

# Chapter 6 GROWTH MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

## Introduction

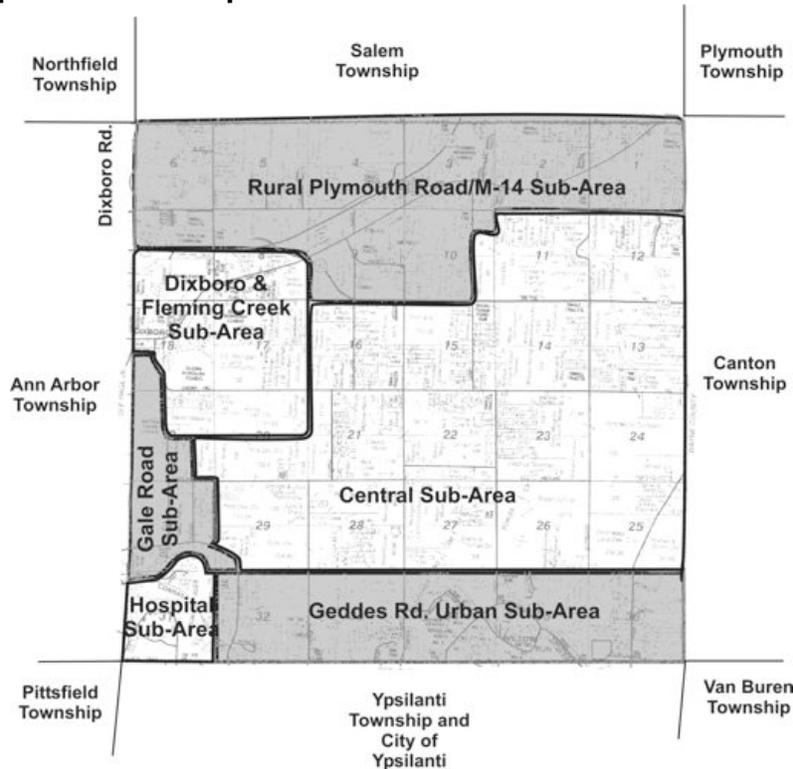
This Chapter opens with a general description of the major planning sub-areas of the Township. It is followed by the Growth Management Strategy and Future Land Use sections. The last section lays the foundation for a Greenspace Plan for the Township.

## PLANNING SUB-AREAS

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

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

**Map 6-1 Superior Township Sub-areas**



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

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

## GROWTH MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

### **Introduction**

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

### **Key Strategies to Reach Vision**

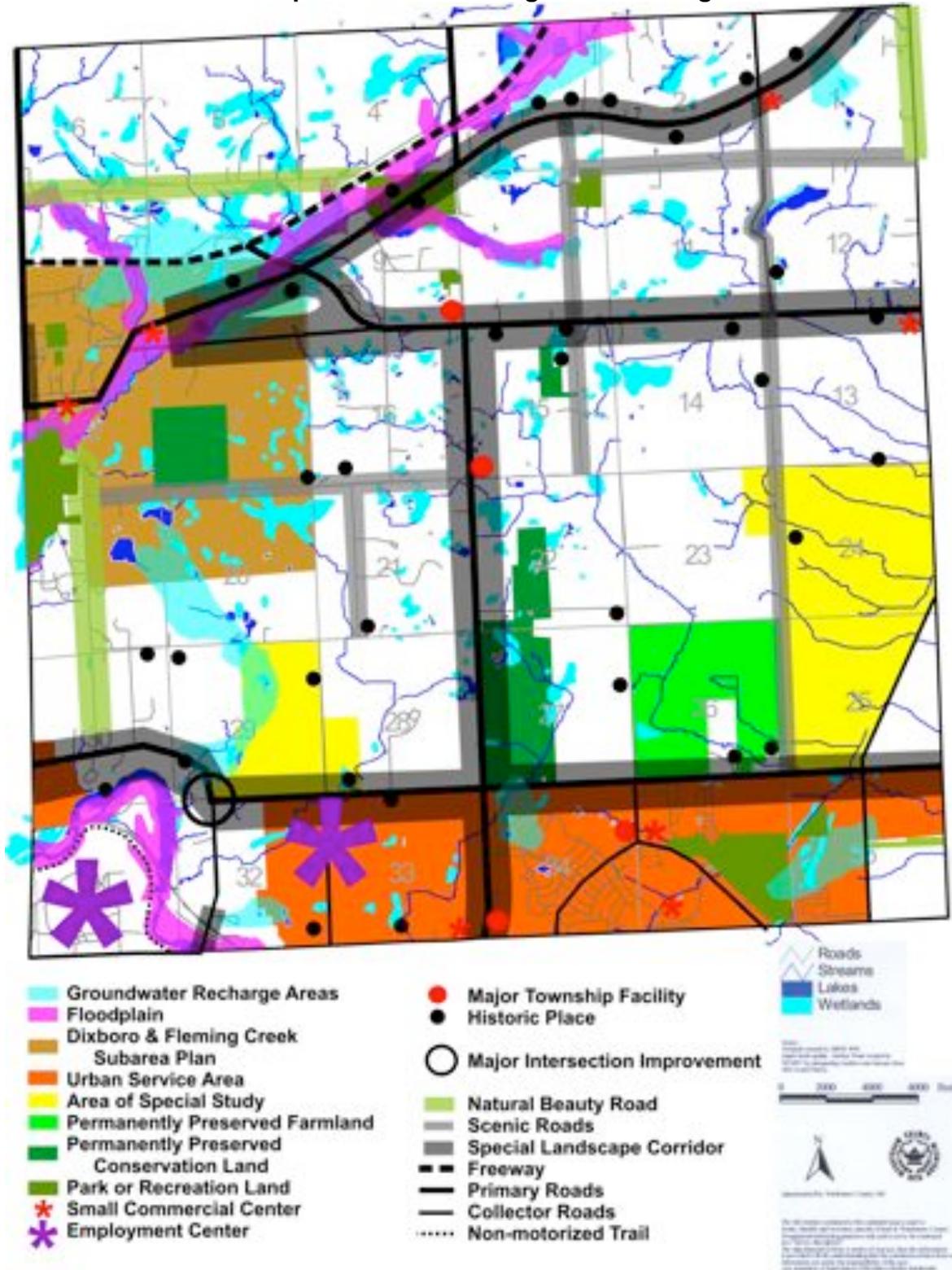
Following is a description of the key strategies that will continue to be followed in order to achieve the Vision, Goals, and Policies set forth in Chapter 5. The core elements of these strategies are illustrated on Map 6-2, Growth Management Strategies. All of the key policies related to these strategies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

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

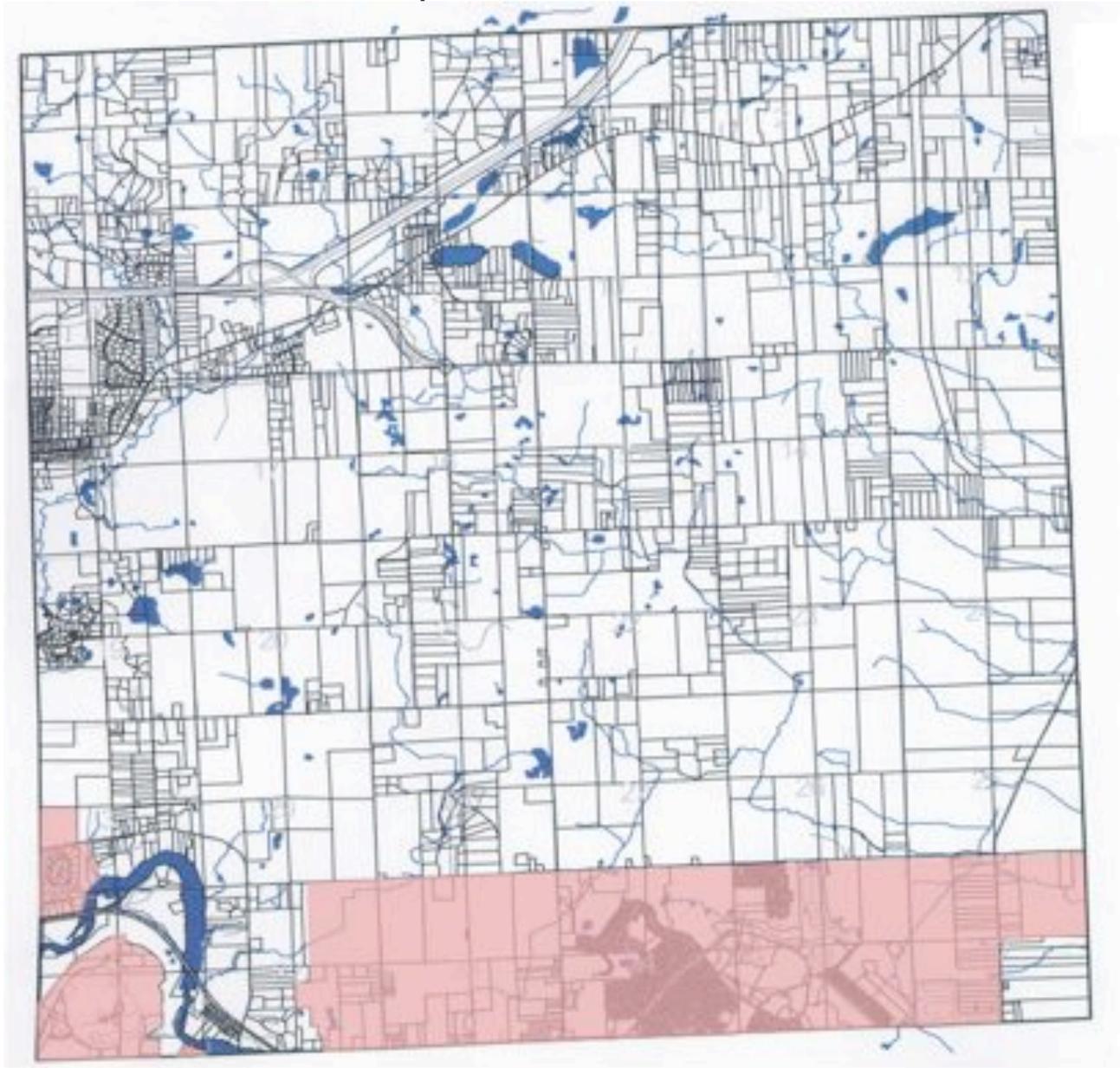
- (1) Provision of an Urban Service Area for future public sewer and water service and urban-scale land uses (as designated on Map 6-3);**
- (2) Preservation of agricultural lands and conservation of rural open space in the Central Sub-area of the Township;**
- (3) The supply of land suitable for urban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

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

Map 6-2 Growth Management Strategies



Map 6-3 Urban Service Area



 Roads  
Streams  
Lakes

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

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

 0 2000 4000 6000 Feet

 N



Map prepared by: Professional Planning, Inc.  
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### **Geddes Road Urban Sub-area**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Gale Road Sub-area**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Hospital Sub-area**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Dixboro & Fleming Creek Sub-area**

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

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

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

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

#### **Rural Plymouth Road/M14 Sub-area**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Central Sub-area**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Transportation Improvements**

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

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

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

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

### **Other Public Facilities**

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

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

## URBAN SERVICE AREA

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

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

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

### **Urban Service Area Defined**

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

### **Residential Development Potential**

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

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

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

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

### **Technology Center Development Potential**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Medical Center Development Potential**

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

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

## **AREAS OF SPECIAL STUDY**

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

### **2004 Plan: Purpose of Special Study Areas**

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

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

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

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

**Special Study Area A**

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

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



**Special Study Area B**

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

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



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

**2009 Update: Special Study Area Designations Removed**

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **FUTURE LAND USE**

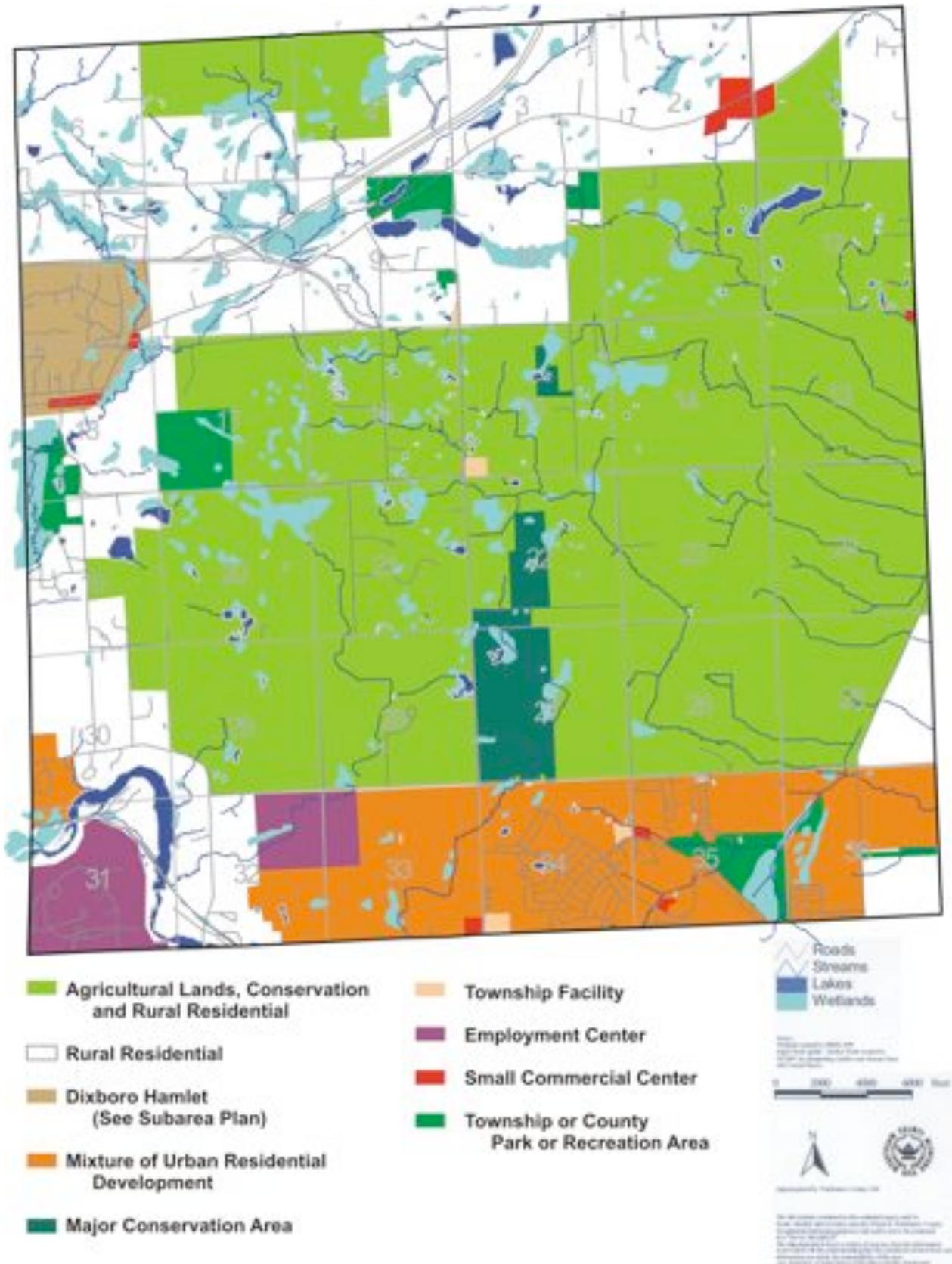
### **Introduction**

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

### **Elements of the Future Land Use Map**

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

Map 6-4 Future Land Use



**Agricultural, Conservation, and Rural Residential**

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

**Major Conservation Areas**

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

**Rural Residential**

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

**Dixboro Hamlet**

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

**Mixture of Urban Residential Densities**

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

**Employment Centers**

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

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

**Small Commercial Centers**

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

**Township Facilities**

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

**Township or County Park or Recreation Area**

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

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES**

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

**Technology Center**

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

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

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

### **Medical Center**

The Township will continue to work in cooperation with St. Joseph Mercy Hospital officials to encourage development of the Township's designated "Medical Center" (see the "Urban Service Area" section of this Chapter).

### **Dixboro Hamlet**

The Township will promote and encourage the development of the Dixboro hamlet area in accordance with the policies and desired character described in the Dixboro Area Plan Amendment (Chapter 9 of this Plan).

### **Rural Economic Development**

The Township will continue to encourage the purchase and donation of development rights to permanently preserve agricultural land. The Township will also encourage farmers to diversify their income sources through development of value-added agricultural tourism and entertainment activities consistent with Zoning Ordinance requirements.

### **Home Occupations**

There has been a revival in home entrepreneurship over the past decade. The expansion of broadband Internet and cellular telephone access, combined with significant changes in the character of American corporate workplaces makes home occupations, telecommuting, and "virtual offices" feasible.

Home occupations are those where the entrepreneur works from home, and can, within certain limitations, be almost any type of business. Some develop as people perform services elsewhere, but use part of their home as an office. Many tend to be service or direct marketing/sales

oriented, and an increasing number are Internet-based businesses. Starting up a new business from home offers cost savings, and may increase the potential for success.

The economic impact of a home-based business is like that of any other successful business operation, even if on a smaller scale. Sales of products and services generate income from which supplies, equipment, and labor are purchased and increased disposable income becomes available to spend in the Township. Since owners of home occupations work in the Township, it is likely that more purchases will also be made locally, which benefits other area businesses.

Recent updates to the “home occupation” provisions of the Township’s Zoning Ordinance have made it easier to operate a variety of small-scale home occupations in residential zoning districts. The Township will continue to permit limited business activities that do not adversely impact the residential character of the property or neighborhood.

The Township will also encourage owners of highly successful and growing home occupations to relocate their operations to nearby office and commercial zoning districts when they exceed zoning limitations in the residential districts.

## GREENSPACE PLAN

An important goal of the Superior Township Master Plan is to establish a linked greenspace system in Superior Township. The elements of this system and implementation approaches will be specified in a separate Greenspace Plan. A greenspace system would include:

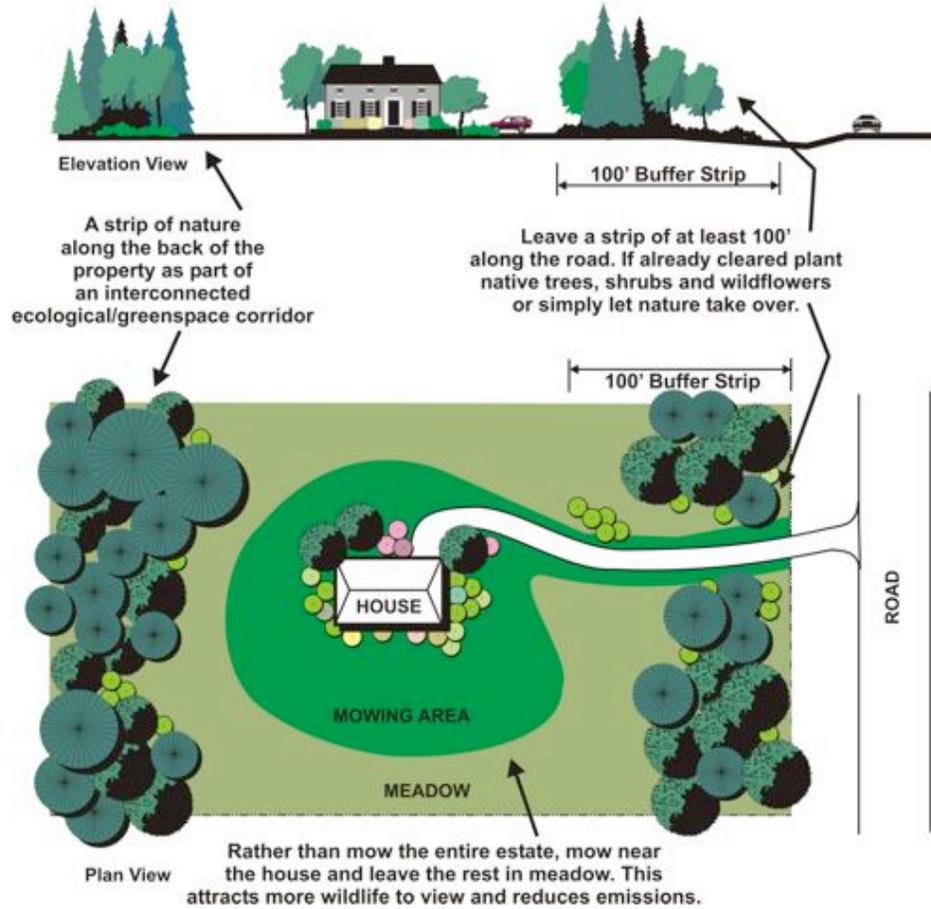
- Interconnected open space that serves as ecological corridors to help protect and foster animal and plant wildlife and as a community amenity that preserves rural character. Ecological corridors would have no public access except for portions of public parks and preserves dedicated for such use.
- Recreational greenway trails to encourage walking and bike riding for exercise, to experience the outdoors, and as an alternative to automobile travel within the Township and surrounding communities. Residents could travel to parks, schools, and other places of interest without needing to use the car. Greenway trails would provide access from all other sub-areas to parks and other nature preserves intended to be open to the public.
- Protected rural character along rural roads with a special focus on vegetated buffers and trees lining most roads.

Establishment of a greenspace system usually requires volunteer action by property owners to manage select portions of their properties as open space, acquisition of easements or property from willing sellers, and the dedication of appropriate portions of new developments to open space. One way landowners can voluntarily contribute to the greenspace system and to rural character in general is to retain open space on their properties.

A common approach is illustrated in Figure 6-1.

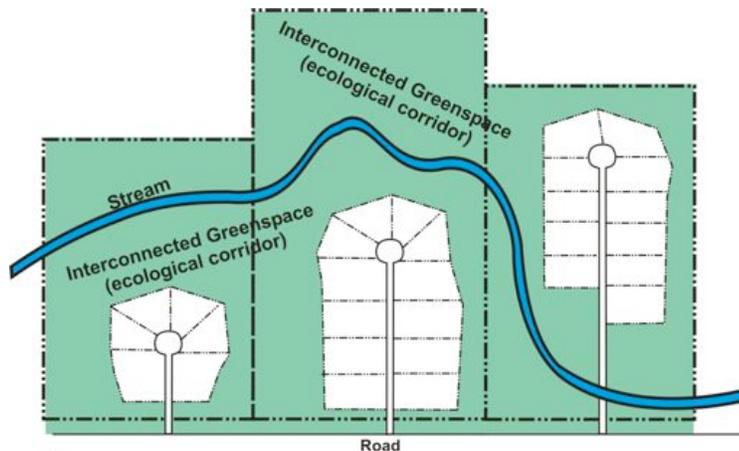
As very large parcels are developed for residential subdivisions, dedicated open space should be located along the roads and in areas of the parcel that will connect to open space on adjacent parcels. (See Figure 6-2.) Site plan review standards in the Zoning Ordinance can aid in coordinating this process but a Greenspace Plan is needed to document open space assets that should be included in interconnected open space and to provide direction to developers.

Figure 6-1 How Large Lot Landowners Can Help Protect Open Space



Source: Adapted from the Benzie County Open Space and Natural Resources Protection Plan.

Figure 6-2 Interconnected Greenspace (ecological corridors) Preserved on Three Separate Residential Developments



Source: Adapted from the Benzie County Open Space and Natural Resources Protection Plan

Developing an integrated greenspace system will require preparing a Greenspace Plan and then implementing it. The Greenspace Plan will take some time to prepare. It should be prepared by a committee made up of members of the Township Planning Commission, Township Parks and Recreation Commission, and Township Board. The public should be active participants in its preparation.

In general, the desirable elements of an interconnected open space system include floodplains, wetlands, woodlands, streams, drains, and steep slopes. These are areas that should be protected from intensive development, and connecting them with undeveloped corridors will be important in preserving the desired character in Superior Township as it develops in the future. Those elements are depicted on Map 6-5. Parks and recreation sites and other protected areas that would be desirable to include in the greenspace system or would be attractive places for greenway trails to reach are also depicted on Map 6-5.

Map 6-5 contains the foundation for a Greenspace Plan for Superior Township, but much work remains to be done before it can be finalized as a separate supporting plan to this Master Plan. First, greenway trail routes will need to be identified. Some of these should be routed cross-country while others will need to be placed in road rights-of-way with support of the appropriate road authorities. Trails will need to be designated for use by intended users which will vary depending on the trail. For example, horses will likely only be permitted on some trails, whereas pedestrians and bikes will likely be allowed on all trails.

Second, much of the Greenspace Plan will consist of interconnected natural areas without public trails. It often takes time to identify the key existing natural wildlife corridors, and even more effort to solicit participation from the private landowners for long-term preservation of such natural wildlife corridors.

Third, much of the land area in white, north of Geddes Road, is presently in agricultural use. Those farms that are ultimately permanently protected through a PDR, TDR, conservation easement, or donation will be a part of the adopted Greenspace Plan.

Implementation elements of the Greenspace Plan are likely to include:

- The identification of priority open spaces and recreational greenways for acquisition and coordination with developers.
- Methods for acquiring ownership or purchase of easements in open space and recreation property by purchase and donation. The Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy and the Superior Land Conservancy have already begun to do this. Their efforts should be encouraged and coordinated. Adoption of a millage to help fund

Township acquisition should be considered. Informational assistance should be provided to landowners regarding the benefits and tools for land preservation.

- In new development projects, open space and recreational space should be provided and protected, consistent with the Greenspace Plan and coordinated between adjoining properties to make useful links.
- Encouraging more clustered residential development.
- A major tree planting initiative along roads in the Township.
- Vigilant protection of the character of designated natural beauty roads.
- Protection of rural character along roads in the Township.
- The construction of a Township trail system linked to the sidewalk system in the urban parts of the Township.
- Provision of greenway trail connections between the Township and adjoining jurisdictions.

A greenspace system can take decades to implement, but the longer preparation of a Greenspace Plan is delayed, the more difficult it will become. Each new development presents new opportunities and potentially new threats to implementation of a Greenspace Plan. Thus, the initiative to create a Greenspace Plan in Superior Township should begin as soon as this Plan update is adopted.

Map 6-5 Elements to Consider in Developing a Greenspace Plan

