

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.