

Chapter 4

Planning Principles

The **Issues** set forth in Chapter 3 have been used to define the planning values of Paw Paw Township and form the structure of the Master Plan. These **values** provide the foundation for an overall land use **vision** for the community, from which planning **goals** and **strategies** have been developed. The Future Land Use Plan (Chapter 5) has been created based entirely upon these **Planning Principles** (*values, vision, goals and strategies*).

Planning Values

The following **Values** have been derived from the previously discussed **Issues**. They represent the general beliefs and desires of the community and are the source of the **Vision** statement.

Paw Paw Township and the Village of Paw Paw are a single community. The strength of the community lies in the value of the area's commercial core, small-town and rural housing options, water features, agricultural lands, and recreational/tourism opportunities. To separate the Township from the Village in the community picture would fail to recognize the interrelationships between these assets and prevent the growth of the community to its full potential.

Agriculture plays a key role in Paw Paw Township. As a primary industry in the Township, agricultural activity defines the history of the community and positions Paw Paw Township favorably in Southwest

Michigan's emerging 'regional food systems' scene.

Opportunities for growth exist in Paw Paw Township without contributing to sprawl.

The Village of Paw Paw and the M-51/Red Arrow Highway/I-94 area provide Paw Paw Township existing development areas toward which to direct commercial growth and promote diverse and affordable housing choices. Targeted growth in these areas will preserve the agricultural lands in the Township for agri-business and agri-tourism opportunities.

Local water features are a key community asset.

The natural water features in the area are valued for their beauty, their recreational and tourism potential, and their contribution to the residential base of the Paw Paw community.

Connectivity within the Paw Paw community provides economic advantages.

Connectivity between area-wide assets (recreational features, points of interest, activity centers, and residential development) offers potential for growth. Accessibility attracts residents and visitors and translates into economic activity.

Vision

The **Vision** is a statement that describes how Paw Paw Township would like to see its future unfold. Having a clear sense of the past and present . . . and direction for the future . . . will allow the township to meet its land use challenges and identify its economic opportunities successfully.

The **Vision** is an 'ideal' and likely will not be possible to attain entirely. However, it

should serve to motivate and provide guidance to decision-makers and residents. The **Vision** embraces the community's **Planning Values** and is designed to provide a focus that will translate into action.

Our Vision for Paw Paw Township is to move forward as a community characterized by:

A dedication to progress -- defined by its consistent efforts to recognize the Township and the Village of Paw Paw as the 'community of Paw Paw' in its overall economic and land use strategies and to take advantage of the role the community plays in the County and the Region in moving towards prosperity.

A significant agricultural partner in the Region -- that capitalizes on the area's strong agricultural history and the Region's emerging food systems network. Paw Paw Township is a community plugged in to the agri-business and agri-tourism opportunities that are supported further by the area's reputation for events/festivals.

A rich natural environment -- quality waterfront areas, ample residential lakefront property, and scenic areas near rivers and wetlands provide a unique and beautiful setting. These areas are valued by the community and play a major role in the economic stability of the area.

Economic strength through connectivity -- between area-wide assets (natural features, recreational facilities), activity and employment centers, and residential areas. This connectivity improves accessibility and serves as a catalyst for business growth;

attracts travelers; and links the area's economic and recreational network.

The Vision Realized: Goals & Strategies

The **Vision** serves to inspire specific *goals* and *strategies* that will then be implemented through the Future Land Use Plan (Chapter 5).

A *goal* is a general statement of a desired outcome – it should be realistic and obtainable. Each *goal* is followed by a set of *strategies*. A *strategy* is a specific action that accomplishes the outcome set forth in the *goal*. The *strategies* provide the basis for the Implementation elements of the Plan.

Vision Element: A Dedication to Progress

Goal: *Collaborate with the Village of Paw Paw on land use issues common to both jurisdictions.*

Strategy: *Engage in coordinated land use planning with the Village of Paw Paw in targeting Village 'fringe areas' for commercial, mixed use, and residential growth.*

Strategy: *Adopt zoning ordinance elements that coordinate with and/or complement Village zoning standards along jurisdictional boundaries.*

Strategy: Work in conjunction with the Village of Paw Paw to adopt common waterfront and gateway development standards.

Strategy: Work with the Village of Paw Paw to develop and adopt a Paw Paw Community Recreation Plan.

Strategy: Establish joint meetings with Village planning officials to establish a productive and collaborative relationship.

Goal: *Recognize the role of Paw Paw Township and the larger Paw Paw community in the County and Region.*

Strategy: Establish a relationship with Van Buren County planning officials as the ‘Community of Paw Paw’ . . . to enhance communication and participation in land use programs and grant opportunities.

Strategy: Plug in as a partner of Region 8 – Southwest Michigan Prosperity Region.

Strategy: Consider county and regional plans in local land use decisions.

Strategy: Partner in county and regional land use grant applications (ie. non-motorized and blueway corridor improvements).

Goal: *Serve as ‘ambassadors of collaboration’ for economic prosperity.*

Strategy: Concentrate efforts on communication and participation with planning and land use officials at the local, county and regional levels.

Strategy: Represent the Township as a collaborative community . . . marketing the area as the Community of Paw Paw.

Strategy: Actively educate residents and business owners of the Paw Paw community about shared assets and economic advantages through partnering.

Vision Element: A Significant Agricultural Partner in the Region

Goal: *Recognize the role of agriculture in the local economy and the Township’s position in the overall Van Buren County economy.*

Strategy: Facilitate a partnership between the local agricultural base and the regional food system network.

Strategy: Facilitate a partnership between the local agricultural base and area retailers/institutions.

Strategy: Work with the County and area communities to foster

the Paw Paw community as a 'fresh food corridor'.

Strategy: Update the agricultural zoning district to support viable agri-business land use opportunities

Strategy: Develop zoning standards that support 'food hubs' and local food entrepreneurship.

Strategy: Market the agricultural base as part of the local tourism trade . . . recognizing the area's reputation for festivals/events.

Goal: **Preserve Township farmland and open space**

Strategy: Maintain the Farmland Preservation land use classification and AGR Agricultural (Farmland Protection) Zoning District.

Strategy: Continue to initiate and/or support local participation in federal, state, and local farmland preservation programs.

Strategy: Maintain the Open Space and Rural Residential land use classifications - - and the application of cluster and open space zoning techniques.

Strategy: Seek to purchase or acquire by donation the development rights from properties identified to have significant

open space qualities or sensitive natural resources.

Strategy: Actively discourage sprawl by directing residential and commercial growth to the areas adjacent to the Village of Paw Paw.

Vision Element: A Rich, Natural Environment

Goal: Recognize and promote the lakes and wetland areas as community assets.

Strategy: Work in conjunction with area lake associations, the Village of Paw Paw and the Van Buren County Drain Commission to create a long-term plan for water quality preservation and shoreline management.

Strategy: Apply zoning techniques, developed in conjunction with the Village of Paw Paw, designed to manage shoreline development, such as a waterfront overlay approach.

Strategy: Seek opportunities to expand or enhance the vistas around the lakes.

Goal: Protect the water quality of the lakes and wetland area.

Strategy: Continue to implement the Township/Village Wellhead Protection Plan.

Strategy: Establish floodplain protection measures using updated FEMA information provided by the State of Michigan.

Strategy: Educate waterfront homeowners about environmentally-friendly practices.

Strategy: Apply low-impact development solutions along shorelines, such as a waterfront overlay approach, vegetative buffers, and rain gardens.

Goal: Provide for recreational opportunities that take advantage of the natural environment.

Strategy: Plan for non-motorized paths that will connect parks and other activity centers throughout the Paw Paw community.

Strategy: Establish blueway corridors that extend throughout the Paw Paw community and that are provided planned points of access and connect points of interest.

Strategy: Use the Open Space land use classification to identify land that contributes to the formation of an 'open space corridor' . . . instead of

isolated pockets of open space surrounded by other land uses.

Strategy: Initiate protection of identified open space through the application of federal, state or local preservation programs or purchase.

Vision Element: Economic Strength Through Connectivity

Goal: Promote Red Arrow Highway as a vibrant corridor within the Paw Paw community and a gateway into the Village of Paw Paw.

Strategy: Identify and use public spaces within Village 'fringe areas' to establish 'gateway' entrances that direct traffic into the Village. Apply coordinated streetscape improvements to these 'gateways' so as to provide a visual connection to the downtown area.

Strategy: Make Village 'fringe area' portions of the Red Arrow Highway corridor more pedestrian friendly with pedestrian crossings at key locations, safe sidewalks, and pedestrian amenities.

Strategy: Work in coordination with the Van Buren Road Commission to develop an access management plan for the Red Arrow Highway corridor.

Strategy: Create a wayfinding system (signs and/or other graphic communications such as colors, logos, etc) to guide motorists and pedestrians to the downtown area and to local attractions.

Goal: Target areas for commercial and residential growth to allow for connectivity and avoid the impacts of sprawl.

Strategy: Direct commercial growth to the 'fringe areas' of the Village of Paw Paw and the M-51 corridor (between Red Arrow Highway and I-94) to take advantage of existing infrastructure and/or allow for connectivity to existing development.

Strategy: Allow for diverse and affordable housing choices (density, form, building type) in the 'fringe areas' of the Village of Paw Paw to take advantage of existing infrastructure and allow for connectivity to existing development.

Goal: Promote connectivity through land use, transportation and recreation planning policy.

Strategy: Direct development to areas that can achieve connectivity to surrounding points of interest and area recreational assets.

Strategy: Accommodate non-motorized facilities (eg. bike lanes, sidewalks) within transportation routes that connect area-wide assets (recreational features, points of interest, activity centers, residential development).

Strategy: Effectively use greenway and blueway corridors to connect assets within the Paw Paw community.

Goal: Promote connectivity through asset-based marketing.

Strategy: Use a wayfinding system (signs and/or other graphic communications such as colors, logos, etc) to guide motorists and pedestrians throughout the Paw Paw community.

Strategy: Work with area business owners to cross-promote attractions within the Paw Paw community, emphasizing accessibility and network connections.