

## **SPRING LAKE TOWNSHIP FRAMEWORK PLAN**

### **Introduction to the Framework Plan:**

The framework plan for Spring Lake Township is the direct result of community visioning and the hard work of a citizen's Steering Committee that developed creative planning strategies with the help of the Township planning staff and officials and project consultants. The framework plan acts to provide specific goals and highlight planning principals that will direct the future development of the Township. The Framework plan contains various elements based on land uses within the Township.

The Framework Plan was developed by focusing the results of the community visioning process into a set of themes and strategies. The themes and strategies were reviewed, revised and prioritized by the Master Plan Steering Committee over a period of several months. The themes and strategies highlight the greatest concerns for Spring Lake Township as addressed by the Steering Committee and are reflected in the graphic illustration of the plan.

### **How is a Framework Plan different than a Future Land Use Plan?**

The Spring Lake Township Framework Plan is a future "sketch" of the Township and focuses more on specific goals and projects than it does on actual change in Land Use for the Township. Future Land Use plans paint the Township in broad strokes of Land Use based upon the desires for the Township outlined in the Township Framework Plan. The Future Land Use plan will be described in more detail in its own separate chapter within this Spring Lake Township Master Plan.

### **FRAMEWORK PLAN ELEMENTS**

- Commercial Development Nodes
- Residential- Estate
- Residential- Resource
- Residential- Suburban
- Residential- Settlement
- Business/Industrial
- Open Space Areas
- Community Gateways
- River Trail with Public Access Locations
- Rural Preservation Routes
- Recreational Opportunity Areas

## FRAMEWORK PLAN ELEMENTS

**Commercial Development Nodes:** Commercial Development Nodes are identified in the plan at the intersections of 148th Avenue and M-104, 174th Avenue and Hickory and 148<sup>th</sup> and Apple. These nodes would function to contain commercial development into key intersections of the Township and create the type of commercial development that was desired by Township residents. These commercial nodes would be located near dense residential areas and serve the day-to-day needs of residents including gas stations, restaurants, grocers, café's, dry cleaners and other services needed on a regular basis. This strategy of using commercial development nodes is to significantly reduce commercial sprawl along M-104 and 174<sup>th</sup> Street and aggregate commercial development into integrated and definable sites resulting in a net neutral build-out along these corridors. Future benefits of this form of development include a reduction in traffic congestion, more efficient traffic movement, less air quality impact, and enhance opportunities for walkable and non-motorized connections.

**Residential - Estate:** This residential classification seeks to preserve areas within the Township that are still in agricultural use or that contribute to the rural character of the Township, which occur along Hemlock in the north part of the Township and in the southeast portion of the Township along the 148<sup>th</sup> and Leonard Road corridors. This classification would allow the development of lower density residential in order to preserve open space and agricultural land. The density proposed under this designation is .one (1) dwelling unit per acre with cluster housing and planned unit developments encouraged to increase open space.

**Residential – Resource:** In response to the Township's diverse natural environment a residential designation was developed that would allow for development near sensitive natural features. Resource residential allows for one (1) to three (3) dwelling units per acre and promotes conservation design of housing developments. This conservation design looks at preserving existing open space through clustering housing and allowing for connections via trails and pathways. Developments within the Resource Residential area, along 180<sup>th</sup> and Hickory Roads, have the opportunity to be connected through a greenway system. Site plans/ layouts should be reviewed with the thought of preserving as much continuous open space in the designation area as possible.

**Residential – Suburban:** Located within an area of the Township that has largely been developed the Residential Suburban designation allows for three (3) to five (5) dwelling units per acre. This designation allows for development to continue much the way it has been over the recent years. Site plan review and layout for this area should ensure that future development connects to existing infrastructure and incorporates sidewalks that link the developments to the existing trail system, and if possible, minimizes the number of dead-end cul-de-sacs. These connections will link various neighborhoods and allow for movement between both commercial nodes located on 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

**Residential – Settlement:** Two settlement areas would be located in the Township located near the commercial nodes at 148<sup>th</sup> and M-104 and 174<sup>th</sup> and Hickory. These residential areas would be dense with five (5) to nine (9) dwelling units per acre. These compact neighborhoods would function to provide a mix of various housing types and designs and create traditional neighborhood feel that would link residents to recreation and shopping. These neighborhoods would be connected by both vehicular and non vehicular

modes of transportation and would be located close to schools and places of employment. By locating these settlement areas near schools, employment and shopping residents will be encouraged to drive less which may lead to a decrease in traffic congestion and overall household spending on transportation. This decrease in transportation cost can be factored in to the affordability of the housing for families and those within the local workforce.

**Business / Industrial:** The Townships proximity to US –31 and M-104 has allowed the development of stable industrial and business development. The Township would like to continue to support these industries that sustain a strong work force and stable tax base for the Township. By introducing higher density residential near these employment centers the Township hopes to provide employees of these business centers the opportunity to own a home within an easy commute and/or walking distance to destinations of employment. Access to a traditional downtown, a diverse resident base, abundant recreation opportunities, trails and natural features such as the Spring Lake and the Grand River and its proximity to Lake Michigan provide incentive for new businesses to locate within the Township to take advantage of the good housing and the amenities.

**Open Space Areas:** Spring Lake Township works tirelessly to preserve and protect as much open space within the Township that is possible. Residents of Spring Lake Township would like to continue this policy by including in the Framework Plan the option to preserve lands that contain fragile natural features such as wetlands, floodways, and critical dunes areas. Open space areas for passive recreation was also addressed especially in areas near the existing and proposed non-motorized trails throughout the Township.

**Community Gateways:** Gateways into the Township currently do not effectively announce arrival and communicate the sense of pride and the character that is Spring Lake Township. Opportunities exist to develop primary gateway entrances into the Township at M-104 and US–31 and secondary entrances along Fruitport and State Road. These entrances can use a variety of features including landscaping, signage and lighting to define the edge of the community and develop a strong identity for the Township.

**River Trail with Public Access Locations:** The loss of viewsheds and limited access to the Grand River was a major concern of many residents during the Township visioning. The Master Plan Steering Committee has the same concern and desires to protect remaining viewsheds and create public access points to the Grand River along Leonard Road. The Township would assemble parcels of property through direct purchase of property or through conservation easements along the trail network connecting with the existing trail located on Leonard road near the Village of Spring Lake. This trail would not only preserve the views of the Grand River from the road but would also preserve the riparian edge of the Grand River.

**Rural Preservation Routes:** The preservation and enhancement of Fruitport and Leonard road are addressed in the Framework plan. These two rural roads are most identified by residents as representing the rural character of the Township and are candidates for preservation. Preservation of these routes would be done through Rural Route Preservation Overlay Districts. These districts would include guidelines for the width of road right of way and landscaping requirements as well as guidelines for signage and lighting.

**Recreation Opportunity Areas:** These areas in the Township illustrated on the Framework Plan map were developed using GIS and U.S. Census demographics analyzing areas within the Township that have high percentages of children under age 15 that could benefit from additional park space. All of the areas that have been identified are in close proximity to an existing pedestrian non-motorized pathway. These areas could be the focus of a larger overall park system connected to the Township pathway system.

**Proposed Road Connections.** The Township is served by a network of principle and minor arterials including US-31, Cleveland Street (M-104), 144<sup>th</sup>, 148<sup>th</sup>, Fruitport, Spring Lake, Hemlock, and 174<sup>th</sup> roads. Due to development patterns a network of local streets and roads, some of which connect to the Village of Spring Lake, Village of Fruitport, and City of Ferrysburg, also serves many areas within the Township. Several areas within the Township, which have the capacity to accommodate new development, such as Sections 4, 5, and 9 in the northwest portion of the Township, and Sections 24 and 25 in the southeast portion of the Township, need to develop with an interconnected road system. Unless prevented by extreme site topography and/or natural features the use of cul-de-sacs should be limited in favor a more traditional and functional network.

**FRAMEWORK PLAN SUMMARY:** The Spring Lake Township Framework plan will be the driving force in the development of the Future Land Use Plan included in this Master Plan. The Framework Plan includes the desires and expectations for the future development of Spring Lake Township based on the vision of its residents and the hard work of the Master Plan Steering Committee. The corresponding map is the visual representation of the ideas and goals of the Community Framework Plan.