- 5. Allow Parallel Vehicle Parking Adjacent to Plymouth Road, and Cherry Hill Road north of Fleming Creek.**

- Would provide parking for adjacent establishments.
- Would serve to slow traffic through the Dixboro Community.
- Would add to the visual character of a centralized community.
- Would provide physical separation from vehicle traffic and pedestrians on sidewalks.
- Would enhance feeling of safety for pedestrians on sidewalks.
- Would serve to slow traffic traveling through the Dixboro Community.

6. Establish a Tree Planting Program Adjacent to Plymouth Road (between Voorhies and Dixboro Roads) and Cherry Hill Road north of the Cherry Hill/Gale Roads Intersection.

- Would establish continuing visual character of the transportation corridors of the Dixboro Community.
- Would provide a focused community atmosphere.
- Would provide physical and visual separation from establishments adjacent to roadways and vehicles traveling on roadways.
- Would enhance roadway and pedestrian access points to Plymouth Road.
- Would begin to create additional distinguishing features within the community.
- Deciduous shade trees would be planted in a linear fashion along these roadways

7. Consider low profile picket fences or hedges for separation of residential areas along Plymouth Road

- Would provide physical separation of residential areas from pedestrian sidewalks and on street parking.
- Could focus entrances to specific sites or buildings.

8. Consider Street Lights along Plymouth Road, and Cherry Hill Road north of Fleming Creek.

- Lighting would be designed to accent or highlight prominent architectural and/or natural features and be intended to enhance nighttime aesthetics, pedestrian movement, and other Community activities.
- Would provide visual mood along roadways.

- Would contribute to predetermined physical character of the area.

□

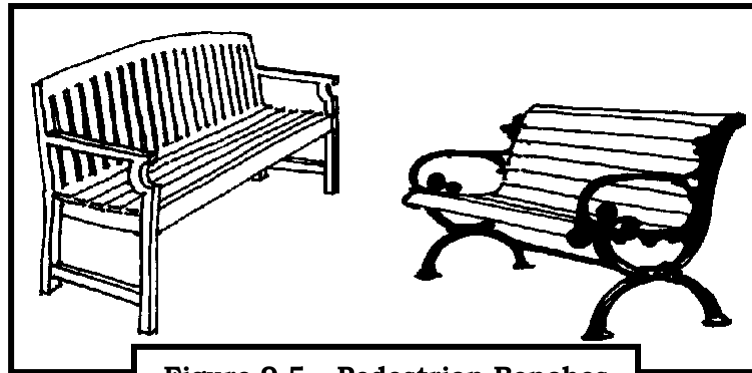


Figure 9-5 – Pedestrian Benches

□ **9 Provide Benches Adjacent to Sidewalks Within Commercial Portions of Community.**

□

- Civic-orientated structures would be clustered to encourage civic involvement and could be coordinated with outdoor dining facilities.

□ **10. Provide selective vegetative planting areas within open space areas and adjacent to public areas with access to pedestrian walkways.**

- Would provide Community gathering locations for various activities that could take place within the Community.

□

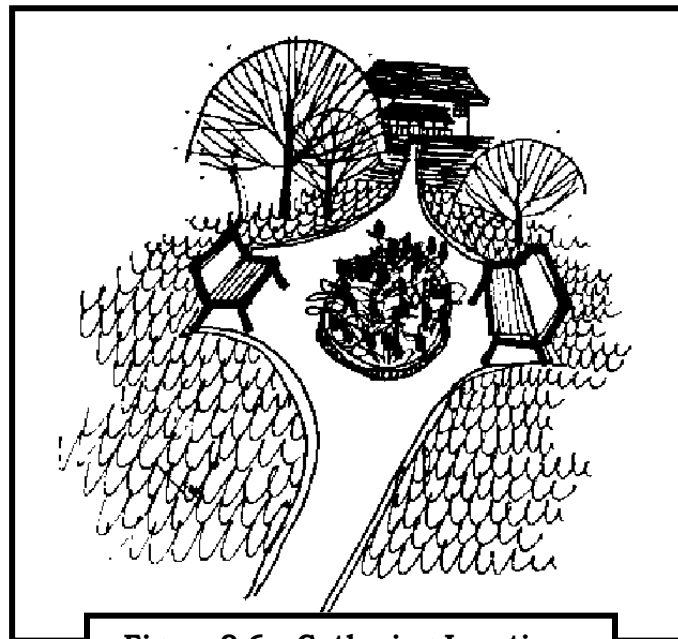


Figure 9-6 – Gathering Locations

11. Consider Vehicle Traffic signal at the Plymouth Road/Cherry Hill Road intersection.

- Would reduce traffic speed through Dixboro Community.
- Would allow pedestrian crossing of Plymouth Road at a control point resulting in safer pedestrian access to land uses north and south of Plymouth Road.

12. Consider Traffic Island at Designated Point on Plymouth Road within the Dixboro Community.

- Could provide focus point within the Community of Dixboro.
- Would reduce traffic speed through the Community of Dixboro.

13. Consider Roundabout at Designated Point on Plymouth Road within the Dixboro Community.

- Could provide focus point within the Community of Dixboro.
- Would reduce traffic speed through the Community of Dixboro.

14. Consider Small Scale Community Parking Lots.

- Would provide central location for parking within Community.
- Could be connected to Community-wide pedestrian path system.

15. Community Character Incorporating Visual and Physical Techniques Along Plymouth Road.

- The incorporation of traffic-calming and other physical treatments along Plymouth Road can be designed to enhance the safety, visual perspective, and character of the Dixboro Community.
- Looking west along the southern side of Plymouth Road at the intersection with Cherry Hill Road and along the frontage of the Dixboro Store.

Figure 9-7 – Plymouth Road Character



- 16. **New Development can add to the Character of the Community.**
 - - When vacant parcels are developed, additional physical features can be added along the roadway including vegetative planters, pedestrian benches, sidewalks, streetlights, etc.

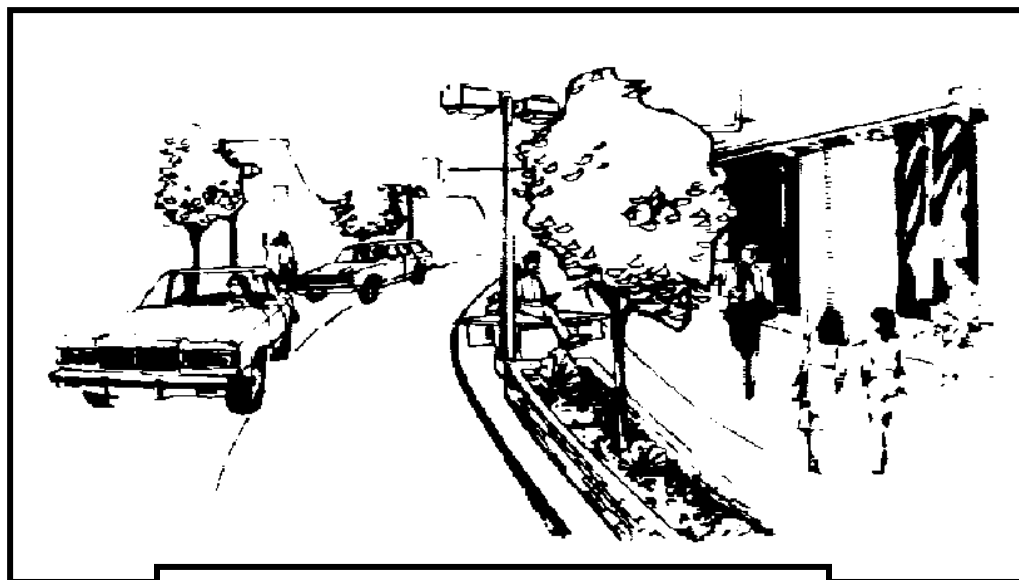
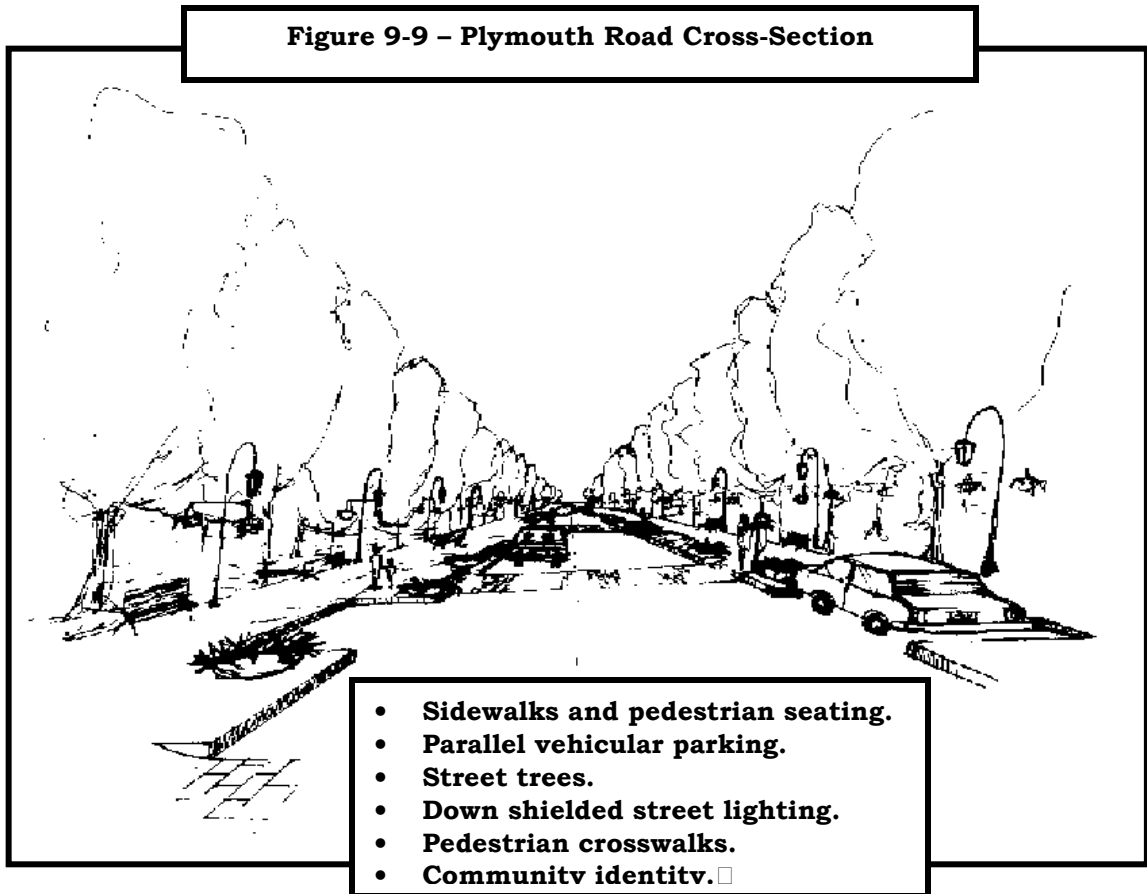


Figure 9-9 – New Development Character

- 17. A Rendering of an example of the Future Dixboro Community Looking East Along Plymouth Road from Dixboro Road.



Cherry Hill Road

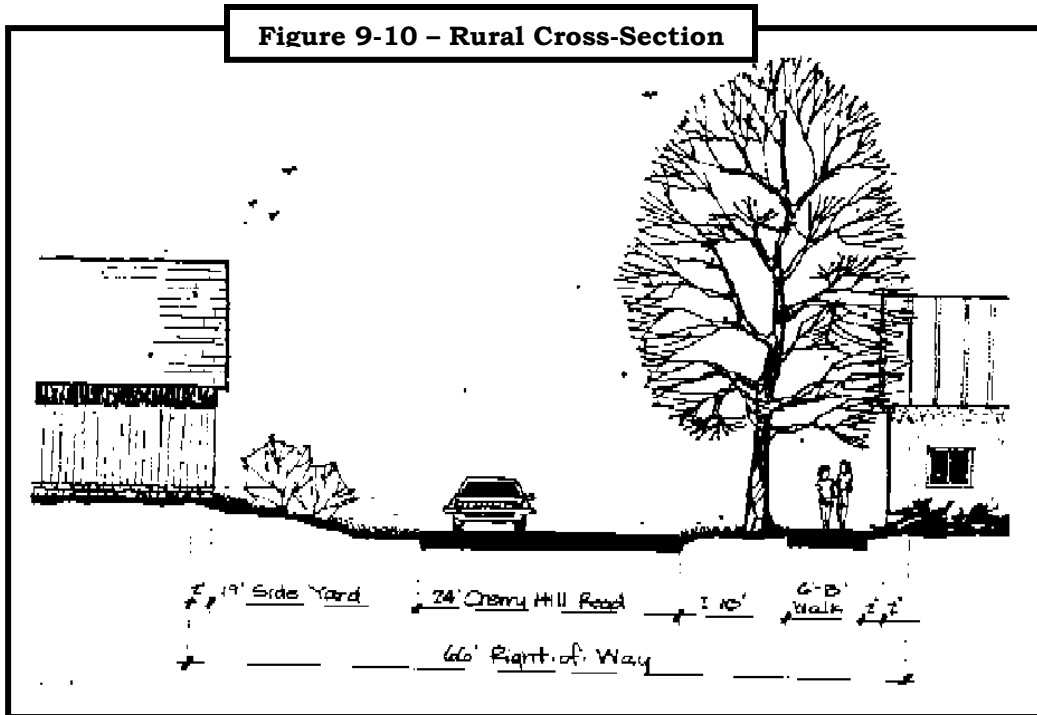
The Cherry Hill Road/Plymouth Road intersection presents difficulty for the Dixboro Community because of the proximity of buildings to the road and the fact that the intersection is located in the center of the community. As residential development occurs south and east of the community, traffic flow through this intersection will increase substantially, and the problem will become progressively worse.

□

Similar traffic-calming methods and community character enhancements should be incorporated along Cherry Hill Road, between Plymouth Road and Fleming Creek.

□

South of Fleming Creek, as Cherry Hill Road becomes more rural, pedestrian walkways should continue through Glenborough to the Cherry Hill Nature Preserve, to the east of the Glenborough residential development. An example of this treatment is shown below.



Plymouth/Ford Road Intersection

The intersection of Ford and Plymouth Roads is generally considered to be the physical eastern entrance to the Dixboro Community. These roadways currently carry significant traffic and as these regional arterials continue to increase in traffic volume, the impact to the Dixboro Community will be considerable.

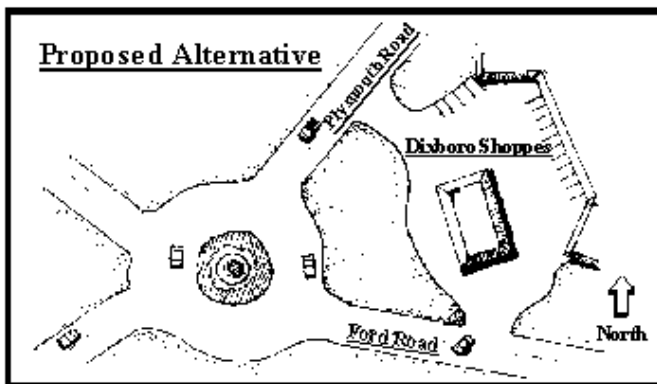
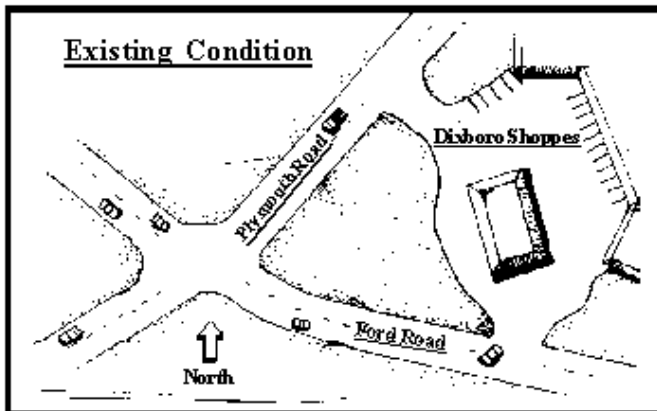


Figure 9-11 – Roundabout

New roundabout: To ensure that traffic continues to flow at this intersection and to establish a substantial physical entrance point to the Dixboro Community, a roundabout should be considered. At left is a graphic representation of the potential of this application.

□

Church Street/Plymouth Road Intersection

Church Street is a local roadway primarily designed to provide access to adjoining residential dwellings. Because of the traffic on Plymouth Road, and because Church Street runs parallel to Plymouth Road, motorists occasionally try to bypass the traffic on Plymouth Road by using Church Street as a “short cut.” To discourage this situation a bermed and vegetated “turn out” should be considered. Following is a graphic representation of this potential technique.

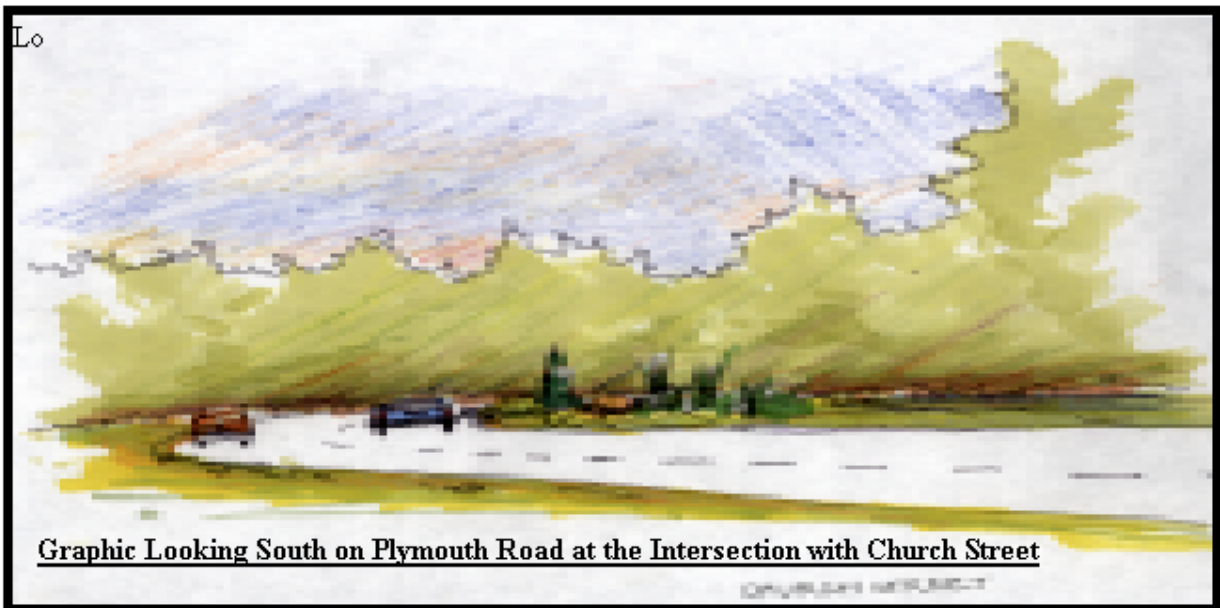
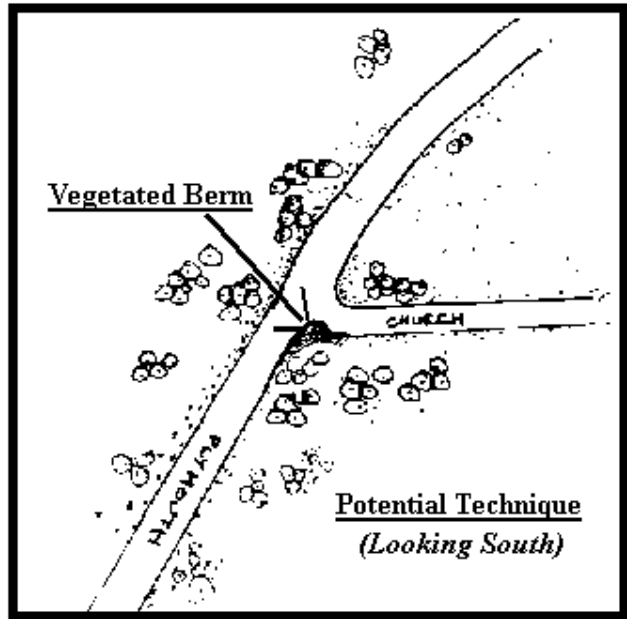
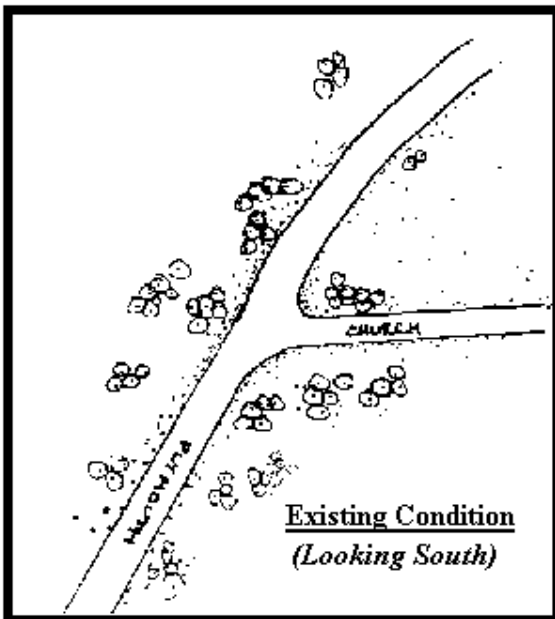


Figure 9-12 – Church Street

Short Street/Plymouth Road

Short Street is a central focal point within the Dixboro community. It physically and visually connects internal local streets to activity areas, including the Methodist Church and Village Green with Plymouth Road.

The following graphical depiction considers a vehicular island circulation pattern at the intersection of Short and Church Streets with angular vehicular parking shown adjacent to Short Street. This concept would interconnect with the continuation of pedestrian walkways across Plymouth Road as well as access parallel vehicular parking along Plymouth Road.

□□

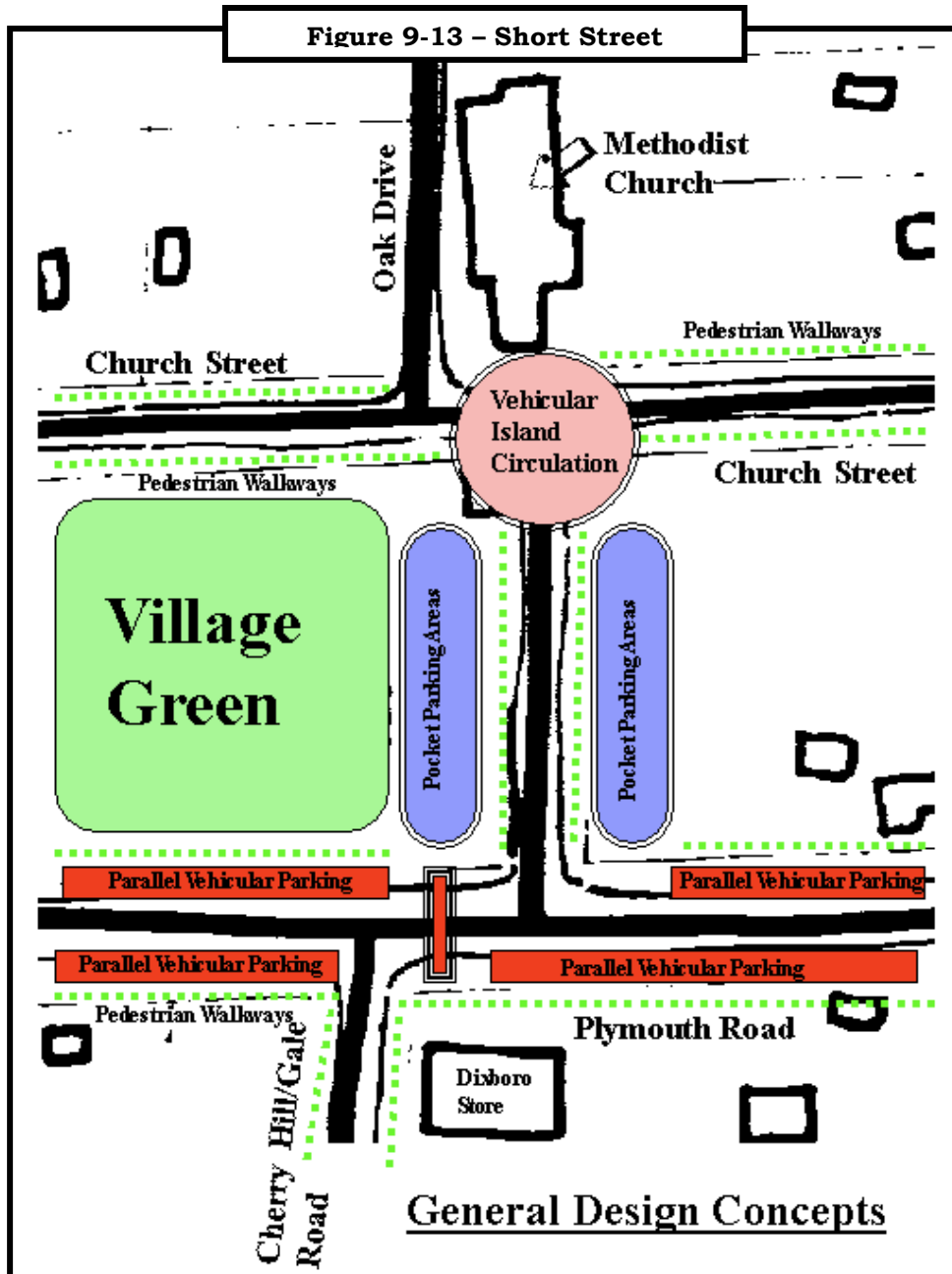
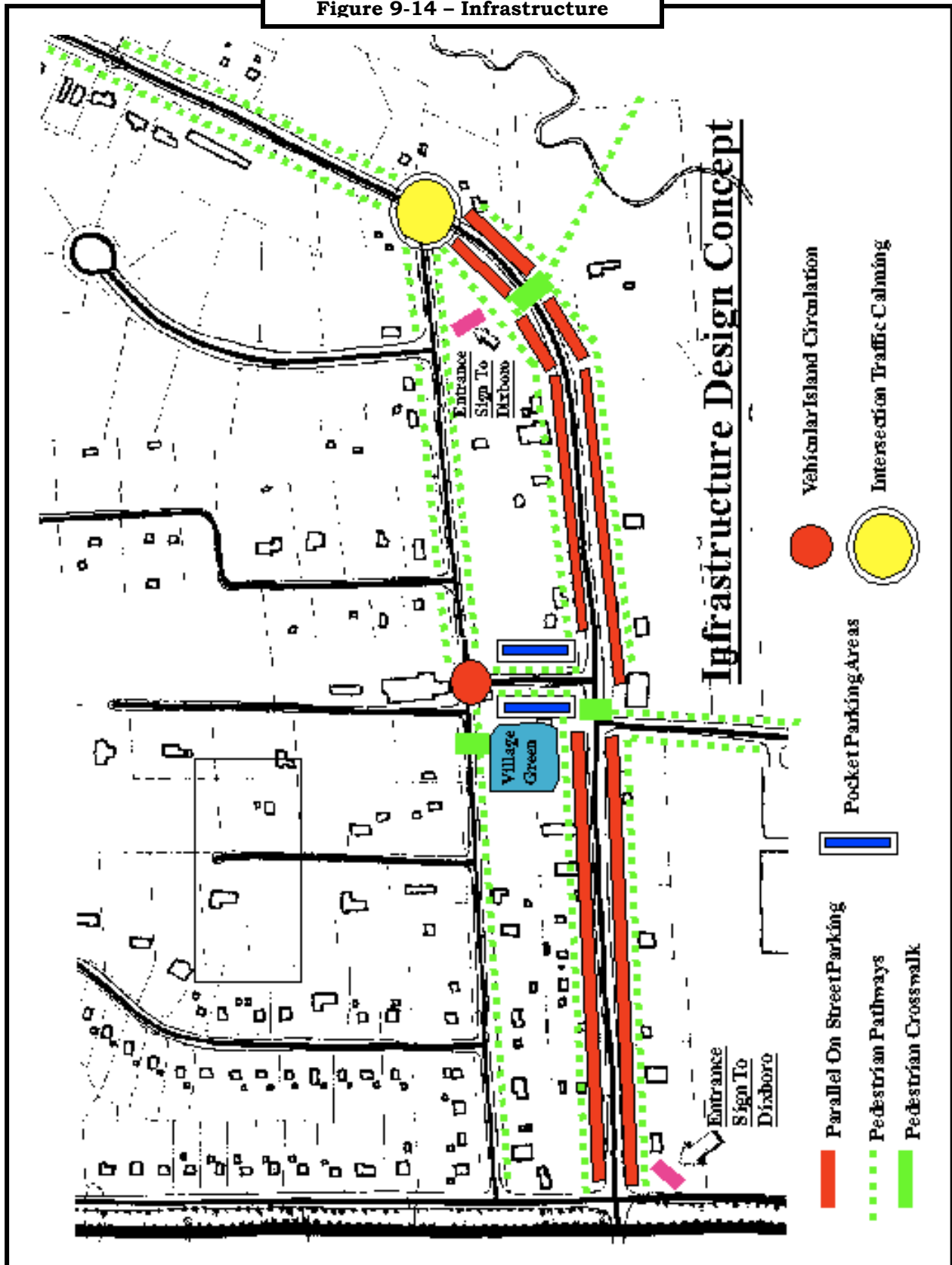


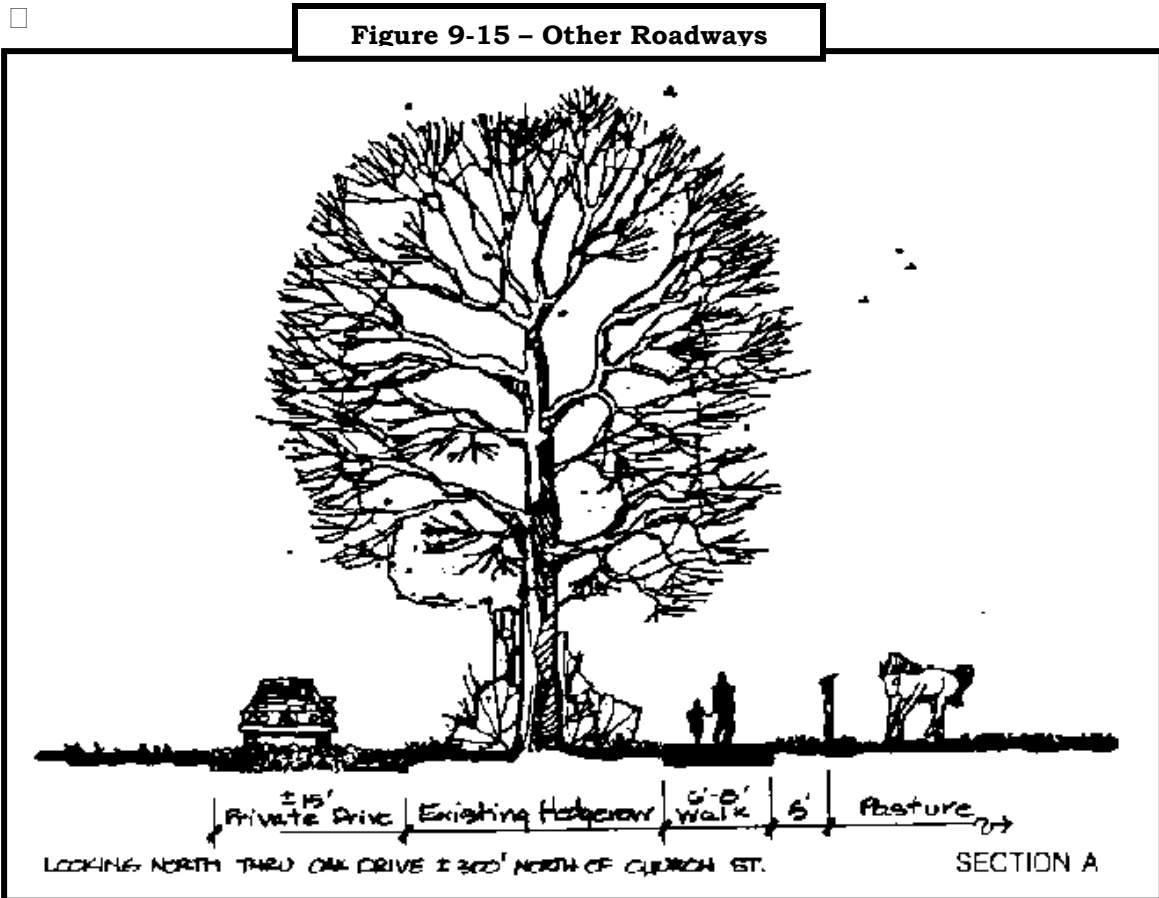
Figure 9-14 – Infrastructure



Other Roadways

The visual character of the Dixboro general area could also be enhanced by pedestrian walkways within the adjacent rural areas and along roadways as depicted below.

□ Traffic-calming techniques and visual perspectives could also be considered for other roadways that are adjacent to or pass within the Dixboro Community should also be considered. Each roadway should be considered in relation to its physical characteristics, location, and function.



IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES

□

Introduction

Many of the policies set forth in this plan will be implemented by negotiations between developers and Township officials during site plan review and, in certain areas, during building design review. In these negotiations, the standards and concepts contained in this plan should be used as guidelines.

□

Zoning

Special zoning districts are currently in effect within the Dixboro community, (i.e., the VC and NSC Districts). These districts were designed to ensure that character and environmental objectives would be achieved within the community.

In 2008, these districts were amended to promote greater economic viability and vitality for the Dixboro area, while continuing to improve the quality of design of buildings and sites as well as the livability of the regulated districts.

□

Density Transfer

If a suitable regulatory mechanism becomes available, transfer of density from areas to be restricted to natural conditions, such as the stream corridors and wooded areas, potentially could be used as a means of compensating property owners for restrictions on use.

□

Land Acquisition

The Township or other public agency should acquire the remainder of the corridor of the main branch of Fleming Creek in the planning area. If lands cannot be publicly acquired, preservation agreements should be considered with property owners as development is proposed.

□

Road Construction

The road changes proposed in this plan should be incorporated into the Washtenaw Area Transportation Study (WATS) long-range transportation improvement plans. State and federal funds should be used for major changes. County Road Commission funds should be used for minor changes. Road improvements in any new development area should be provided by developers.

Neighborhood Association(s)

The Township should encourage the creation of one (1) or more voluntary neighborhood associations for Dixboro residential areas, for the purpose of promoting healthier neighborhoods, organizing local block parties and

events, and improving communication between residents and with the Township on law enforcement, blight, and other issues of concern.

Business Groups and Local Improvement Authorities

The Township should encourage the growing group of commercial and office business owners in Dixboro to consider forming a Dixboro Merchants Association for the purpose of coordinated marketing, hours of operation, and cross-promotion of products and services.

The Township should also consider establishing a downtown development authority (DDA) or corridor improvement authority and a tax increment financing district in the Dixboro area to provide additional means to fund future capital improvement projects in the district.

□

□ DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

□

Developments in the Dixboro Community study area are encouraged to develop in stages and in a planned, coordinated manner, according to an overall development plan. Encouragement would be given to a Planned Community concept as outlined in the zoning ordinance. Haphazard development will not be considered.

□

Development within the Dixboro Community will only be permitted where adverse impact to natural features is avoided. Extensive landscaping and preservation of natural features (woodlands, wetlands, lakes, streams and drainage ways), found throughout the defined study area, would be incorporated into development site plans. This type of buffering would also be used between land uses within the Community and surrounding agricultural or residential land uses.

□

Existing uses in the Dixboro Community should be adequately screened and protected from spillover effects of new development within the study area.

□

The Dixboro Design Review Board should continue to review proposed new buildings, additions to existing buildings, and exterior remodeling of existing buildings. The design process should continue to be coordinated with the Planning Commission’s site plan review process. Site plan review should also recognize the guidelines herein.

