

Chapter Nine - Comprehensive Plan Strategies

This chapter outlines a series of implementation recommendations and strategies to achieve the goals and objectives of the comprehensive plan. The recommendations and strategies outlined in this chapter were established by the Joint Planning Commission after considerable discussion concerning the most logical and practical way to achieve the goals and objectives of the plan and in response to an analysis of the current social, economic and land use trends, the previous goals and objectives outlined in the 2002 Bear Lake Township Comprehensive Plan and the 1999 Pleasanton Township Land Use Plan, and the extensive public planning process that included, a community-wide survey and three large public meetings. The recommendations and strategies in this chapter are organized under the six primary topics: General Land Use and Development; Downtown and Economic Development; Housing and Neighborhoods; Recreation and Tourism; Public Facilities; and Natural Resources and the Environment.

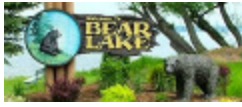
General Land Use and Development

Goal A.

A rural community, including active farms, natural features and scenic qualities in most areas outside the Village that considers private property rights

Strategies

1. Develop and adopt a comprehensive zoning ordinance, including provisions for:
 - a) Cluster development;
 - b) Buffering and/or screening around commercial and residential areas;
 - c) Buffering and/or screening along roadways;
 - d) Planned Unit Development (PUD's);
 - e) Mixed uses in appropriate locations;
 - f) Density bonuses as a reward for maintaining existing natural features and vegetation and preserving open space;
 - g) Buffering and/or screening around important natural features (e.g. wetlands);
 - h) The preservation of important view-sheds;
 - i) Design guidelines for rural commercial areas;
 - j) Joint driveways and alternate access points;
 - k) Shared parking lots in the rear of buildings;
 - l) Alternative surface materials;
 - m) Context appropriate signage;
 - n) Appropriate stormwater control and detention; and
 - o) Established pedestrian pathways connecting building entrances and parking facilities
2. Consider Open Space/Farmland Preservation Plans
3. Work together on the development of an ordinance that regulates:
 - a) The size and placement of signs
 - b) Blight and trash
4. Work together to support the consistent and fair enforcement of ordinances
5. Work together to identify and promote centennial farms
6. Work together to inform local farmers of Farmland and Open Space Programs (e.g. PA 116)



7. Work together to determine opportunities and methods for providing “agri-tourism”

GOAL B.

Joint planning and zoning that continually responds to community needs

Strategies:

1. Develop and prepare a unified zoning ordinance
2. Adopt the unified zoning ordinance (Village of Bear Lake, Bear Lake Township and Pleasanton Township)
3. Review and update the comprehensive plan (required at least every five years)
4. Conduct a series of educational workshops and programs to increase public understanding of land use issues facing the Bear Lake Community
5. Invite citizens and key-stakeholders to engage in planning and decision-making groups
6. Periodically convene a meeting of all elected and appointed officials, including the Bear Lake School, the Village of Bear Lake, Bear Lake Township and Pleasanton Township

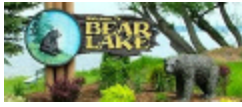
Downtown and Economic Development

Goal A.

Increased levels of economic activity and employment in and immediately adjacent to the Village of Bear Lake, emphasizing commercial development associated with human services, retail, tourist services, in-home businesses and resort development

Strategies:

1. Develop a comprehensive economic inventory and market study of the village area, including workforce capacity, available commercial sites, development opportunities and strategies for attracting new businesses and consumers
2. Seek out and contact absentee building owners whose properties in the community appear to be vacant, abandoned and/or in need of significant repair to discuss redevelopment options
3. Increase communication and nurture cooperation between citizens and groups interested in the continued success and viability of the downtown area
4. Work with local business owners, developers and other interested citizens to create and conduct an economic development program, including:
 - a) educational workshops for business owners on current consumer trends, marketing and advertising strategies; and
 - b) recruitment strategies to actively seek out successful businesses looking to relocate in the region; and
 - c) special store hours or open houses during community events; and
 - d) a job retention training program
5. Engage state agencies on opportunities and programs that would provide financial assistance for downtown development



Goal B.

Key public utilities necessary to support current and increased commercial activity and residential development in the Village of Bear Lake and areas adjacent to the Village

Strategies

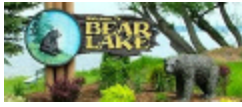
1. Engage public officials from the Village of Bear Lake about renewing participation in the Bear Lake Pleasanton Area Utility Authority (BLPAUA)
2. Work with the BLPAUA to develop and pursue a new strategy that will establish a comprehensive wastewater disposal system & stormwater management system in and near the Village
3. Study and assess the need for an improved public water supply system in and near the Village

Goal C.

A more interesting, culturally active and aesthetically appealing downtown Bear Lake

Strategies

1. Develop a downtown re-development and streetscape plan to guide capital improvements (e.g. crosswalks, light posts, trees and plantings and burying electric and phone infrastructure) and other public and private investment toward improving connections with nearby neighborhoods, parks, schools and recreation areas, expanding local business patronage and create a more aesthetically appealing downtown
2. When constructing new civic buildings in the downtown area, consider architectural styles, building sizes, roof angles and building shapes that will maintain a consistent character.
3. Study and consider the implementation of design guidelines for the downtown area of the Village
4. Establish a historical recognition program for buildings in the downtown
5. Include provisions for parking lots that address placement, the size, access and landscaping in site plan review
6. Place “dark sky” lighting or place shields over new decorative light fixtures to direct light downward, enhance community character and preserve dark skies
7. Establish a way-finding system to enhance knowledge of the unique features and places of the Bear Lake Community
8. Establish a façade improvement program
9. Establish incentives for the adaptive reuse of buildings in the downtown
10. Develop appropriate sign regulations for downtown businesses
11. Establish a farmers market in or near the Village
12. Study and review the comments and suggestions outlined in the Michigan State University Small Town Design Initiative



Housing and Neighborhoods

Goal A.

Residential areas with strong neighborhood structure, access to services and strong property values

Strategies:

1. Develop and enforce a blight and trash ordinance
2. Provide incentives for new residential development to maintain naturally occurring vegetation
3. Incorporate into the new joint zoning ordinance, provisions for:
 - a) Minimum lot-to-width ratios; and
 - b) Sidewalks, pathways and other connections for pedestrians and vehicles between developments and neighborhoods; and
 - c) Stormwater runoff

Goal B.

A modest increase in overall population and residential housing

Strategies

1. Identify appropriate locations for a wide range of housing opportunities

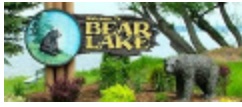
Recreation and Tourism

Goal A.

New recreational facilities and high-quality maintenance for existing facilities

Strategies

1. Develop and adopt a comprehensive recreation plan that outlines improvements to current recreation facilities, the development of future recreation facilities, capital improvement expenditures, programming options and funding mechanisms. This process will include the following activities:
 - a) Establish a multi-jurisdictional recreation advisory committee to oversee and guide the recreation master planning process;
 - b) Conduct a survey (if still needed) with all citizens in the Bear Lake Community on the types of activities and programming they want in their community; and
 - c) Submit a Recreation Plan to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources
2. Establish a land acquisition program to acquire land that will provide for recreation activities and trail development
3. Establish a community-wide “friends for recreation” group devoted to the promotion and support of recreation in the Bear Lake community
4. Work with the Bear Lake School to coordinate, support and manage recreation facilities



Goal B.

Increased tourism throughout the Bear Lake Community

Strategies

1. Develop and implement a comprehensive marketing program for community festivals (Bear Lake Days) and other events that focus on recreation and family activities
2. Identify and promote local youth programs such as 4-H and church youth groups
3. Seek out existing community organizations to develop new community events
4. Develop one additional festival or event for the Bear Lake Community
5. Support the development of a community-wide “friends group” devoted to the promotion and support of cultural and Tourism activities in the Bear Lake Community

Public Facilities

Goal A.

Well-maintained public and private roads assuring that no parcel is land locked

Strategies

1. Work with the Manistee County Road Commission and other local agencies to maintain all roadways within the Bear Lake Community

Goal B.

New culturally significant facilities

Strategies

1. Support the development of a community-wide “friends group” devoted to the promotion and support of cultural facilities in the Bear Lake Community

Goal C.

A variety of transportation choices

Strategies

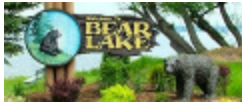
1. Conduct a transportation study to help determine future needs and investments
2. Work with existing services to provide adequate public transportation options for Bear Lake Citizens
3. Provide for a community-wide non-motorized trail system

Goal D.

Adequate services for community seniors

Strategies:

1. Conduct a survey to establish the needs and priorities of community seniors



Goal E.

A clean and adequately maintained public restroom in the downtown area

Strategies:

1. Study the feasibility of building and maintaining a public restroom in the downtown area

Natural Resources and the Environment

Goal A.

A clean, safe and protected watershed, including groundwater and the lakes and rivers of the Bear Lake Community

Strategies

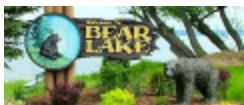
1. Complete an inventory and hazard assessment of current activities and facilities within the wellhead protection area
2. Help develop and distribute informational brochures and other materials on methods to protect and maintain water quality.
3. Incorporate into the new joint zoning ordinance, provisions for:
 - a) Building setbacks of at least 50 to 100 feet along wetlands, rivers, and lakes;
 - b) Stormwater management;
 - c) The retention of natural vegetation along shorelines; and
 - d) A wetland overlay zone
4. Work with local organizations to develop and implement a *rain-garden* program
5. Study the feasibility of underground stormwater infiltration systems under large community parking lots
6. Conduct a thorough wetland inventory

Goal B.

Clean, safe and protected natural features and open space

Strategies

1. Contact and work with state agencies and local conservation groups to assist with natural resource protection
2. Convene a series of workshops and make available information on conservation tools (e.g. PDR, TDR, conservation-easements, estate donations, local taxes, grant proposals or other programs) that assist citizens and local officials in preserving open space
3. Study options for ridgeline development
4. Provide incentives for developments that incorporate woodland protection and other natural features
5. Work with state and local agencies to understand potential wildlife corridors



Goal C.

A community free of harmful environmental contamination

Strategies

1. Develop and adopt a comprehensive zoning ordinance, including provisions for:
 - a) Low maintenance landscape buffers and screening; and
 - b) Alternative surface materials; and
 - c) Appropriate stormwater control and detention
2. Study and initiate programs and/or regulations that will limit the amount of fertilizers, pesticides and human waste that reaches community waterways