

**GROWTH
MANAGEMENT
PLAN**

GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLAN

Principal Features

- A. The Growth Management Plan is a strategy/policy type plan, that is, it describes the Planning Commission's strategies regarding future growth, development, and preservation of resources of the Township and the policies which are intended to implement them. The strategies are aimed at the fundamental (strategic) issues which the Planning Commission expects the Township to face during the foreseeable future. These basic issues are those which will have enduring effects on the Township, and which will influence the physical character of the Township in the years ahead. The plan is focused upon a limited number of issues so as to concentrate the Township's attention and efforts on those issues which can truly make a difference in the Township's future.
- B. Since the plan concentrates on strategies and policies it is general in nature. That is, the plan shows how the Planning Commission will respond to various issues and the approaches that will be followed. On the other hand, the plan does not prescribe or predict uses of specific parcels of land; it describes the intended use of general areas. The plan does not provide a picture or a blueprint of the Township 20 years hence and should not be interpreted in this fashion. Similarly, the plan does not state that a certain action will be taken at a future time. To give the plan either of these two characteristics would require that the Planning Commission make decisions today concerning future events, something which is impossible to do successfully and, if attempted, gives a plan an unworkable rigidity.
- C. The plan provides guidelines for the Planning Commission and Township Board to make decisions or recommendations for individual parcels of land, specific public improvements, and similar questions that might arise at various times in the future. For example, the plan will provide the framework for Planning Commission recommendations on rezoning petitions and subdivision plats to the Township Board and for Planning Commission decisions on site plans. It is not the intent of the plan that the designation of any area for a specific use entitles a property owner within that area to an immediate zoning change consistent with the use designation. Neither does it mean that certain supporting uses are not to be permitted in any particular area. In both cases, the decision will be made on a case by case basis at the time the question arises and within the context of the plan. The plan will be amended if the analysis involved in the decision indicates that a change is appropriate.
- D. The plan is based on the fact that the future is uncertain and cannot be predicted; that current perceptions of future conditions will change. The major issues will change over time, and strategies and policies appropriate to respond to them will have to be modified or replaced with new ones. As such, the Planning Commission intends to periodically refine, add to, or otherwise modify the plan as events unfold. Refinement may be in the form of restating, deleting, or adding to the issues, strategies, goals, or policies set forth in the Plan. It may also be in the form of detailed policies for specific areas of the Township. These changes might result from analysis of a specific development proposal (such as a rezoning petition), a capital improvement proposal by the Township or other government, a periodic review of the plan by the Planning Commission, or from a detailed study of a part of the township by the Planning Commission. This approach can be viewed as a series of successive attempts to adapt the plan as well as the planning process to changing conditions.
- E. The plan presents major issues, strategies, and policies regarding future land use and facilities. The data and analysis on which the plan is based has been presented in a series of working papers which were discussed prior to preparation and adoption of the plan.
- F. The plan is an overall guide for decisions, but the continual use of the planning process and not the plan itself will assure that decisions regarding land use facilities will be better than they would be in the absence of the process. It is the Planning Commission's intent to continually improve the planning process as well as the plan.

Concept

Even though Freedom Township is primarily rural, it has a community focus point around Pleasant Lake. In addition to considerable residential development, this area also has local commercial uses and public uses such as the Township Hall and a school near the intersection of Pleasant Lake Road and Lima Center Road. The concept behind the preparation of the

Freedom Township Growth Management Plan is to emphasize this area and center controlled growth within this area. The basic policy throughout the Growth Management Plan is to discourage scattered growth from occurring elsewhere within the Township. In essence the Plan creates a single neighborhood for the non-farm residents which also provides for local commercial and public uses required by other Township residents.

Plan Elements

The Growth Management Plan for Freedom Township contains five (5) land use classifications: Low-Density Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Natural Resources, and Agricultural. Each element within the Growth Management Plan is based upon a series of goals and policies for the physical development of the Township that relates to sound planning principles and strives towards the creation of a balanced and stable living environment.

Using the Plan as a statement of Township policy, development can take place in an organized and constructive fashion even though no rigid timetable has been established within which staging of such development should take place. Therefore, the Growth Management Plan establishes where and how such developmental activity should occur and the way in which they relate to one another.

The Growth Management Plan should be distinguished from a zoning map. The Plan represents the Township's long-range policy (15 to 20 years) regarding future growth, whereas a zoning map is a legal document which utilizes property lines to depict short-range (1 to 5 years) legal designations of land use. The Plan should serve as a foundation upon which zoning decisions are made and provide major input to the decision-making process regarding future development proposals.

General Growth Management Plan Goals

The intent of a Growth Management Plan is to insure that the community develops in a manner consistent with the desires of its residents, thus it is necessary to prepare a list of goals and policies which define the Township requisites. In addition to the general goals, specific policies are expressed in the Growth Management Plan which are also discussed herein.

The following goals were used as a guide in the preparation of the Freedom Township Growth Management Plan.

- Protect and promote the health, safety, comfort, convenience and general welfare of the general public.
- Create an environment which maintains a more meaningful life, protects the interests of the individual and the total community.
- Maintain the rural, natural, and scenic qualities of the Township of Freedom by preserving farmland and significant open lands, promoting healthful surroundings for family life, while also providing for the needs of recreation, residence, commerce, and industry in future growth.
- Establish guidelines for realistic and orderly development for those living and working in the Township, recognizing the character of the Township, the needs and desires of its citizens, the capabilities of its natural resources, and the anticipated pressures of its population growth and land development.
- Provide a sound basis for public and private decision making regarding the Township's development.
- Plan for a transportation network which provides safe, efficient and convenient movement of private and commercial traffic throughout the Township.
- Encourage the efficient use of land and water resources in accordance with their character and ability, the preservation and enhancement of scenic and aesthetic features of the Township, and the prohibition of any developments that seriously contaminate, pollute or erode the natural resources of the Township.
- Define a land use pattern which recognizes the compatibility between and balance among land use activities, anticipates the future demand and amount of land needed for each land use activity, identifies the most desirable location for each type of land use activity which permits efficient operations and future expansion, and enhances the environmental quality as well as the tax base of the community.