



Introduction

Springfield Township is a growing community located in southeastern Summit County, Ohio. The township, which one might consider a dual-character community due to presence of both suburban and rural areas, has continued to experience development pressures due to the township's ideal regional location with a common border shared with Akron to the northwest and easy access to Interstates 76 and 77. At the same time, Springfield Township has also experienced the impact of the downturn in the nationwide economy with a significant slowing of housing and commercial development. Such changes have affected revenue generation for the township itself and in many cases, altered citizen's priorities in what they need and what from their community. These issues along with the fact that good planning practice suggest re-evaluating planning priorities every five years have influenced the township's decision to embark on an update to the 2002 Springfield Township Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

PURPOSE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

This comprehensive land use plan focuses primarily on identifying Springfield Township's overall approach and strategy for growth in the future. It assesses the impacts of growth and development on community character and future development opportunities. It promotes orderly development throughout the township, and identifies areas where residential, commercial, and industrial growth are most appropriate. The plan also identifies ways to preserve land while balancing development pressure and the need for a more balanced tax base. It is intended that this plan respect basic private property rights and ensure that future regulations will be written in a fair and equitable manner.

The comprehensive land use plan identifies Springfield Township's goals and objectives as well as a comprehensive set of policies and plan recommendations (implementation strategies). It also includes a summary of relevant background information. All of the background information, goals, objectives, and recommendations can be used in the future by the township decision-makers, property owners, business owners, and even regional agencies, to make decisions based on what the township desires to be in the long-term future. This plan does not change any laws or zoning regulations as they apply to the township upon adoption. It does, however, provide guidance for future changes that may be made to township policies, laws, and regulations over the next 20 years.



Comprehensive Land Use Plan

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THE PLANNING PROCESS

In 2001 and 2002, Springfield Township undertook a massive planning effort to develop the township's first comprehensive land use plan. The development of this plan included extensive public input through public meetings and the use of the Springfield Township Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). In fall of 2002, the township trustees adopted the plan to serve as its guide for future decisions related to growth and development.

In 2008, the township determined that it was necessary to update the plan in an effort to address ongoing issues with development and to identify and expand on certain priorities including, but not limited to, township identity and economic development. While the intent of this second process is to update the plan, it was not envisioned that the township would completely rewrite the existing plan but would, as the desired alternative, review the plan and undertake strategic updates with enhanced graphics and a higher level of detail. The update process included regular public meetings to keep township officials and the Technical Review Committee (TRC) up to date on the process and allow for key feedback, but it did not include as extensive a public input process as the original plan because a strong foundation of planning goals and objectives had already been developed in the 2002 plan and would serve as the basis for the updated plan.

OVERVIEW OF THE PLAN UPDATE

This plan is divided into five chapters. This *Introduction* and the *Planning Foundation* chapter sets up some of the basic background for the plan and the process. The *Goals and Objectives* chapter sets forth the township's main vision for the future through a series of ten goals and related objectives. This chapter can be used to guide future decisions that arise out of this plan and those that the township may face in the future that were not anticipated in this plan.

Following the goals and objectives is the core component of this plan. The *Comprehensive Land Use Plan* chapter incorporates a series of recommended actions under the following key themes:

- Future Land Use
- Infrastructure Network
- Economic Development
- Quality of Life
- Sustainability

The final chapter outlines an implementation strategy for the township that summarizes the core group of recommendations and a method for continual monitoring of the goals, objectives, and the overall plan.