

**ORDINANCE NO. 3-2006**

**A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IN  
SPRINGVALE TOWNSHIP  
ISANTI COUNTY, MINNESOTA**

The Board of Supervisors of Springvale Township Ordains as follows:

An Ordinance establishing a Comprehensive Plan in Springvale Township which is a thirty-six square mile township located in the north central part of Isanti County. It is primarily rolling landscape with farms, woodlands, wildlife lowlands, and very low-density residential development.

**SECTION I. PURPOSE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

This plan is intended as a general guide to manage growth and development in Springvale Township for the foreseeable future in a manner that will preserve the rural character of the community. The first formal plan responds to the increased growth rate of the area to channel that growth to best serve present and future residents.

This plan addresses future land use; including the density of new residential development, open space, housing, and farm land use. As a statement of policy, this Comprehensive Plan is intended to serve the needs of a variety of individuals and agencies involved in the growth and well being of the community.

1. For the Town Board and Advisory Commissions, it serves as a guideline for making prudent, coordinated, incremental decisions over time, and a vehicle for clearly articulating policies that may have been previously unwritten.
2. For land owners and developers, it provides a set of guidelines and expectations concerning the arrangement of land uses, densities, and public services that they can factor into their own decision making.
3. For other public agencies, this plan outlines existing and potential future linkages between township regulations, services, facilities, and other units of government to foster on-going collaboration in the coming years.
4. Most importantly, the Comprehensive Plan provides the residents and business owners with a collective community vision for the future of private development decisions.

**SECTION II. PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

In 1998 the Town Board appointed a three member Planning and Zoning Board to develop an interim ordinance to restrict residential development density pending a Comprehensive Plan and permanent ordinance. This Board has held monthly meetings to listen to citizen input for the Plan and to recommend Board action on applications for residential development. A survey was distributed by direct mailing to all land owning residents soliciting their input to the Plan and the resulting Ordinance. The preferences from the survey are detailed in the Land use strategy plan. (In 2000 the Planning and Zoning Board was dismissed and the Town Supervisors were named as their replacements)

**SECTION III. GROWTH MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

This plan recognizes that Springvale Township is primarily an agricultural community with new residential growth pressure. The primary goal of this plan is to preserve and enhance the rural character of Springvale Township as growth continues. Economic ties to the larger diverse metropolitan area will become closer and management of this change is crucial to preserving residents' lifestyles. Future development on adjoining five, ten, or twenty acre lots will not preserve the current character and identity of the Town. This Plan outlines an alternative strategy for managing future growth. In the future the Town may be viewed as two primary land use areas with district vision and land development policy for each:

1. **Semi-Rural Area:** The Urban Service Area around Cambridge as classified by Isanti County will receive sewer and water services before other areas of Springvale Township. As these services become available increased housing density may be allowed.
2. **General Rural-Agricultural Area:** Most of Springvale Township is planned to remain rural. Both traditional agriculture and larger forty acre hobby farms will be encouraged. Some residential development in this area will be allowed but it will be limited to a base density to follow existing Isanti County Zoning laws as of June 2006.

**SECTION IV. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Immigration to the area began in the late 1800's. The population was primarily farmers and their families making a living raising crops and animals. The normal infrastructure was established with people working in stores, churches, constabularies, and professions supporting an agrarian life style. The move away from total dependence on agriculture started some forty plus years ago with better road and rail transportation between this area and the much larger Minneapolis/Saint Paul metropolitan area.

The last twenty years have seen an increase in population of residents that live here and commute to jobs, both locally and in the metro area. Some of these new residents purchase existing houses while others build new homes.

**SECTION V. POPULATION GROWTH**

Population growth in the last decade has been between four and five percent per year primarily coming from outside the area. Future area growth is forecast to increase exponentially and to remain at those levels with more of the growth shifting from the traditional urban areas like the city of Cambridge to the more rural townships. Another trend that indicates population growth due to an influx of new residences is the decreasing average number of residents per household. This combination of more residences and fewer residents per household means the demand for new dwellings will continue.

**SECTION VI NATURAL RESOURCE BASE**

1. **Water Resources:** Throughout much of the township the terrain consists of mildly rolling hills contributing to the formation of lakes, creeks, marshes, seasonal wetlands, and rivers. In addition, there are seasonal water flow channels and manmade drainage ditches dating back many years. A number of lower areas host year round marshes and fens.
2. **Natural Plant Communities:** A wide variety of trees are the single most visible element in the plant community. Red, Burr, and White Oak, soft and hard Maple, Red and White Pine, Elm, Basswood, Ash, Paper and Yellow Birch, and Tamarack make up the major populations. The Tamarack swamps in the northern and central parts of the township are generally part of larger wetland complexes that include marshes, fens, creeks, and significant wildlife habitat.
3. **Common Wildlife:** The wide range of landforms and vegetation provide suitable habitat for many animals. Among the larger animal types are Whitetail Deer, Black Bear, and Red Fox. The smaller mammals include Muskrat, Mink, Otter, Weasel, Badger, Skunk, Opossum, Raccoon, Rabbits, and Squirrels. Birds include several hundred species of songbirds. Many waterfowl migrate through such as Canadian Geese, Mallards, Wood Ducks, Blue Winged Teal, Ringbills, Swans, Gadwall, and Pintails. Raptors such as the Bald Eagle, Golden Eagle, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, Osprey, Red-tailed Hawk, Marsh Hawk, and Kestrel are frequent visitors. Hunting seasons exist for upland game birds such as Wild Turkey, Pheasant, Ruffed Grouse, Woodcock, and Sharp-tail Grouse. Many types of reptiles, snakes, and insects also inhabit the township.
4. **Fisheries Resources:** The major bodies of water providing fish habitat are several lakes: Broberg's, Willman's, Johnny's, Line, and Elizabeth. The Rum River, Stanchfield Creek, and Pine Brook also provide habitat for many species of fish, animals, and birds.

**SECTION VII. EXISTING LAND USE**

Springvale Township covers thirty-six square miles or approximately twenty three thousand acres. A good share of that area is in natural features such as rolling hills, woods, waterways, bogs, and swamps that are not easily converted to crop or other farmland.

Approximately six thousand four hundred acres or twenty-eight percent is registered cropland according to the USDA. The soil characteristics range from silty clay of Wisconsin (Red) Drift in the north to Anoka Sand Plain in the south. Mixed in are areas of Zimmerman sandy loam and boggy depressions. All of the drained soils are suitable for adequate to good crop yields.

Housing exists as either part of a farming operation or on scattered large lots. Land classified as strictly residential occupies a large and growing part of the total land area. Non-farm related residences are most concentrated on the south boundary of Springvale Township, in a corridor on either side of Highway 95, around lakes Elizabeth and Willman's and in sections 24 and 25 next to Cambridge.

**SECTION VIII. CURRENT ZONING**

Springvale Township is currently zoned A-2 Agriculture except for the small area around the road intersection at Highway 47 and Highway 95 which is zoned RSC (Rural service district), and the Urban Service Areas One and Two are located around the City of Cambridge. In addition there are several environmentally sensitive areas around water features. These include:

1. SP (Special Protection) areas around lakes/wetlands in sections 16, 18, 20, 21, 34, and 35.
2. SP area along Stanchfield Creek in sections 2, 11, and 14.
3. An NE (Natural Environment) area around a lake in section 1.
4. SP (Scenic River) area along the Rum River in sections 14, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, and 32.

The current ordinance follows Isanti County Zoning allowing two residences per forty acres.

**SECTION IX. GROWTH MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

The future of Springvale Township is linked to the continuing development of the greater metropolitan area as builders/developers search ever further out for reasonably priced land. Because of the demand this region is experiencing an accelerating growth rate. Springvale Township is not now covered by regional planning as provided under the Metropolitan Councils blueprint but the Isanti County Comprehensive Plan provides some guidelines. The basic density of two residences per forty acres in an agricultural area can be modified by Isanti County to encourage denser development in some areas and less dense development in others.

**SECTION X. COMMUNITY VISION AND VALUES**

A survey was distributed by direct mailing to all land owning residents soliciting their input to the Plan and resulting Ordinance. The preferences from the survey were:

1. More people preferred the Interim Ordinance restriction than those wanting no ordinance.
2. More preferred building rights transfer on adjacent land than other method.
3. A majority was in favor of parks as method of permanent protection.
4. More preferred to limit commercial development to major intersections.
5. More wanted no cluster development than those that wanted denser development in the SE corner of the town designated an Urban Service Area.

There were a number of thoughtful written comments expressing a wide variety of views and opinions. The two most prevalent involved preserving agricultural or open spaces and being freely able to divide land at the owners' discretion. The majority, as expressed in the vote in 1998 and the survey in 2000, wishes to preserve current open space as much as possible. In 2000, the Interim Ordinance was allowed to expire by the town board and no further land use zoning ordinances were established. The Isanti County Zoning ordinance is currently the zoning regulation to be followed.

**SECTION XI. LAND USE STRATEGY**

The majority of land use is agricultural and will remain that way for the foreseeable future. Pressures of housing development will continue as people move out from the Minneapolis/Saint Paul areas and drive land prices higher. Therefore a considered and rational approach to density control is in the best interests of current and future Town residents.

**SECTION XII. GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

The goal of this ordinance is to preserve agricultural land and desirable open space. Isanti County Zoning regulations are currently regulating Springvale Township growth.

**SECTION IV. EFFECTIVE DATE**

This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage according to law.

Passage approved this 15<sup>th</sup> of June, 2006

Peter E. Clay  
Springvale Town Board Chair

Attest:  
Michelle Kleven  
Springvale Town Clerk