

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

Subject

- Request - Adoption of the 2024 Spencer Township Comprehensive Community Plan
- Location - Spencer Township
- Applicant - Spencer Township Board of Trustees

**STAFF ANALYSIS**

The Spencer Township Trustees and Reveille Ltd have worked over the past year to update the Spencer Township Comprehensive Plan. The history of the township dates back to 1845 when the Lucas County Commissioners took land from Swanton Township and Richfield Township in order to create Spencer Township. In 1925, Harding Township broke off from Spencer Township to create its own boundaries.

In the 1940's, the population growth occurred in Spencer Township because the price of land was inexpensive on the east side due to pre-existing drainage issues. Between 1954 and 1955, the Toledo Express Airport opens and the Ohio Turnpike opens on the south side of the township. Fast forward to today's time, and the township has had development, extensive amounts of acreage placed into preservation, and maintained a majority of the population since the 1980's.

**Plan Participation**

The plan themes and strategies were addressed by a steering committee, community engagement and community forums. A group of residents representing a broad array of knowledge, interests, and occupations assisted the comprehensive planning consultants in guiding the planning effort. Several meetings were held over the course of the planning period and were geared toward accomplishing two objectives: (1) Educating the committee members on the basics of local government land and resource planning; and (2) Establishing general goals and defined objectives to serve as a foundation of the Plan. A total of 182 Spencer Township residents participated in the Community Survey. In addition, another survey was sent out to businesses in the Westwinds Business Park that was specific to their business interests, and twelve (12) businesses participated.

**Population and Demographics**

Spencer Township's highest population on record was in the 1960's at approximately 2,500 then a decline started in the 1970's then stabilized to an average of 1,700 from the 1980's to now. The 2020 Census records for the township reflect the population is at 1,746.

**STAFF ANALYSIS (cont'd)**

**Population and Demographics** (cont'd)

The 2020 Census identified 730 housing units, of which 676 (92.6%) were occupied and 54 (7.4%) were vacant. Among occupied housing units, 67.0% were owner-occupied and 33.0% were renter-occupied. 53.2% of households were occupied by married couples, 1.2% were occupied by a male householder with no spouse present, 17.5% were occupied by a female householder with no spouse present, and 28.1% were nonfamily households

**Environmental Considerations**

An overview of Spencer Township's environment starts with the ecological history as being part of the western basin of Lake Erie. From 300,000 years ago to 11,600 years ago, the region now encompassing Spencer Township experienced three periods of glaciation.

As a result of glaciation, the land that makes up Spencer Township has multiple issues when it comes to development. Two portions of the township lie in Flood Prone Areas (Zone A). One section lies mostly between Raab Road to the west and Schwamberger Road to the east, parallel to Prairie Ditch. Another section of the flood prone area lies in the northeastern portion of the Township north of Frankfort Road.

Spencer Township has the rarest wetlands in Ohio and it sustains one of the greatest concentrations of wetlands in Lucas County. Much of the eastern half of Spencer Township consists of hydric soils that are prone to be highly saturated in water and have low oxygen levels.

**Parks and Recreational Assets**

Public and non-profit parks and preserved land make up a sizeable footprint of Spencer Township, accounting for 25.5% of all Township land. Much of the park land is public and/or tax-exempt, managed by Toledo Metroparks, the Nature Conservancy, and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR). Since 2010, public/exempt land has increased by 628 acres (8.1% of total Township acreage).

**Transportation and Connectivity**

Transportation systems are a key element in attracting or discouraging development of commerce and industry. Spencer Township is within minutes of the Toledo Express Airport which has been growing in its air cargo business and is readily accessible to the US 80/90 Ohio Turnpike and the Chicago to New York Conrail line. The Westwinds Industrial Center at the southerly edge of the Township along Eber Road is near all three of these transportation modes.

## **STAFF ANALYSIS (cont'd)**

### **Transportation and Connectivity** (cont'd)

Spencer Township's transportation system consists of a total of 36 miles of Township, County and State roadways. The grid roadways are extensions from adjacent townships and do not function to serve any major centers. Most of the roads are classified on the Street and Highway Plan as being major collector streets having a future right-of-way width of 90 feet. There has been no new roadway construction in Spencer Township for several decades but with State, County and Township funds there is an on-going maintenance and repair program

### **Planning Areas, Issues and Recommendations**

The township was divided into six (6) areas that were evaluated for planning issues, existing land uses and zoning, preferred land uses, environmental considerations, infrastructure and future capital improvements. Each section received an individual recommendation for next steps and a conditions map. The geographic locations were as follows:

- Spencer-Sharples
- Westwinds
- Northwest
- Crissey Road Corridor
- Frankfort North
- Frankfort South

### **General Recommendations**

The Land Use Plan Strategies are based on two (2) main themes: Connectivity and Sustainability.

#### ***Connectivity:***

Residents that completed the plan survey noted a desire to improve and heighten pedestrian connectivity throughout the community and to better interconnect key destinations in the Spencer-Sharples Planning Area, Westwinds Business Park, and to the various parks with multi-modal infrastructure. The plan identifies a wayfinding system that would allow for residents and visitors to easily locate key areas in the community such as Westwinds Business Park, numerous parks, and other community assets like Spencer Township Neighborhood Center.

To help improve connectivity to key parks and preserves, Spencer Township should work with Metroparks Toledo, Nature Conservancy, and ODNR in developing a Parks and Connectivity Plan. This plan would identify corridors to improve pedestrian connectivity and a long-range maintenance and capital improvement plan. In addition to the wayfinding signage, the development of aesthetic gateways coming into the Township would assist in branding the community.

## STAFF ANALYSIS (cont'd)

### **General Recommendations** (cont'd)

#### ***Sustainability:***

Seven Future Land Use Areas were developed to assist the identified stakeholders in utilizing the optimal set of tools to accomplish the Plan's Strategies and to manage growth, development, and farmland preservation activities. These seven future land use area classifications are:

- Agriculture
- Rural Residential & Conservation
- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial / Planned Business Park
- Mixed Use
- Parks and Preserves

The plan recommends looking at compact and cluster development that would promote areas serviced by public water/sewer infrastructure to help maximize the generation of public revenue and resources. Additionally, Best Management Practices (BMPs) should be implemented in all Future Land Use Areas but should first be implemented in Agricultural, Rural Residential & Conservation, and Parks / Open Space Areas, and areas where water quality measures have been adopted like 208 Facility Planning Areas and areas where hydric soils and floodways are located.

### **Future Land Use Plan**

A primary component of the comprehensive plan is ensuring that development, revitalization, and preservation of the community occurs in a manner that is not harmful to residents, township resources, its assets and environment. The Future Land Use Map is a primary element of the 2024 Spencer Township Comprehensive Plan. It is based upon an analysis of existing conditions, a review of previous planning documents, results of the community survey, and other issues that surfaced during the planning process. The Future Land Use categories include agriculture, rural residential and conservation, residential, commercial, industrial and planned business park, mixed use, and park and open space areas.

### **Plan Implementation**

The strategies identified in the plan were developed in conjunction with public input and considered past, current and projected issues. The plan is designed to provide the Township Officials, residents and other stake holders with visions and strategies to guide the Township in the future. The plan is intended to be used in planning and zoning, future land use map, neighborhood and capital improvement, intergovernmental relations and plan review situations.

**PLAN COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION**

The Lucas County Planning Commission recommends approval of the 2024 Spencer Township Comprehensive Community Plan to the Spencer Township Zoning Commission and the Trustees.

TEXT AMENDMENT  
SPENCER TOWNSHIP  
LUCAS COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
REF: Z30-C139  
DATE: September 25, 2024  
TIME: 9:00 A.M.

MLM  
EXHIBIT A – Copy of Land Use Plan