

SPRINGPORT TOWNSHIP COMMUNITY LAND USE PLAN



December, 2010

**A product of the
Springport Township Planning Commission**



SPRINGPORT TOWNSHIP

Jackson County, Michigan

Community Land Use Plan

**Created by the Springport Township
Planning Commission**

With the assistance of:

**Region 2 Planning Commission
120 W. Michigan Avenue
Jackson, Michigan 49201**



December, 2010

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION	4
II.	PHYSICAL SETTING/NATURAL FEATURES OF SPRINGPORT TOWNSHIP	7
III.	POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS	17
IV.	LAND USE AND PHYSICAL FEATURES	22
V.	TRANSPORTATION	24
VI.	LAND USE PROBLEMS AND POTENTIALS	26
VII.	LAND USE PLAN	28
	A. Springport Township Land Use Goals and Objectives	28
	B. Springport Township Land Use Plan	30
VIII.	PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND ZONING PLAN	32

INTRODUCTION

What is a Master Plan?

This planning effort provided the Springport Township Planning Commission with an opportunity to consider the future course of development in the Township. Among the reasons for this was a desire to avoid a random and inefficient land development pattern. Other purposes for planning included the following:

- A plan provides a guide for zoning decisions.
- A plan directs future growth toward areas of the Township more capable of handling the specific nature and intensity of land uses.
- Planning and zoning help to identify and conserve areas of significant natural features.
- Planning is a continuous process that allows the adjustment of goals and objectives according to changing growth and demographic patterns.
- Adherence to the community land use plan reduces the potential for conflicting land uses.
- Plans are required to be kept up-to-date by Michigan planning and zoning enabling legislation.

The Future Land Use Plan and the Zoning Ordinance

This Future Land Use Plan is intended to guide the future growth and development of the Township. It is not an ordinance and does not have the force of law. The Plan takes a long-term view of the Township and provides a vision 20 years or more in the future. As such, the Plan represents a vision for the Township for the year 2030. Contained within the Plan are goals, objectives, and policies, plan implementation measures, a land use plan map, and a zoning plan. The land use plan map indicates appropriate areas for future land uses according to a vision for a desired future development pattern.

The zoning ordinance is the primary instrument used to implement this plan. The zoning ordinance provides zoning districts in which permitted land uses are listed, prohibited land uses are omitted, and lot requirements including density, building setbacks, maximum height, and maximum lot coverage percentages are provided. The zoning ordinance includes a zoning map indicating where zoning districts are located.

The Zoning Plan that is included as part of the Plan Implementation section provides detailed information on the relationship of the Future Land Use Plan to the Township Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Plan translates future land use plan designations to existing and proposed zoning district designations.

Springport Township

In the State of Michigan, enabling authority for community planning is provided by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, or P.A. 33 of 2008. The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, or P.A. 110 of 2006 also requires that zoning be based on a plan that promotes health, safety, and general welfare.

Planning Process and Plan Organization

Work began on the Springport Township Plan in 2008 with an inventory of existing conditions. In the months that followed, information was reviewed regarding population and housing trends, economy, natural features, infrastructure, land use trends, and the transportation system. This information is presented in the Community Profile.

As required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, the final task in the planning process was to reach out to the citizens of Springport Township for additional public input through the public hearing process. The plan was distributed to surrounding communities, the Region 2 Planning Commission, and the County Affairs subcommittee of the Jackson County Board of Commissioners for their input.

By working with residents, business owners, township officials, planners, surrounding communities, and other stakeholders, Springport Township has prepared a plan that balances the competing interests that affect land use decisions. These decisions include, for example, jobs and tax base on one side and protection of quality of life and natural resources on the other. Through careful implementation of the Future Land Use Plan, the Township is preparing to build its tax base and provide for high quality new growth, while preserving existing natural assets and protecting the overall health, safety, and welfare of its residents.

Planning and Zoning Responsibilities

Several committees, agencies, and individuals are involved in planning, zoning, and other aspects of township development. These entities are listed below with a brief description of their roles.

Township Board of Trustees

The Township Board of Trustees is the legislative body that is elected to serve the residents of Springport Township. As the legislative body, the Township Board has the authority to formally adopt the zoning ordinance and amendments to the text and zoning map. The Board also sets the budget, and appoints members to committees.

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission consists of a chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary, township board liaison, and a zoning board of appeals representative. Their main duties include the following:

- Take action on requests for amendments to the Zoning Ordinance.
- Create and maintain the township plan.
- Review development proposals including site plan review, conditional uses, land division

Springport Township

and subdivision, and site condominium proposals.

Though the Planning Commission is primarily a recommending body, it has the primary responsibility in development of the community plan.

Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA)

The Zoning Board of Appeals is the only body at the township level that hears appeals on zoning matters. When administrative decisions are made in connection with enforcing the ordinance, they can be appealed. When this occurs, the ZBA hears appeals and judges the merit of the request based on criteria listed in the Zoning Ordinance.

The ZBA also has the responsibility of interpreting the Zoning Ordinance when it is alleged that the Zoning Administrator or other township official or agency is in error. The ZBA has the authority to provide the official interpretation of the Zoning Ordinance with appeals to their interpretation taken to Circuit Court.

Zoning Administrator

The township zoning administrator is the primary official responsible for the enforcement of the Zoning Ordinance and other ordinances. The zoning administrator has several responsibilities including being the primary person-of-contact for developers seeking project approval, site plan review, issuance of zoning compliance permits, scheduling and arrangement of committee meetings, issuance of citations and court appearances, and public hearing notification.

Region 2 Planning Commission Staff

Staff of the Region 2 Planning Commission routinely advises the Planning Commission with rezoning recommendations and assisted the Planning Commission in development of this Master Plan.

Jackson County Zoning Coordinating Committee (JCZCC)

A committee of the Jackson County Board of Commissioners, the Zoning Coordinating Committee reviews and recommends on zoning ordinance amendments and community plans from Jackson County communities.

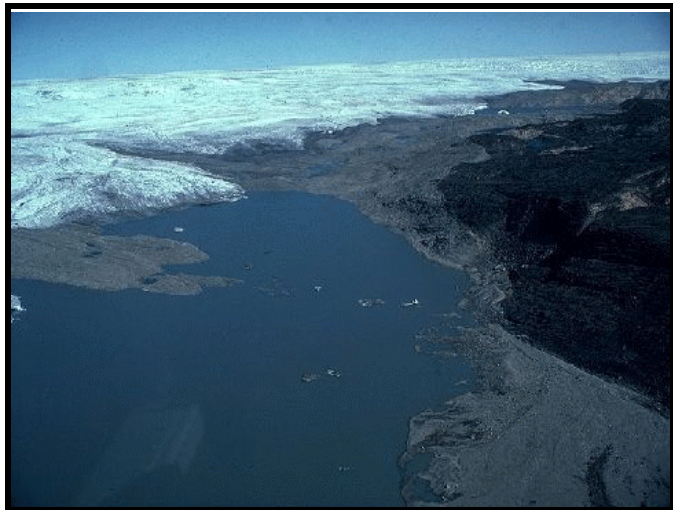
Springport Township

II. PHYSICAL SETTING/NATURAL FEATURES OF SPRINGPORT TOWNSHIP

Springport Township is located in the northwest corner of Jackson County and is surrounded by Calhoun County to the west, Eaton County to the north, Tompkins Township to the east, and Parma Township to the south (see Map 1). The Township is located in a predominately rural area which has gently rolling to flat topography and soils suited for agricultural purposes. Agricultural production is, therefore, a vital part of the Township economic base.

The Township is located in close proximity to a number of cities which offer employment opportunities to Township residents. The Village of Springport, having a 2000 population of 704, is located within the Township and serves as a focal point for much of the economic activity within the area; the City of Albion, located approximately eight miles south of the Township, had a 2000 population of 9,144; the City of Eaton Rapids, located approximately eleven miles north of the Township, had a 2000 population of 5,330; while the City of Jackson, located approximately twenty miles southeast of the Township, had a 2000 population of 36,316.

As with the remainder of the State of Michigan, landforms in Springport Township were primarily created and shaped by glaciation. Thousands of years ago, glaciers scratched the surface of the Earth and carried sediments. When the glaciers melted, the sediments were deposited and melting ice created rivers and lakes. The glaciers of the latest ice age receded approximately 10,000-15,000 years ago. This chapter presents information on the effects of glaciation including topography, soils, rivers, and streams.



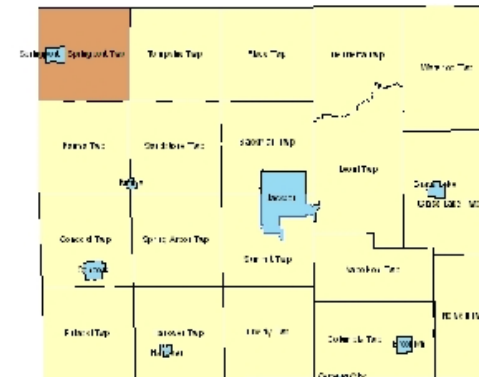
Example of glaciation

Topography

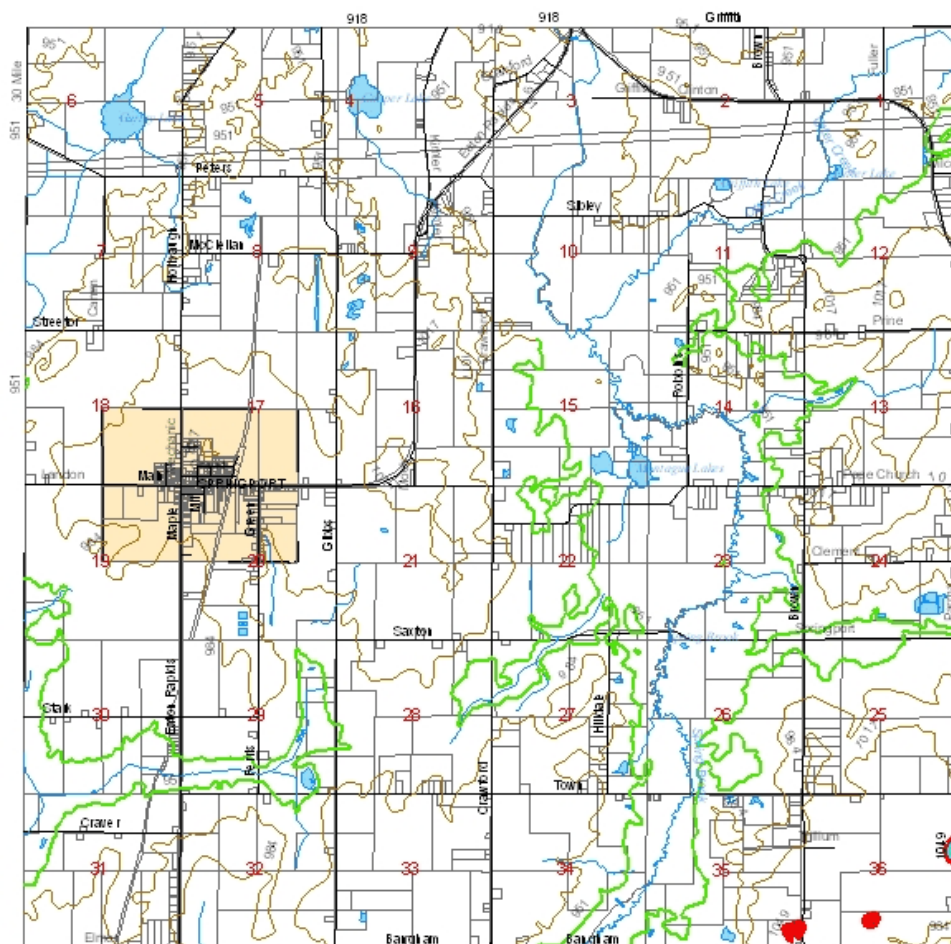
The topography of Springport Township is shown on Map 2. The map indicates that the highest elevations are found in the southeast corner of the Township in sections 35 and 36 where small and isolated areas of 1,049 feet above sea level are found. Larger areas of high elevation are found east of the Village where elevations of 1,017 feet above sea level exist. Drainage flows toward Otter Creek and Spring Brook where the lowest elevations are found at 951 feet above sea level.

Map 1

VICINITY MAP



Jackson County



Map 2

SPRINGPORT TOWNSHIP

TOPOGRAPHY

Legend

- Highest Elevations
- Lowest Elevations
- Elevation Contours



Map Created: September 22, 2008

Springport Township

Soils

Soils were formed when receding glaciers deposited silt, loam, and sand on bedrock formed during earlier geologic times. The depth of the deposits ranges from a few feet to hundreds of feet. When soils were deposited on flat surfaces with the bedrock at a considerable depth, the result was dark, rich soils ideal for farmland. If the soils were formed into hills, much of the rich soil will have washed out and the slope reduced the desirability of the land for farming.

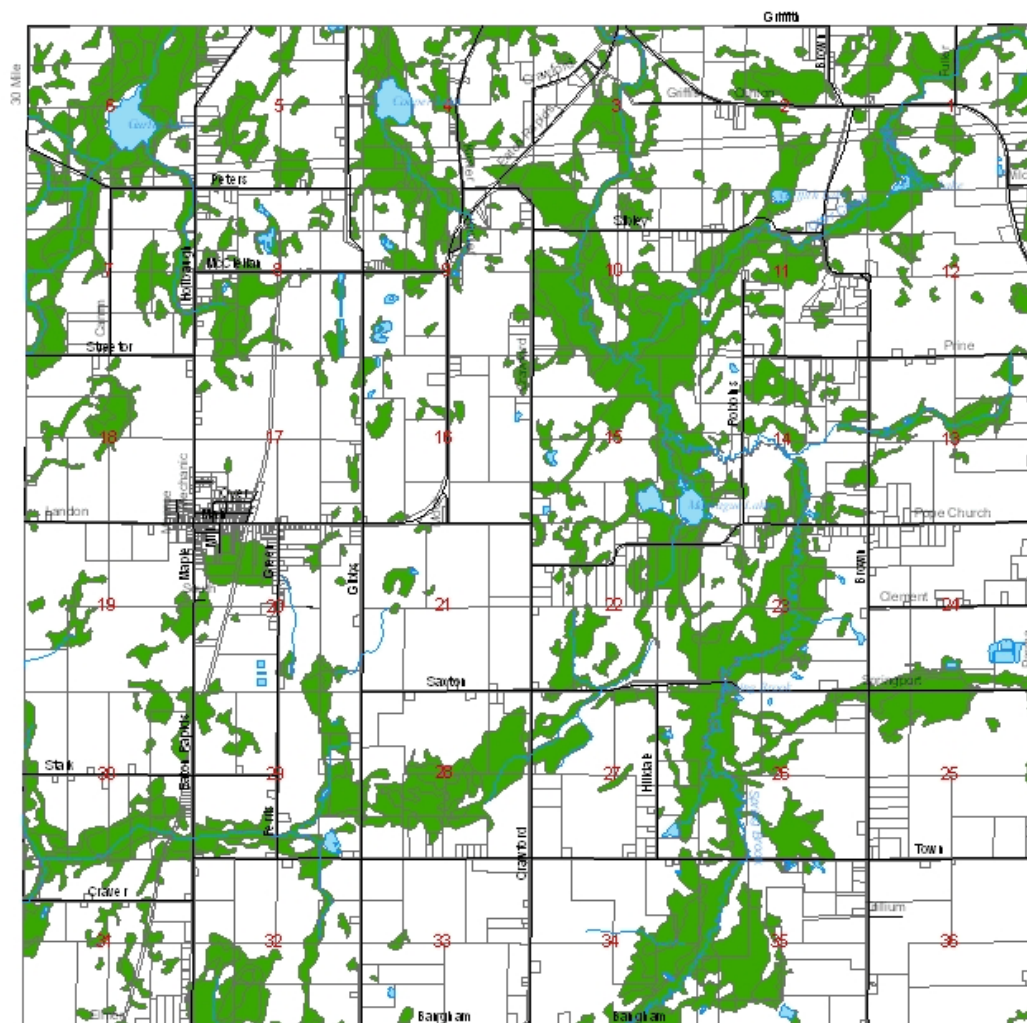
The suitability of Springport Township soils was examined based on groundwater recharge and presence of hydric soils. The evaluation was based on the criteria used by the Jackson County Soil Survey. The following sections present the findings of these examinations.

Groundwater Recharge

Ground water supplies are provided by an absorption of surface waters into underground areas. Most of these recharge areas can be found on sandy and gravel glacial soils where rainwater and runoff quickly gain access to underground storage areas. These important recharge areas are significant since much of the Township's drinking water comes from local groundwater supplies. Ground water is obtained from wells driven into the unconsolidated glacial material ranging from 25 to over 150 feet in depth. Water is generally plentiful in the sandy and gravel soils west of the former lake bed but is harder to obtain in the eastern portions of the Township where water movement is much slower through the lake clays and shales.

Groundwater recharge areas are shown in Map 3 which is based on information contained in the Jackson County Comprehensive Plan. The two principal factors that were used to generate the map were soil permeability and clay content, but other factors were also considered including: natural vegetation, underlying material, seepage, and presence of hydric (wet) soils. Though the map is useful on a large-scale basis, it is no substitute for field testing and direct knowledge of the area. The map identifies areas that are subject to pollution of ground waters and, therefore, areas that could be targeted if there is a desire to maintain and protect rural water supplies.

The map indicates that there are large groundwater recharge areas in Springport Township. Many of those are associated with rivers and streams and the county drain system. The availability of readily-accessible groundwater has been an important factor influencing development patterns in Jackson County. Those areas of the county with moderate- and high-groundwater recharge also have the ability to accommodate septic tank absorption fields.




Map 4

SPRINGPORT TOWNSHIP

HYDRIC SOILS

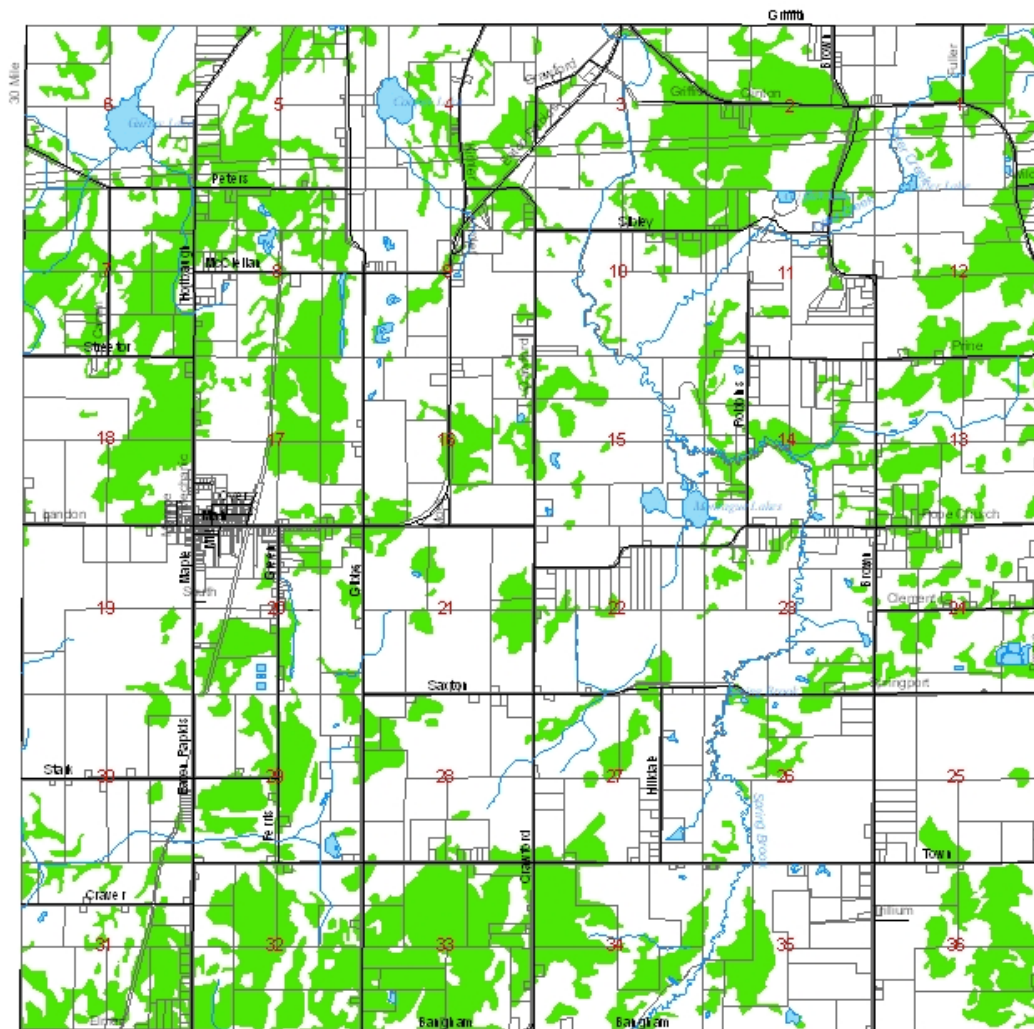
Legend

 Hydric Soils

Source: Jackson County Soil Survey



Map Created: September 23, 2008




Map 5

SPRINGPORT TOWNSHIP

PRODUCTIVE AGRICULTURAL LANDS

Legend

 Productive Agricultural Soils

Source: Jackson County Soil Survey



Map Created: September 23, 2008

Springport Township

Hydric Soils

Based on the Jackson County Soil Survey, soils were examined for the presence of water. These are soils that are generally considered to be unsuitable for septic tank absorption fields. The percolation rate of these soils is not high enough to dispose of waste at an acceptable rate. These are general areas to avoid for future low-density residential development.

Map 4 presents locations of hydric soils in Springport Township. While this map should only be used on a general (not site specific) basis, it shows that there are several large areas of the Township where hydric soils exist, and thus, are unsuitable or marginal for sewage disposal systems. These areas are found throughout the Township especially in the areas around bodies of water including streams and lakes.

Productive Agricultural Lands

Agricultural productivity is based upon a number of factors and certain soils are deemed to be the most productive in a particular region. While management practices will allow practically any soil to be productive, some soils allow greater productivity with less input. These competitive soils are the ones that have the greatest need for preservation.

What is the basis for selection of a particular soil for classification as a productive soil within a region? The most obvious criterion is the production of general field crops is easily available from the Jackson County Soil Survey. Certain crops may need special soils such as mint or blueberries but these are specialty situations, not generally produced crops. To maintain the agricultural economy of the county the most productive soils need to be preserved in the agricultural districts.

Map 5 reflects agricultural productivity in Springport Township. It is based on a ranking system which was developed from the Jackson County Soil Survey using production figures for all the crops generally grown in Jackson County. Yields of corn, corn silage, winter wheat, oats, soybeans, and alfalfa hay were used.

The map shows that productive agricultural soils are found in scattered locations. Concentrations of productive soils exist in small areas north of the Village of Springport and in the northeast and southwest corners of the Township.

To an extent, the soil characteristics of Jackson County have played a role in the development pattern that we see today. Springport Township is no exception as soil characteristics have helped to guide the location of agricultural and residential land uses.

Springport Township

Hydrology

There are several lakes and waterways in Springport Township. The most prominent of these are Otter Creek, Spring Brook, Gurley Lake, Cooper Lake, and Montague Lakes. The drainage pattern for most of the Township is southeasterly toward Lake Erie.

Otter Creek and Spring Brook are important waterways that help drain the Township. They deliver stormwater runoff toward the Grand River which drains into Lake Michigan. Every river has an associated floodplain. Floodplains are flat areas that function as storage basins during periods of high water due either to precipitation or a rapid rate of stormwater runoff. Development in floodplains not only jeopardizes the structure being placed in the floodplain, but the structure also displaces water that would have otherwise settled. Therefore, development in floodplain areas increases the magnitude of flooding and increases the flood elevation above its normal stage.

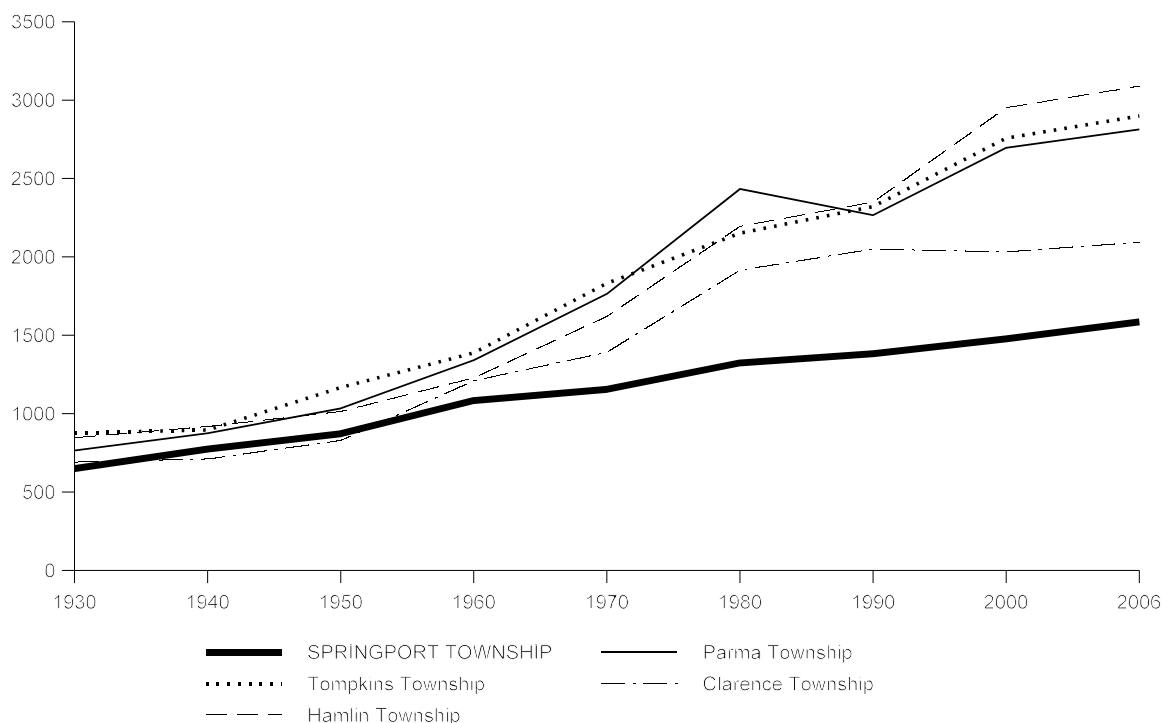
There are several small lakes in Springport Township. The most significant in terms of size are Gurley Lake, Cooper Lake, and Montague Lakes. These lakes are largely undeveloped ranging in size from Gurley Lake at approximately 40 acres, Cooper Lake at 27 acres, East and West Montague lakes with a combined area of 28 acres, to Griffith and Fuller lakes, each with an area of 3 to 4 acres.

There are several areas of wetlands in Springport Township (depicted on Map 6). While some wetlands exist in expected areas such as near lakes and rivers, others are found in a random pattern.

III. POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

In 2000 the population of Springport Township included 2,182 persons (including the Village of Springport). This represents an increase of 4.4 percent over the 1990 total of 2,090 persons. Figure 1 and its accompanying table, "Area Population Growth, 1930-2006", provides a basis for comparing population size and growth rates between Springport Township and other surrounding townships. As the table indicates, the growth rate over the past several decades in Springport Township has generally been slower than growth rates for the adjoining townships. In terms of actual number of persons, the Township has a population size which is similar to surrounding townships. Population growth within the Village of Springport during the 1960-1970 decade was slightly lower than that of the Township. Table 2 entitled, "Population Projections 1975-2000" represents projected levels of population for Jackson County, Springport Township, and Springport Village. The table indicates that the Township may anticipate an increase of over 680 persons by the year 2000, a projected population increase of 36% during the next 25 years.

Figure 1
Area Population Growth, 1930-2006



Springport Township

Community	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2006
<i>Springport Township*</i>	650	774	873	1,084	1,156	1,324	1,383	1,478	1,586
<i>Parma Township</i>	765	876	1,034	1,341	1,764	2,435	2,267	2,696	2,814
<i>Tompkins Township</i>	877	896	1,168	1,388	1,832	2,152	2,321	2,758	2,899
<i>Clarence Township</i>	692	712	830	1,211	1,392	1,916	2,051	2,032	2,094
<i>Hamlin Township</i>	847	919	1,015	1,229	1,621	2,195	2,351	2,953	3,089

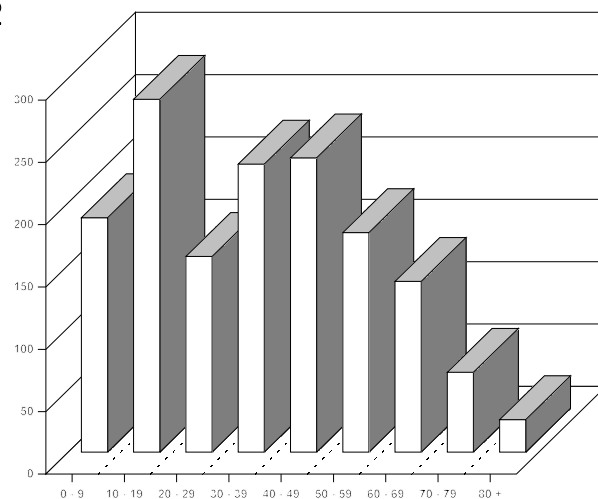
*Population figures do not include Springport village

Source: US Census Bureau

Age Structure

Age is an important factor in determining the needs of Township residents now, and in the future. The age of population determines such demographic factors as the number of retirees, school-age children, employees, and fertility ratios. The study of age patterns can be useful in planning for recreation, education, services for the elderly, and other services. Figure 2 provides the age pattern in Springport Township in the year 2000.

Figure 2



Another indicator of the age of a community is the trend in the median age. The median age - the age at which half of the residents are older and half younger - increased in Springport Township from 32 in 1990 to 35 in 2000. The increasing median age is a phenomenon that is likely to continue when senior citizens, many of them retired, make up a larger percentage of the population. The percentage of senior citizens will grow significantly beginning at the end of the current decade. Due to a decreased birth rate and relatively few women of child-bearing age, the number of school age children has not increased in proportion to population gains.

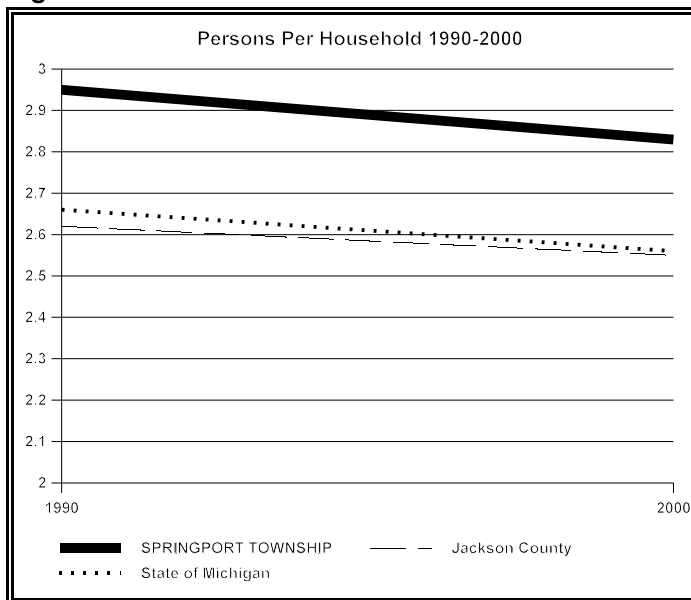
Springport Township

Household Size

For decades the average household size in most areas in the United States has been declining. Springport Township has followed this pattern. In 1990, the average number of people per household in Springport Township was 2.95. By 2000, the number had declined to 2.83. Figure 3 shows how the trend for average household size in Springport Township compares to Jackson County and the State of Michigan.

Springport Township has been consistently higher than the County and State in average household size. Among the reasons are the relatively large number of large households with families with children living at home. The result of the relatively high persons per household ratio is that fewer dwellings are needed to house an equivalent number of people.

Figure 3



Education

The residents of Springport Township have followed a national trend toward higher levels of education. In 1990, for example, the percentage of residents, 25 years of age and older, who achieved at least a high school education was 77%. By 2000, this percentage increased to 81%.

The largest recent increases in educational attainment are those residents who have a college education. Of the 1,388 people in Springport Township age 25 years and above in 2000, 515, or 37%, attended college at some point. Of the number who attended some level of college, 314 did not yet receive a degree while the remaining 201 possessed an associates degree, bachelors degree, or a graduate or professional degree.

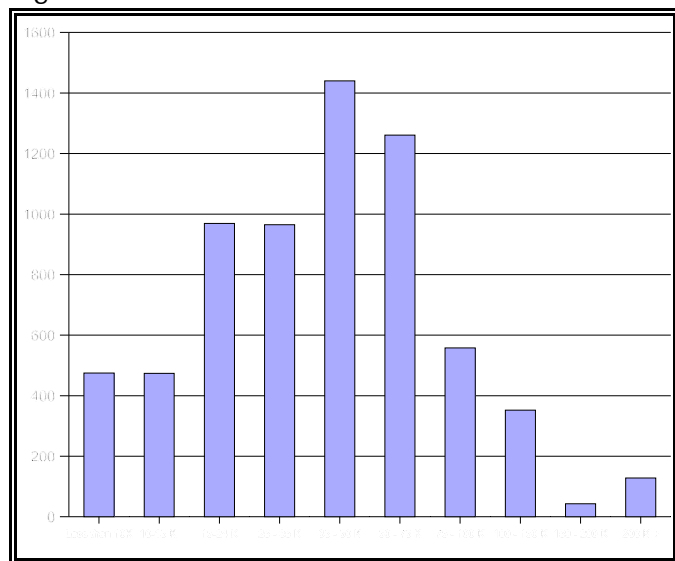
In 2000, there were 585 pupils 3 years and over enrolled in school in Springport Township. Over 84% or 491 of these students were attending elementary or high school. Springport Township is located entirely within the Springport School District.

Springport Township

Income

In spite of a sluggish economy in this decade, income in Springport Township has increased. Reasons for the increase include higher levels of education, cost-of-living increases, and an improved standard of living. Figure 4 provides household income brackets for Springport Township in 2000. In 2000, the average household income was \$42,344 in Springport Township; slightly lower than the Jackson County average household income of \$43,171 in the same year.

Figure 4



Another measure of income is per capita income, which is simply the average income for wage earners in a community. During the 1990's, the per capita income level rose in Springport Township from \$10,323 to \$16,417.

2030 Population Projection

Based on current trends, the population of Springport Township was projected to 2030 using three separate forecasting methods. Based on this analysis, the population of the Township is projected to increase to somewhere between 2,455 and 2,632 by that year. The actual population figure is more likely to fall somewhere in the middle of these extremes. The results of the three projection methods are described in the following paragraphs:

1. Region 2 Planning Commission (R2PC) and the Michigan Department of Transportation have combined to provide population projections for the Township for the future transportation planning model. R2PC predicts a future year population of 2,455 for year 2030.
2. The *constant-share* method assumes that Springport Township will maintain a consistent proportion of the Jackson County population in 2000, or 1.4%. This method takes advantage of the fact that population projections are more accurate for larger populations such as on the county or state level. Caution is advised when using this method because Springport Township has been growing at a slightly faster rate than Jackson County over the last few decades. Jackson County population projections are supplied by the Region 2 Planning Commission. Based on this method, the 2030 projection for Springport Township is predicted to be 2,527.
3. *Linear regression* assumes that the Township will continue to grow at the same rate as it did between 1990 and 2000. The annual rate of increase for that period was about 0.7%. Based on this method, the 2030 population projection for Springport Township is 2,632.

Springport Township

The linear regression projection predicts that the population of the Township will rise at the highest rate through 2030 while the other methods predict lesser degrees of increase. A number of factors will influence future population growth in the Township including infrastructure improvements and economic conditions in the State and County. Population growth should be monitored with the use of available data including building permits for new residential construction, infrastructure improvements, decennial census bureau population figures and estimates, and the knowledge of the Planning Commissioners regarding growth in the area.

Housing

In 2000, there were 518 housing units in Springport Township which was an increase of 65, or 14% above the 1990 figure of 453. Of the 518 dwelling units in 2000, 433 were owner units and 85 were renter units.

A total of 445 dwellings were one-unit stick built or modular structures while most of the remaining dwellings were mobile homes (81 units), duplexes (5), and multiple-family units (3). A large percentage of the homes are farmsteads and other structures constructed prior to World War II with the remainder of homes constructed fairly evenly in the decades since that time.

IV. LAND USE AND PHYSICAL FEATURES

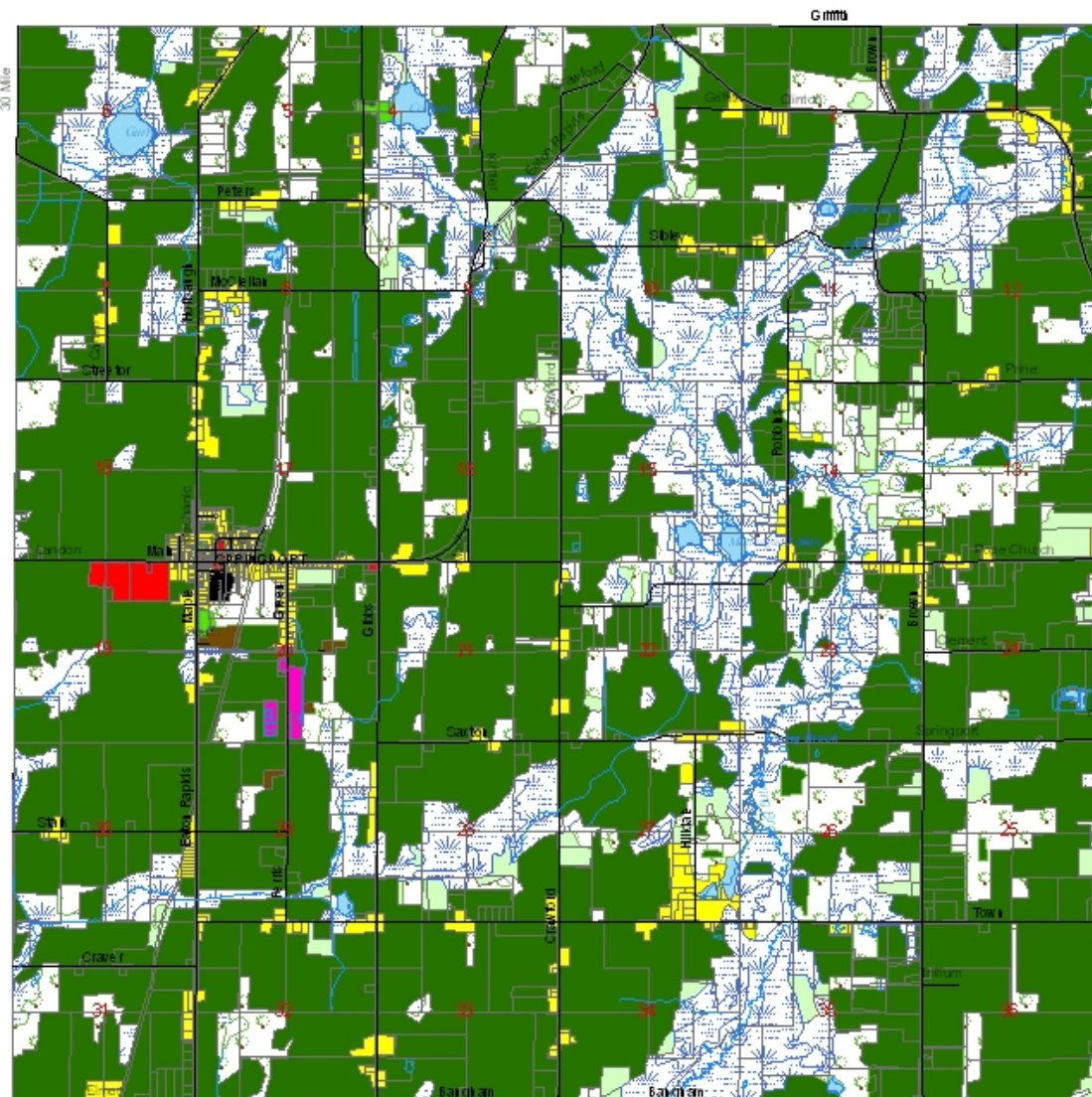
As noted earlier, the Township is located on a gently rolling to flat topography, with degree of slope presenting few limitations on land use. Marsh area of wetlands occupy a large amount of land within the central and eastern portions of the Township and are a very significant feature of the physical environment.

As shown on Map 7, the primary form of development in 1998 in Springport Township was scattered farms and single-family residences located along county roads. Residential land use is the largest acreage of developed land primarily used for single-family residential purposes.

Commercial uses within the Township are few in number, consisting of farm equipment sales and gasoline service stations. Much of the commercial use is east and west of the Village of Springport along Eaton Rapids Road.

Industrial land uses are also few in number consisting of a pallet manufacturing plant and a lumber mill. Both uses, according to the 1973 Land Use Survey, occupied a total of 1 acre.

Public and semi-public uses occupy approximately 20 acres within the Township. These areas consists of a several small cemeteries and a larger area west of Brown Road in Section 35.



Map 7

SPRINGPORT TOWNSHIP LAND USE/LAND COVER, 1998

LEGEND

- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Transportation, Communication, Utilities
- Mining
- Open Land
- Agriculture and Related
- Vacant Land
- Wooded/Forest
- Water
- Wetland



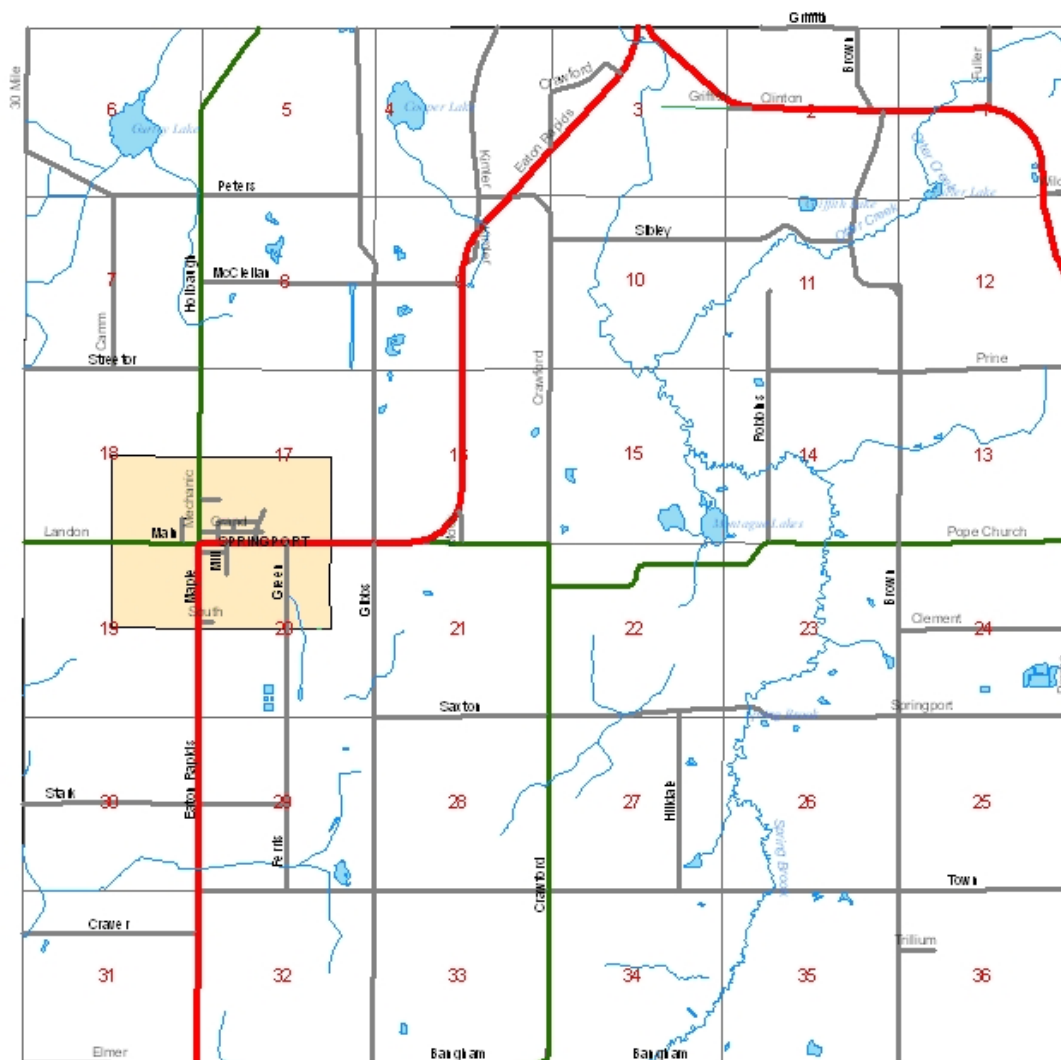
Map Created: October 13, 2008

V. TRANSPORTATION

There are three general classes of road in Springport Township - arterials, collectors, and locals. These serve different purposes with arterials carrying the highest traffic volumes and moving traffic from one town to another. Collector roads deliver traffic from local street to arterials. Local roads are intended to provide access to individual properties and have low traffic volumes. The township transportation functional classification system is shown on Map 8.

Springport Township is served by two state highways, M-99 and M-50, linking the community with urban areas to the south, east and north. Interstate 94 traverses Parma Township, immediately south of Springport Township. M-99 serves as a connection to the interstate route from the Springport area.

Collector roads in the Township include Pope Church Road and Landon Road which both run in an east-west direction, and Holibaugh and Crawford roads which run north and south. The remaining roads in the Township are classified as local roads.



Map 8

SPRINGPORT TOWNSHIP

Road Functional Classification

- Arterial Roads
- Collector Roads
- Local Roads



VI. LAND USE PROBLEMS AND POTENTIALS

Perhaps the most important problem of land use in Springport Township is that of dispersion of land uses, principally single-family dwellings scattered along roads in the rural areas of the Township.

Springport Township has a pleasant environment for residential living, attracting a great number of families. While a little dispersion may be acceptable and is necessary to assure an adequate mix of residential living opportunities, dispersion on a larger scale results in a number of problems which are compounded as additional sprawl occurs.

As noted earlier, the soils and topographic characteristics of the Township are conducive to agricultural activities. Obviously, as agricultural lands are converted to other purposes these lands are not only lost for agricultural production but may also result in patterns of rural land use which are inefficient for farming activities. When such a valuable resource exists it should be properly managed and protected.

Sprawl also results in other problems. As lots are sold along roads the land to the rear of these lots becomes landlocked making any possible future development of these lands difficult and costly. Extensive dispersion results in heavy use of rural roads which require additional maintenance or improvement. The provision of services such as streets, sewer and water, should they ever be necessary, become economically infeasible because of this linear pattern of development. Development of this type also results in reduction in the efficiency and safety of roads in the Township because of the number of turning movements and conflict points which result.

Finally, strip development has substantial impact upon the aesthetic quality of the Township and therefore, the quality of environment for residential purposes. Extensive strip development screens the views available from the road and is contradictory to the rural character of the Township.

Fortunately, dispersion of land uses other than residential, are very limited. As noted earlier, commercial activities are located in only a few areas of the Township, and there are very few industrial land uses. This offers the opportunity for the Township to direct these types of land uses as needs arises into areas of the Township and Village suitable for their development and prosperity while maintaining the quality of environment. This relationship is mutually beneficial to both the living and working environment within the Township.

Springport Township

Springport Township has the opportunity to manage its growth, to mold its future development into a pattern which offers a pleasing living environment. It can correct present land use problems and provide its residents with sound policy to encourage future development in a pattern which results in an efficient, safe and pleasant arrangement.

VII. LAND USE PLAN

Springport Township Land Use Goals and Objectives

The development of goals and objectives is a critical part of the land use planning process in that goals and objectives establish a basis upon which the land use plan and its policies are formulated. The goals and objectives provide the basic framework for the plan concept and establish the purposes for its existence. Based on analyses of Township population, land use and natural features, transportation and other related factors, the Springport Township Planning Commission has established the following land use goals and objectives:

1. Agricultural

Goal:

The protection and preservation of agricultural land from harmful encroachment and incompatible land uses, thus allowing opportunities for pursuing a living from agricultural means and retaining the rural character of the township.

Objective:

- 1) Encourage low population densities in agricultural areas.
- 2) Encourage large lot acreage in agricultural areas to preserve land for agricultural production.

2. Residential

Goal:

The development and maintenance of attractive living environments which contain a suitable mix of housing types, provide for the preservation of existing housing and are located and designed in compatibility with adjacent land uses. Residential areas are to encouraged in or near the Village of Springport.

Objective:

- 1) Encourage development of residential land uses only on soils suitable for septic systems or preferably where future sanitary sewer service is feasible.
- 2) Locate future residential development so as to avoid potential conflict with adjacent incompatible land uses, including agricultural, commercial, and industrial uses.

Springport Township

- 3) Encourage the subdivision of undeveloped land for residential use only when needed on the basis of market demand.
- 4) Encourage concentrations of residential development near the urbanized area so as to avoid uneconomical rural dispersion and strip development.
- 5) Preserve the private investment in the existing housing stock through sound code adoption and enforcement.
- 6) Provide sufficient amounts of land with a high degree of accessibility within the urbanized area for high density residential uses, including mobile home parks and multiple-family developments.

3. Commercial

Goal:

The development of well-located, attractive commercial areas primarily within the urbanized area which provide a variety of retail products and services and which retain the rural character of the Township.

Objectives:

- 1) Emphasize the role of the Village of Springport as the trade center for the Township and surrounding areas.
- 2) Encourage concentrations of related commercial uses so as to avoid strip commercial developments along major roads.

4. Industrial

Goal:

The development and maintenance of appropriate light industrial activities which relate to the rural character in the Township and which will provide employment opportunities and strengthen the local tax base.

Objectives:

- 1) Promote the development of light industrial enterprises only which are compatible with the rural nature of the Township.
- 2) Encourage the location of industrial activities in areas of compatible, adjacent land uses and where such activities can be served by major

Springport Township

thoroughfares, rail service, and sewer and other public facilities, preferably in or near the Village of Springport.

5. Recreation, Open, Space, and Natural Areas

Goal:

The preservation of certain lands which, because of their recreational features, unique nature features, and environmental sensitivity, should be protected to provide recreation opportunities and aesthetic qualities for future generations and maintain a pleasant and uncongested environment.

Objectives:

- 1) Preserve unique features, wetlands, woodlands, and wildlife habitats by restricting development to areas which can tolerate such activity without environmental conflicts.
- 2) Provide public and private recreation and open space areas that are easily accessible to residential areas.

Springport Township Land Use Plan

The Springport Township Land Use Plan is a practical and realistic enactment of the goals and objectives which have been established by the Township. It sets forth a plan for future development which attempts to minimize the previously identified land use problems, capitalize on the opportunities and potentials available to the Township, and encourage appropriate types of land use which promote the health, safety, and welfare of Township residents. It is designed to enable the Township to anticipate various types of development and to program the necessary public services and facilities which aid in maintaining a pleasant and viable community.

The Land use Plan for Springport Township defines the areas into which the various uses of land are anticipated and should be directed. The plan map anticipates the future use of land for agriculture, low- and moderate-density residential, commercial, industrial, and public/semi public uses. Map 9 presents that future land use plan map.

As depicted in the plan, the largest category of land use, in terms of area, is agriculture, including farming activities and related low-density residential uses. As much as possible, the plan proposes the preservation and protection of essential agricultural lands from encroachment by other uses, and the maintenance of conditions necessary for vital agricultural operations. In certain areas of the Township, although their character may be essentially agricultural, limited

Springport Township

amounts of land may be used for residential dwellings on large lots, resulting in densities well below that for residential areas in the plan. These rural non-farm residential uses should be permitted only where soils, topography, and other physical features are not suited for agricultural purposes and where development will not result in pollution problems.

General residential locations are also indicated on the Springport Township Land Use Plan. These areas are located so as to direct residential dwellings in and near the Village of Springport and in rural areas where land splits have made agricultural use impractical. Ideally, residential dwellings at urban or suburban densities should be located primarily in the Village itself, where urban public services are readily available. The designation of residential areas in these locations results in a clustering of residences and allows the provision of efficient service and facilities promoting orderly development and avoiding the problems associated with dispersion and sprawl.

The Township Land Use Plan recognizes that the area in the vicinity of the Village of Springport is the retail and service commercial center for the Township and adjacent areas. As such, future commercial uses have been directed near the Village on the land use plan map.

Industrial uses are also directed in and around the Village of Springport where necessary services and facilities are readily available. Close coordination with the Village planning efforts can insure that the Township retains its rural character, while industrial activities can be grouped in an orderly fashion, as in an industrial park, thus having the amenities necessary to provide industries with the facilities and services they desire.

Clustering of land uses is the basic concept used in the plan to minimize the problems and inefficiencies, hence additional public and private costs, associated with unplanned dispersion and sprawl. Each category of land use has particular locational needs which have been determined and anticipated locations conceptually defined in the plan.

VIII. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND ZONING PLAN

As noted earlier, the plan is a guide intended to promote a safe, efficient, and desirable pattern of land use. The concepts and principles which it describes should be applied as the Township grows and develops. A number of tools are available which enable the Township to guide its growth and development achieving the land use goals defined in the planning process.

A zoning ordinance is the primary instrument which the Township may use implement its land use plan. Properly applied, the zoning ordinance accepts the realities of existing land uses and patterns and gradually, as new uses come about, it directs growth toward achieving the concept of the plan. The Zoning Plan which follows later in this chapter is intended to assist the Planning Commission in implementing the plan by serving several purposes including the application of appropriate zoning districts to plan designations; specifying zoning district lot area, lot width, maximum height, yard setback, and maximum lot coverage requirements; and identifying criteria for making rezoning decisions.

The plan is, therefore, a guide to be used in determinations of zoning. Obviously, the plan cannot anticipate all potential future problems or conditions which may arise, nor can it precisely predict exact locations of future land uses. In the practical matter of day-to-day zoning development, it may be necessary at times to adjust the plan map because of these uncertainties. Certainly, however, the concepts set forth by the Township, which are the actual statements of policy, should be closely followed.

Subdivision regulations provide standards for the subdivision of land which result in development utilizing sound design and having the necessary qualities for a pleasant and healthful living environment. This discourages heavy traffic in residential areas, and a system of utilities which is complete, efficient, and easily maintained.

Zoning Plan

What is a Zoning Plan?

The Springport Township Land Use Plan is intended to provide the basis for zoning in the Township. To this end, the Plan contains a special element known as a “zoning plan”. According to the Michigan planning and zoning enabling acts, a zoning plan describes for the various zoning districts controlling area, bulk, location, and use of buildings and property. The legislation requires the Planning Commission to adopt and file with the Township Board a zoning plan for the areas subject to zoning in the Township. The zoning plan is to include an explanation of how the land use categories on the future land use map relate to the districts on the zoning map.

While the zoning plan is intended to promote zoning that is consistent with the Land Use Plan, it should be kept in mind that the zoning ordinance has a short-term focus of up to five years while the master Plan has a long-range focus of 20 or more years in the future. Accordingly, not all areas on the future land use map should be rezoned until growth indicates the need for zoning changes and/or infrastructure is in place to service new development.

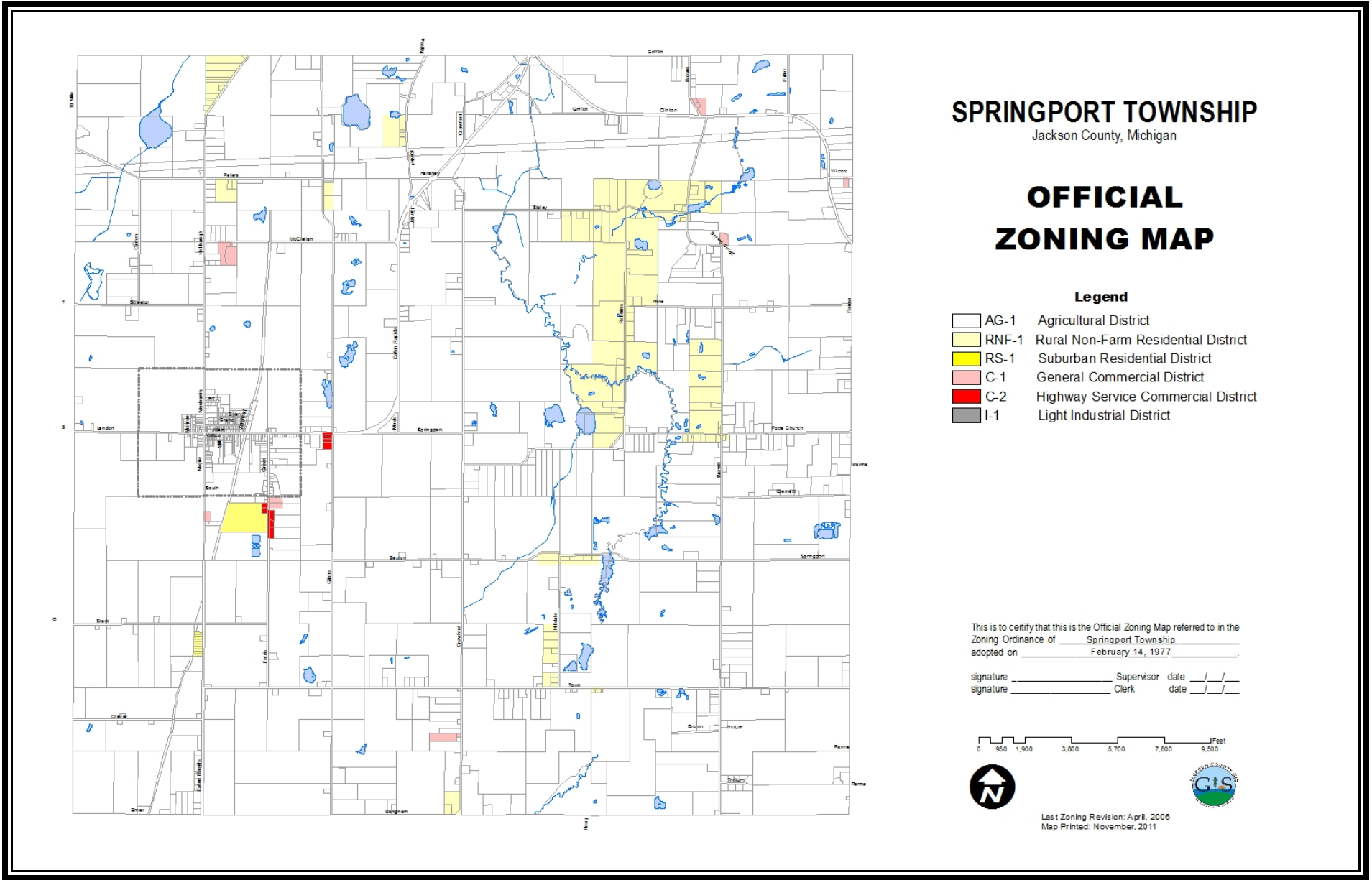
Zoning Districts

The Springport Township Zoning Ordinance currently divides the Township into the following zoning districts (see zoning map on following page):

Agricultural district (AG-1). The purpose of the Agricultural district is to set aside land suitable for agricultural development and agricultural-related uses to protect from premature urban development. Uses are generally limited to single-family homes, farms, kennels, quarries, feedlots, sales of agriculturally-related products, and conservation and recreational uses.

Rural Non-Farm Residential district (RNF-1). The purpose of the Rural Non-Farm Residential district is to provide suitable areas for single-family dwellings at low densities and to preserve the predominantly rural character of these areas. Allowed uses include single-family dwellings, home occupations, recreational uses, churches, schools, nurseries, airports, housing for the elderly, travel trailer parks, animal hospitals, sanitary landfills, and manufactured homes.

Suburban Residential district (RS-1). The Suburban Residential district was established to provide residential areas principally for moderate suburban densities where necessary urban services and facilities, including central sewer and water supply systems, can be feasibly provided. The RS-1 district allows a variety of low-intensity uses including single-family dwellings, recreational uses, churches, nurseries, schools, and multiple-family dwellings.



Springport Township

General Commercial district (C-1). The General Commercial district is intended to encourage planned and integrated groupings of retail, service, and administrative establishments which will retail convenience and comparison goods and provide personal and professional services for the entire area. C-1 allows uses such as personal and business services, offices, indoor commercial amusements, eating and drinking establishments, automobile service stations and repair garages, hotels and motels, churches, and self-service storage facilities.

Highway Service Commercial district (C-2). The purpose of the Highway Service Commercial district is to provide for various commercial establishments offering accommodations, service, and supplies to local as well as through automobile and truck traffic. These districts are to be provided at locations along major thoroughfares and should encourage grouping of variance facilities into centers and discourage dispersion of these activities. Allowed uses in C-2 include automobile services stations and repair garages, motor vehicle sales, drive-through restaurants, motels and hotels, commercial amusement centers, and self-service storage facilities.

Light Industrial district (I). The Light Industrial district is intended to provide suitable space for industrial uses that operate in a safe, non-objectionable and efficient manner, and which are compatible in appearance with and require a minimum of buffering measures from adjoining non-residential zoning districts. r types of land use but with limitations placed to reduce adverse effects on neighboring uses. Allowed uses in the I district include assembly and manufacture, contractors yards, farm machinery sales and repair, lumber yards, industrial office buildings, trucking terminals, and junk yards.

Springport Township

Dimensional Standards

Bulk, height, and setbacks for each district are included in the zoning ordinance. The following table summarizes the current bulk, height, and setback requirements.

Zoning District	Lot Requirements			Minimum Yard Requirements			Maximum Building Height Requirements		Remarks
	Minimum Lot Area	Minimum Lot Width	Maximum Lot Coverage	Front	Side	Rear	Principal	Accessory	
Agricultural, AG-1	1 acre	200'	10%	60'	30'	50'	2 ½ stories, or 35'	100'	Single-family detached dwellings and mobile homes.
	5 acres								All other uses.
Rural Non-Farm Residential, RNF-1	1 acre	200'	5%	35'	20'	35'	2 ½ stories, or 35'	25'	
Suburban Residential, RS-1	10,000 sq. ft.	100'	30%	35'	10' 25' (total)	20'	2 ½ stories, or 35'	25'	Single-family detached dwellings with central sewer and water systems.
	1 acre	120'							All other uses.
General Commercial, C-1*	15,000 sq. ft.	100'	25%	35'	20'	20'	35'		With or without central sewer and water systems
Highway Service Commercial, C-2*	15,000 sq. ft.	100'	25%	35'	20'	20'	35'		
Light Industrial, I*	1 acre	150'	35%	35'	20'	35'	35'	35'	-

*Landscaping buffer required when abutting a residential zoning district and where abutting a public street.

Rezoning Criteria

The most common zoning application of the land use plan is during the rezoning process. Accordingly, a rezoning should be required to meet set criteria in order to be considered consistent with the land use plan. The following standards satisfy this requirement:

- Is the proposed rezoning consistent with the policies and uses proposed for that area in the land use plan?

Springport Township

- Will all of the uses allowed under the proposed rezoning be compatible with other zones and uses in the surrounding area?
- Will any public services and facilities be significantly adversely impacted by a development or use allowed under the requested rezoning?
- Will the uses allowed under the proposed rezoning be equally or better suited to the area than uses allowed under the current zoning of the land?

Relationship to the Future Land Use Map

The remainder of this chapter equates the various zoning districts included on the zoning map with the various categories included on the future land use map.

Agricultural areas. Areas indicated as agricultural are currently implemented with the use of the AG-1, Agricultural zoning district.

Residential areas. The following residential designations are included on the future land use map:

Low-Density Residential. Low-density residential areas are addressed generally on the future land use map. The following zoning districts can be used to implement the low-density residential future land use designations:

- AG-1, Agriculture
- RNF-1, Rural Non-Farm Residential
- RS-1, Suburban Residential

Moderate-Density Residential. One moderate-density residential area is indicated on the future land use plan map. This designation is to be implemented with the use of the RS-1, Suburban Residential zoning district.

Springport Township

Commercial Areas. Three areas are designated as commercial on the future land use plan map. These areas are generally to be implemented with the C-1, General Commercial and the C-2, Highway Service Commercial zoning districts.

Industrial Areas. The industrial future land use plan designation is intended to be implemented with the I, Industrial zoning district.

Other Plan Designations. Other future land use plan designations include the public/semi-public and the wetland categories.

Public/Semi-Public. No zoning district has been designated to implement this plan designation. Instead, uses that fall under this category are permitted in most zoning districts as a permitted or conditional use.

Wetlands. No single zoning district is intended to implement this area at this time. Rather, it is possible that at some point, zoning ordinance or other provisions will be devised to buffer this area through the use of filter strips, an overlay zoning district, or other means. Regulated wetlands are administered in the State of Michigan by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality.