

CONSTANTINE TOWNSHIP LAND USE PLAN

I. General Considerations

Land use planning is meant to be constructive in nature, whereby the future development of the Township will be controlled and planned for the welfare of the inhabitants. The Township Zoning Board has made an assessment of the existing development in the Township and has proposed implementing certain measures to take steps to regulate the future development of the Township so as to provide for the best possible use of land to serve the residents in the area while allowing owners of property maximum possible freedom to use their land as they see fit.

The Land Use Plan enacted by Constantine Township will be the basis for all future expenditures of public funds for capital improvements, as well as to act as a guide for amendments to the Zoning Ordinance. One of the major considerations of the Planning Commission is to prohibit the scattering of concentrations of development as much as possible as it is not economically feasible to provide community services to scattered residential developed areas. Consequently, the plan recommends that future development be located within those specific areas which will place the provision of adequate public services on a sound economic basis.

Another basic consideration is that the Township consists of much good agricultural land, which lands are known to the Zoning Board. The preservation of these lands for agricultural purposes is an important consideration in developing this plan.

II. Existing Land Use and Character of the Township

Constantine Township is basically agricultural with the exception of the Village of Constantine and certain outlying areas immediately adjacent to the Village. With the exception of the Village area, the only other area of the Township that is not primarily used for agricultural purposes is the State land which is partly a game reservation and which is all wooded in the Northwest part of the Township, consisting of approximately 1900 acres. The Township is gently rolling and the watershed is basically in a Northeasterly-Southwesterly direction with the St. Joseph River running from the Northeasterly corner of the Township to the Southwesterly corner through the Village of Constantine. This river is a major body of water which flows eventually into Lake Michigan. There are four streams, three of which flow into the St. Joseph River in the Township. These are the Fawn River coming in from the East at the Village of Constantine, Black Run from the North which comes into the Township in the Southwest portion and Miller's Mill Creek which also comes from the North and joins the St. Joseph River in the Southwest corner of the Township.

There is one tavern located on Riverside Drive, Southwest of the Village.

There is one private summer camp in the Northwest corner of the Township. There is one mobile home park on Withers Road next to the St. Joseph River which has approximately 8 cottages and 28 mobile home sites.

All other Commercial and Industrial development is located south of the Village on the east side of US 131.

Electric and Telephone service is available through out the Township. Gas service is provided Northwesterly from the Village on Youngs Prairie Road to Miller's Mill Road, West on Miller's Mill Road approximately 3/4 mile, East on Miller's Mill Road to U.S. 131, and is also provided in Yantzi's, Roberts, and North Park Subdivisions. Gas service is available to other areas if they pay installation costs for extension of the main. Sewer and water service is available to Village residents but is not furnished outside of the Village of Constantine. Cable TV is available in some of areas close to the Village.

The Township has no valuable minerals except a certain amount of gravel deposits.

The only areas in the Township where residential development has occurred in any magnitude is Northeasterly of the Village along the river and Southwesterly on Riverside Drive, also along the River. These areas are zoned residential now and additional residential development can occur in these areas as there is considerable vacant land.

The Township is served by U.S. 131 which runs on a North and South axis through the Village of Constantine. The Village of Constantine is approximately in the middle of the Township, but slightly Southeasterly of the middle of the Township. The Township has good County roads, the primary roads being Youngs Prairie Road running in a Southeasterly and Northwesterly direction, Riverside Drive running in a Northeasterly Southwesterly direction, North River Road running in a Northeasterly Southwesterly direction, Miller's Mill Road running essentially East and West. and Florence Road easterly from the Village.

The Township has a freight line of the Consolidated Rail Corporation (Con Rail) running North and South through Constantine.

The Township has a County Park on North River Road and the Village of Constantine has 4 parks and a six ball field recreation area.

III. General Planning for the Future

The population (see Appendix A.) of the Township is increasing at the rate of 33 persons per year. Building permits (see Appendix B.) indicate 18 new dwelling are being constructed per year.

Based upon this projection of population, it is anticipated that only 100 to 200 additional acres of land will be necessary for residential purposes in the next 10 years. It is anticipated that additional commercial uses will be required in the Township. The 80 acres south of Stears Road and east of U.S. 131 is deemed to be sufficient for future commercial and light Industrial uses in the Township.

The Zoning Board realizes that there are four homes presently in the commercial and industrial zone Easterly of U.S. 131; however, it is believed that these homes should continue to constitute non-conforming uses and that this area should continue for commercial and industrial purposes and not be rezoned to allow additional residences.

As the Township has a considerable amount of water, including marshes, the St. Joseph River and small lakes, as contributories, it is important that proper set backs be required where buildings are to be allowed along the water. In addition, certain areas of the St. Joseph River and also of Miller's Mill Creek should be kept wild and in a rural state, as they presently are, and set backs from these wild areas should be at least 100 feet or perhaps 200 feet. In addition, set backs should be required from any pipeline with-in the Township of at least 50 feet and building construction should not be allowed in any area which is prone to flooding within an average 50 year period.

Residential growth should be promoted as much as possible in close proximity to the Village of Constantine, to preserve the entirety of the urban area and as mentioned above, where sewer and water is likely to be constructed. Platted residential development should only be encouraged in this area. The present residential areas along the St. Joseph River are attractive and should allow additional low to medium density residential use.

In order to preserve rural and low density areas for agricultural or open space purposes, minimum acreage requirements should be established in the Zoning Ordinance for the construction of principal buildings in these areas. Also, minimum frontage requirements upon public roads should also be required in unplatted areas for construction of principal buildings.

It is anticipated that U.S. 131 will be relocated when made into a limited access highway; however, the location of the proposed new highway is unknown at this time and therefore, the Zoning Board is not in a position to provide any planning at this time as to the need for future roads.

It is believed that this Land Use Plan and as detailed below will promote the orderly growth of the Township, allowing residential and commercial development in reasonable close proximity to the Village and allow low density residential development in other areas of the Township while preserving the basic agricultural and rural character of the Township as much as possible.

IV. Land Use Plan Map

The Township Zoning Board has developed a general but detailed Land Use Plan Map showing basic classifications of land use for the future, proposing that such land uses be considered as realistic and desirable for the year 2002. The various classifications are as follows, including a brief description of the proposed use under the plan for any given area of the Township:

Residential (single family homes in low density residential areas and plats requiring a minimum lot size in unplatted areas of one acre and a width of 165 feet)

Residential 2 (Single and double family homes in a more rural setting allowing livestock as pets and family businesses.

Commercial/Industrial (light industrial and commercial uses)

Recreational (outdoor recreational uses of a non-commercial nature and residential uses)

Mobile Homes (mobile home parks and plats for mobile homes)

Agricultural 1 (Agricultural use only. All buildings (including dwellings are for farm use only)
Agricultural (low density, rural single family residential uses and farming requiring a minimum of five acres)

Open Space and Public Land (land of a marginal character for construction or farming, such as marsh land or wet land and including all publicly owned lands)

Village of Constantine (land located within the Township which is also in the incorporated Village of Constantine)

The map is as detailed as possible and is approximately drawn to scale. The Plan shall always be subject to change by the Zoning Board in the years ahead, based upon changed needs of the community, its change patterns of development or the realization of additional land use needs.

The following is a detailed description of the areas within the Township which show the existing land use character and development of each land section which, along with the above, has been the basis for planning the future use of land within the Township, as shown on the map.

- Section 1: 98% agriculture with mobile home park with 16 permanent sites and 21 seasonal sites, with river on section line, good soil.
- Section 2: 90% agriculture with the rest small tracts and a very small woods.
- Section 3: 100% agriculture, average soil.
- Section 4: 50% wasteland, 50% agriculture and a private woods of 20 acres and a small state owned game area of 20 acres with small tracts of homes in the north west corner.
- Section 7: 90% state owned woods, hunting and game area, remainder farm land but for a small private owned campground.
- Section 8: 90% state owned woods, remainder 10% agriculture.
- Section 9: 95% agriculture with 5% private owned woods. (land essentially light and sandy)
- Section 10: 75% agriculture, 25% wasteland and swampy woods.
- Section 11: 90% agriculture, prime agriculture land 10% in wasteland and woods.
- Section 12: 90% agriculture, prime agriculture land 10% in platted lots for homes on the river. River is section line.
- Section 13: 50% agriculture, good farm land, 25% in sub-divisions and the remainder wasteland and river. Railroad runs Southwest to Northeast, river in West 1/2 of section.
- Section 14: 98% agriculture, good farm land, 2% in small tracts, residential homes; US-131 running North and South on East line and Southwesterly portion of section.
- Section 15: 75% agriculture, 25% wasteland (light soil)
- Section 16: 75% agriculture, 25% private owned woods and wasteland (light soil)
- Section 17: 35% state owned game area, 65% agriculture with some very good marsh farm land.
- Section 18: 90% state owned land (woods), 10% agriculture with a private owned woods of 20 acres.
- Section 19: 75% agriculture, 25% woods-both state owned and private owned. (above average agricultural soil, some hills)
- Section 20: 95% agriculture, primarily muck land with some private owned woods of 20 acres. (muck land being farmed)
- Section 21: 95% agriculture, mostly upland ground. (good farm land, sandy loam)
- Section 22: 75% good agriculture land, 20% waste-land, 5% residential, small tracts in Southeast corner back to river.
- Section 23: 30% agriculture, 50% balance in village in Southeast, South and East parts; 5% small tracts North of Village, residential small tracts; 15% is river in Northeast corner.

- Section 24: 50% agriculture, 25% wasteland (marsh) and river, 25% in village.
- Section 25: All agricultural (prime land) except 37 1/2% in village.
- Section 26: 30% agriculture, 50% residential and small tracts; river running through middle of section; plats on both sides.
- Section 27: 30% agriculture, 50% residential and small tracts; river running through middle of section; plats on both sides.
- Section 28: 90% agriculture with a few small tracts and river and marshlands in Southeast corner (fair farm land, some gravel).
- Section 29: 90% agriculture area with some back water from Mill Creek. (good Land)
- Section 30: 95% agriculture, variety of quality of land; 5% woods and stream.
- Section 31: 70% agriculture, 30% wasteland, river bottom and woods. River in Southeast corner; some marsh which is farmed.
- Section 32: 25% agriculture, 55% wasteland, marsh and woods; St. Joe River (S 1/4) and Mill Creek North and South; 20% river and stream.
- Section 33: 35% agriculture, 25% riverbottom and wasteland 40% small tracts.
- Section 34: 75% agriculture, 25% residential with many small tracts, (good farm land).
- Section 35: 98% agriculture, prime land with the 2% small tracts and a little woods, (good land).
- Section 36: 75% agriculture, prime land, 20% industrial and 5% commercial. Consists of mobile home factory, junk yard and feed mill. U.S. 131 and Railroad running North and South in East 1/2 of section.