

**1995 HONOR AWARD**  
**Michigan Society of Planning Officials**

***CENTRAL AREA PLAN FOR OXFORD CHARTER TOWNSHIP***  
***OAKLAND COUNTY***

"...the planning commission may adopt a plan for a geographic area less than the entire unincorporated area of the township if, because of the unique physical characteristics of that area, more intensive planning is necessary...After adoption of a plan under this section, a site plan for a property located in the plan area...shall comply with the plan adopted under this section."

**O**xford Charter Township Planning Commission adopted the Central Area Plan, a geographical area plan, in September, 1994. Like other communities situated along the Lapeer Road (M-24) Corridor, the impact of recent developments in the surrounding area was straining the Township's policy framework for long-range land use decision-making. In 1993, Oxford Charter Township began working on a new Township master plan. A large area of active and former gravel mining in the center of Oxford Township presented local officials with increasingly greater challenges. By mid 1993, the development interest in the area north of Oxford Village had exceeded the community's expectations and was out-running the projected two-year master plan program. When a single 1200 acre parcel was offered for sale to the development community, the Planning Commission and Township Board became concerned that development might dictate the plan rather than the Township charting its own future. The Central Area Plan was born.

The Township Board and Planning Commission recognized several potential opportunities. The demand for new homesites could be directed to a specific area for a period of 10 to 20 years. The character of that future growth could be directed by the Township rather than driven by the engine of development. The Township recognized that a developer could be found who shared the Township's vision for this special geographical area. The solution identified by the Planning Commission was the development of a special geographical area plan. This tool would provide the Commission with the authority to require specific development plans to conform to the Central Area Plan.

**Section 6.3 and 6.4, Township Planning Act**

The most innovative aspect of the plan was the identification of historic Oxford development characteristics. The plan promotes the following three carefully defined plan components:

- Historic Village
- Resort Residential
- Country Estates

In this way, new development will not obscure the special community character that has always drawn residents to the Oxford area. The plan allows for the extension of the Village downtown character into the Township. The plan also provides for a variety of residential densities, and a "village green" as a recreation feature and focal point.

The smooth flow of both vehicular and pedestrian traffic is also a major consideration. People should be able to circulate to shops, civic buildings, and parks without adding to traffic on M-24.

