

FREEMAN TOWNSHIP PROPOSED LAND USE PLAN

The Freeman Township Land Use Plan as created under Planning Act #168 of Public Acts of 1959 and was amended to Act 1681959 #125-321 to 125 to 333 of complied laws of the State of Michigan.

INTRODUCTION

A land use plan is a proposal for the future use of land and the structures built upon the land. This plan reflects the estimate of future land requirements and distribution for expansion and renewal depicting how development in Freeman Township should proceed in the future to insure the best possible environment for rural living. Fundamentally, the land use plan is a proposal as to how the land development should proceed in the future, recognizing land objectives and generally accepted principles of health, safety, convenience, economy and the general welfare.

The land use plan indicates the location and extent of the various general types of land uses which will be needed to accommodate and serve the population of Freeman Township in the future. The plan classifies all development into several major use classifications, which shall be described later.

The land use plan is not a detailed blueprint for future developments, nor should it be considered a zoning map which establishes districts permitting certain specific uses and excluding others. Rather it is a guide for determining future development.

This plan is designed to recognize that Freeman Township is largely a recreational conservation area, residential area, and agricultural area. Therefore, the plan attempts to provide for the reasonable needs of the present and future residents of the township for services, business opportunities and allowing open spaces for relaxing pursuits. The plan also attempts to take into account the increased population and probable increase of subdivisions and trailer parks. The Planning Board, taking into consideration the tremendous growth in Freeman Township and the total change in our population attitude to a more ecological balance between the land owner and the environment, has published this revision of the 1973 Master Plan in order to establish certain basic objectives for land use in Freeman Township.

SOURCE OF MATERIALS

The Freeman Township Land Use Plan is the result of many hours of work and study by members of the Planning Commission in conjunction with officials of various units of government, state, federal, county and townships surrounding Freeman Township.

The following sources of materials were used in preparing this plan:

1. Original survey of Freeman Township.
2. Aerial Surveys of Clare County-1938, Freeman Township-1958, Mescosta County-1938, Midland County-1938 and Gratiot County-1950.
3. Plat map of Freeman Township.
4. Clare County Road Commission Traffic pattern map.
5. Topographical showing present location for existing structures and development.
6. United States Government Census (1991). State of Michigan (1995).
7. United States Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service showing soil types, slopes and water shed areas throughout the Township of Freeman.
8. New map survey of Freeman Township showing structures and type of uses at present and what exists there now. This map is based upon the actual site inspection of each section of the township by the Planning Commission and upon land use inventory as compiled from these inspections.
9. Clare County comprehensive plan for sewer and facilities, including projected growth plan, generalized soil conditions and wooded areas survey for the Township of Freeman.
10. Many planning and zoning materials from municipalities already planned and zoned or in process of planning. These materials gave the board an insight into the planning of Freeman Township for the most good for all.
11. Technical recommendations for the Clare County Michigan zoning ordinance (preliminary draft, by environmental research).

Vision Statement:

Freeman Township will provide for orderly and efficient growth and development of land, and transportation systems of public and private services, while maintaining its rural character and increasing the quality of life of the township residents. Freeman Township will promote recreation, tourism, and farming industries while preserving its ecosystem. The township will also promote the improvement of its economy and support employment opportunities.

Local, County, and State of Michigan Support:

In the interest of harmony, Freeman Township will promote and support "issues of mutual interest" as formally presented by its neighboring governments as well as those presented by the

County of Clare Michigan and the State of Michigan.

Detailed Objectives For Freeman Township:

1. To Preserve or develop land in accordance with its soil and surface features and capabilities and to encourage the development of recreation to sustain a balance with population growth.
2. To encourage residential and commercial development in areas suitable and designated for such uses, and further to discourage development of the above in unsuitable and undesignated areas.
3. To preserve all wetlands, marshes and drain areas so as to continue the proper water filtering systems that benefit us all in Freeman Township.
4. To encourage the use of private lands to provide wildlife habitat for the good of all people in Freeman Township.
5. To encourage maintaining a greenbelt on all streams, creeks and lakes to enhance wildlife and plant growth.
6. To encourage the use of the open space or cluster approach to develop vacant land into single family dwellings, apartments, or condominium/townhouses.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are to be employed in the interpretation of this plan as descriptions of various types of uses within the Township of Freeman. The following definitions are to be interpreted on a broad basis and all words of description only rather than for limitations.

AGRICULTURE: The use of a premises for the purpose of growing crops, trees, horticulture, raising or breeding of livestock and all other facets of agriculture. This use shall include the erection and maintenance of buildings and structures and the sale of products raised or grown on the premises. Further breakdown as to permitted uses shall be described under the heading of compatible and permitted uses.

RECREATIONAL CONSERVATION: The use of a parcel of land for the conservation and preservation of wildlife and natural resources. This includes uses which are compatible with retaining the land in its natural and undeveloped state, such as hunting, fishing, nature trails, etc.

COMMERCIAL: The use of a premises for the purpose of manufacturing or selling goods or services to the public. This use is divided into the following subclasses:

- A. Office and selling business uses.
- B. Commercial and light manufacturing uses (little noise, smoke, odor and warehouses).
- C. Industrial uses (heavy manufacturing with the associated excessive noise, smoke, and odor).

CONDOMINIUM-TOWNHOUSE: The building designated for the occupancy of multiple families, as compared to a single family dwelling or unit under the same roof.

GREEN-BELT: An area adjacent to both sides of a body of water specifically planned to preserve the natural beauty, provide open space, outdoor recreation and to provide a gradual runoff and buffer zone for quality water.

MOBILE HOME: The use of premises for mobile homes, house trailers and other movable dwelling units which are designated by manufacturer to be transported over the highway to and from the site and are designated so that they may be erected on or removed from a site with little or no site preparation. This description is to be distinguished from the use of a modular home, prefabricated home and building to be transported to a site and permanently located there-upon.

MODULAR HOME: A structure to be located permanently upon a site and has been designed by the manufacturer to be built in segments or sections and transported to a permanent site to be assembled at the site permanently.

OPEN SPACE DEVELOPMENTS: To identify the most appropriate portions of the site for protection, which would include any wetlands, flood plains, or areas that could be used as wildlife habitat.

CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT: Similar to open space, except all development would be on only a portion of the site. The open space portion of the development must be a minimum of 51% of the site, and that portion to be utilized for recreational purposes or sensitive areas, such as flood plains, wild life preservation, or to preserve large contiguous undeveloped areas.

PREMISES: A building, mobile home or other structure and the land upon which it is situated.

PARCEL: A tract or plot of land.

RECREATION: The use of a parcel for parks, public and private clubs, public and private campgrounds and other uses which are designed to provide outdoor recreational areas for leisure pursuits. This definition is divided in the following sub-classes:

- A. Extensive or wide-spread use with few persons in a group. (Example: bird

watching, hunting and etc.)

- B. Intensive or close use with a large group and may be indoor or outdoor. (Example: recreation hall, swimming and skiing.)
- C. Commercial Recreation: The process whereby a person pays for recreation or use of a recreation area while following leisure pursuits.

FLOOD PLAIN: A Watershed area that might be subjected to occasional flooding at the high water period.

RESIDENTIAL: The use of a premises for permanent dwelling of Modular or conventional construction. This definition is divided in the following sub-classes:

- A. High density residential: The use of a parcel for subdivisions consisting of lots containing less than ten (10) acres to accommodate a single family.
- B. Very high density apartment, condominiums, and town houses. The use of a parcel of land for locating more than a single family under the same roof and situated on less than ten (10) acres of land and accommodating multiple family dwellings.
- C. Low density residential: The use of a parcel for a single family dwelling which is situated on lands or parcels containing ten (10) or more acres of land per dwelling.

SUBDIVISIONS: See A under RESIDENTIAL and Mobile Homes, House Trailer Homes, Parks and Courts Compatible Uses.

SINGLE FAMILY: One or more persons and their unmarried direct relatives shall be considered as a single family.

SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING: Shall consist of one roof covering a structure and occupied by a single family as described above for the purpose of living quarters and protection from the elements.

STRUCTURE: A shed, sign, animal shelter, barn, trailer house, mobile home, modular home, or any other man placed object not naturally growing such as a tree shall grow, shall broadly be termed and treated as a structure.

CO-OPERATIVE: A form of Real Estate ownership in which the owner(s) hold a share of stock in a Corporation, which has title to the physical assets of the Corporation. The owner holds a Proprietary Lease to a unit of the development and shares ownership of the Common Elements of the development with all other owners.

PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT: A development which allows a very high density of buildings clustered around open spaces.

COMPATIBLE USES

AGRICULTURAL

1. All facets of agriculture and incidental structures.
2. Low density residential homes.
3. Road side stands, for sale of agriculture products produced upon the premises.
4. Occupations of an incidental nature which are customarily carried on in, and are incidental to the use of a building as a residence or dwelling. (Example: The use of a second dwelling for hired hand and his family, the use of a structure for the processing and packaging of a farm product produced on the premises.)

COMPATIBLE USES

CONSERVATION

This area shall include portions overlapping other areas within the entire Township of Freeman and shall be further protection against destruction and loss of natural features, natural historical sites and provide a living space for the abundance of wildlife which depend upon certain natural areas for their entire existence. The areas may be widely scattered and shall not require large blocking of land to execute the desired goals.

1. Light agriculture (Example: Forestry practices.)
2. Extensive recreation, nature trails and hunting, etc.
3. Single Family Dwelling. See Residential C.

COMPATIBLE USES

COMMERCIAL

There is at present little use of the land for commercial pursuits (to include Light Industrial) within the Township of Freeman. Therefore, the Planning Commission has chosen the

commercial area as to its relation to the main thoroughfare (M 115) and the utilities such as gas, electric power; natural lay of the land, sanitary and health aspects and its location in relationship to other planning areas such as watershed, conservation, agriculture, greenbelt, recreation, subdivision, and residential areas.

The permitted uses are as follows:

1. Commercial pursuits
2. Parking facilities adequate for the intended use and future expansion.
3. Ingress and egress shall have one main roadway as a business drive servicing multiple business drives by individual business entering any primary or secondary roadway. The purpose for this shall be to eliminate traffic hazards to the public (public safety.)
4. Warehouses and storage houses incidental to and arising from the use of the land for commercial use.
5. All structures pertaining to business as long as they do not violate any planning or zoning laws on the Township, County, or State and Federal level.
6. Low density residential. (Example: such as the living at a business as a gas station arising from the business nature. A special use permit shall apply here.)

COMPATIBLE USES

APARTMENTS AND CONDOMINIUMS

The apartments and condominiums have been a special interest and therefore have received special consideration within the Township of Freeman. The area chosen after many hours of discussion and debate was decided to be located in the southern and eastern most areas of the township for the following reasons: the area has the major thoroughfare (M 115) for good access, has nearby lakes and is adjacent to recreation area, adequate high power for electrical needs are present, natural gas for fuel is near at hand and close to the zoned commercial land.

The permitted uses are as follows:

1. Multiple family units, condominiums, townhouses and apartments with adequate sewer and water as well as other sanitary conditions. (Health code)
2. Recreational pursuits.

3. Parking areas of adequate design and capacity.
4. Buildings incidental. (Example: maintenance building)

COMPATIBLE USES

SUBDIVISION

In general there appear to be adequate partially developed subdivisions. It is the recommendation of the Planning Board that future subdivision applications shall be presented to the Planning and Zoning Board for consideration of re-zoning.

1. Sewer and water. (See Zoning Ordinance.)

COMPATIBLE USES

GREENBELT

This area encompasses all of the land surrounding bodies of water, creeks, lakes and rivers. In order to retain these lakes, creeks, rivers and watersheds in their natural state and to protect them from pollution and other misuses, the Planning Commission has established these districts as a means of providing quality water in the future. These districts shall be described in the following manner:

The parcel boundaries shall be somewhat meandering and not in the usual block fashion as the rest of the parcels contained in this master plan. The high water mark shall be used as the basis to determine the boundary. From the high water mark an elevation on a vertical plane to a height of five (5) feet above high water, a horizontal Plain to establish the five (5) feet above high water mark shall continue until this plane comes in contact with the natural contour of the earth, at this point the greenbelt zone shall continue for a distance of fifty (50) feet further back from the high water mark. This shall be the greenbelt border. The Board recommends that within this greenbelt area there be no permanent structure nor the breaking of the existing root system nor the filling in of same, as low vegetation areas act as a natural filtering system. The special use permit would be used for exceptions and existing compatible uses.

The permitted uses are as follows:

1. Conservation.
2. Wildlife preservation.
3. Extensive recreation. See 1 under Recreation for definition.

4. Pedestrian access points are available with special use permit. No parking allowed.
5. Other special uses allowed under special use permit only.

COMPATIBLE USES

Mobile Homes, House Trailer Homes, Parks and Courts

Mobile homes, modular and trailer homes have been given much thought and discussion within the Township of Freeman as to the best location opportunity for expansion of the mobile home residents. This area has been chosen for the future mobile home sites and expansion of the same. The feeling within the township has been that the intermixing of mobile homes with conventional housing is not advisable; therefore, mobile homes should not be permitted to locate throughout the township as single family residences. The mobile home area was chosen for its access to the major thoroughfare (M 115) and its location in relation to the recreation area, agriculture areas, watershed, conservation and greenbelt areas. There is adequate electrical power, closeness to commercial enterprise area; adequate expansion for future use, the land is highly suitable for mobile home uses either on ten (10) acre parcels or subdivision parcels in relation to health and sanitary condition.

The permitted uses are as follows:

1. Residential single family or subdivision basis.
2. Extensive recreational.
3. Light agriculture (horticulture) not rearing nor breeding of livestock.
4. Conservation practices.
5. Structures as pertaining to and arising incidentally from the use of the land for mobile home living.
6. Ingress and egress shall be by one primary roadway and not multiple driveways entering upon any roadway primary or secondary.
7. See construction code.

COMPATIBLE USES

Recreation

It is the opinion of the Planning Commission that Freeman Township will become an important

recreational area with scattered residential homes, in the near future, and the commission recommends that certain areas be set aside for recreational uses. These areas must conform to their natural features and relationship to watershed and flood plain. The soil and other features are conducive to specific agriculture. This area is sufficiently large to serve the needs of the township and recreational users now and in the future. The Planning Commission recommends that the following uses be permitted in the recreation areas.

1. Recreation in the broad sense.
2. Light agriculture and forestry practices.
3. Low density residential (see C. RESIDENTIAL).
4. A special use permit shall be required for anything less than ten (10) acres, the board recommends where possible all intensive uses and subdivisions not be permitted in this area.
5. Parks (public and private).
6. Parking and access sites.
7. Recreation related buildings, (under B. RECREATION) and warming shelters etc.
8. Tents and overnight structures to be removed when the user leaves at the end of his or her leisure pursuits.
9. Schools, libraries, cemeteries and other municipal operations shall be permitted.
10. Commercial Recreation under special use permit. See C. under definition of Recreation.

COMPATIBLE USES

Flood Plain and Watershed

The flood plain area has been taken from the watershed and water table map distributed by the Department of Agriculture and has been accepted as a water table of the Township of Freeman. The flood plain area is regarded as a large settling basin for the purpose of holding large supplies of water within the township, to allow for the natural purification and settlement of water impurities, to control flooding and erosion, and to provide a water supply for agriculture and recreational pursuits. Michigan Department of Natural Resources has control over all flood plain and watershed. Permits are required for any revision to flood plain and watershed.

The permitted uses are as follows:

1. Recreation on an extensive basis and-or intensive basis requires a special use permit.
2. Agriculture pursuits.
3. Low density residential.
4. Parks, public or private, as suitable locations after application to the Parks Commission or if none exists to the Planning Commission.
5. Parking areas and access sites near natural features and scenic areas.
6. Conservation.
7. State of Michigan, Department of Natural Resources has control over all flood plain and watershed areas and requires permits for any revision to flood plain and watershed area.

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

1. **Zoning Ordinance:** The Freeman Township Zoning Ordinance was created for the implementation of the goals and objectives of the Master Plan and the orderly construction of structures and development of land. The Zoning Ordinance is for health, safety and welfare of the public as well as protecting investments and land value. The authority to create a Zoning Ordinance is given to the townships by the State of Michigan under the Township Zoning Act 184 of 1963.
2. **Enforcement:** Enforcement of the Zoning Ordinance is by the Zoning Administrator.
3. **Special Assessment Districts:** Special assessments are a way of paying for local improvements within a specific area or district. This assessment is a fee or tax added to a land owners property taxes administered by the township until that time the improvement has been paid for.

History:

Reviewed by Freeman Township Planning & Zoning Commission	09-02-08
Adoption by Township Board	10-09-08
Revised & Published	10-09-08
Five Year Review by Freeman Township Planning Commission Changes in Italics (None Made)	05-07-13
Five Year Review by Freeman Township Planning Commission Added "Implementation Tools" Freeman Township Board Resolution to Approve	08-06-18 09-13-2018