

Chapter 3

Planning Framework

This Master Plan Update has been developed based on the planning issues identified through the 2003 public input process and confirmed through the current public review process. These issues provided the foundation for the Township vision and helped define the values, goals and strategies of the Plan, as well as the specific elements of the Future Land Use plan.

Public Participation

The Paw Paw Township Planning Commission welcomed the residents and property owners of Paw Paw Township in the process of updating the Master Plan. From the informal group settings of Planning Commission work sessions to the publicized and structured setting of the public hearing, community members were afforded the opportunity to provide input and participate at a meaningful level in the planning process.

Planning Commission Work Sessions

The Planning Commission hosted monthly Master Plan Update Work Sessions during the course of the update process. These work sessions were open to all community members and were publicized on the Township's web site agenda postings.

It was through the work sessions that the Planning Commission received public

comment and direction regarding every stage of the update process.

The *Issues* set forth in this Chapter were identified and explored through Planning Commission debate and public input.

Public Hearing

The public hearing held on the draft Master Plan Update by the Planning Commission offered an additional opportunity for public input in the planning process. The public hearing was held on September 29, 2016 at the Township Hall. The positive comments received on the Plan are a testimony to the value of public participation throughout the process and the importance of having a Master Plan that reflects the priorities and planning values of the community.

Collaboration

An important theme in this Master Plan Update is the desire for collaboration, at both the local and regional levels.

Paw Paw Township understands that collaboration with the Village of Paw Paw on important local issues is essential in driving economic prosperity in the Paw Paw community.

Further, an expanded partnership with Van Buren County and the Southwest Michigan Prosperity Region 8 will allow for an alignment of shared assets and movement forward on projects that are important to the prosperity of the region.

This Master Plan embraces the notion of local and regional collaboration as a means of ensuring that available resources are

targeted where they will have the greatest impact possible for job creators and residents.

Issues

The **Issues** identified during the Master Plan Update process can be summarized as follows:

- ❖ **Agri-Business Opportunities** – recognizing ‘wine corridor’ opportunities; recognizing the Paw Paw area as a crucial part of the regional food system.
- ❖ **Agri-Tourism Opportunities** – establishing Paw Paw Township as a ‘fresh food corridor’ in the area; promoting ‘food hubs’ as part of the local tourism trade; capitalizing on the area’s numerous local events/festivals in support of local food entrepreneurship.
- ❖ **Agricultural/Rural Preservation** – continuing to discourage sprawl; preserving the ‘small farm’ opportunity; protecting areas with prime agricultural soils and key open space habitats.
- ❖ **Commercial Development** – working with the Village of Paw Paw to support commercial land use at a community level, strategically directing commercial development to the fringe areas of the Village of Paw Paw for targeted impact and efficient use of infrastructure.

- ❖ **Housing** – providing for mixed density residential options in Village fringe areas; using mixed density residential areas to provide affordable housing choices; locating to improve connectivity to local service areas and/or employment centers.

- ❖ **Regional Non-Motorized Trailways** – strengthening connections to area-wide recreational assets and points of interest to attract visitors/tourists; improving recreational opportunities in the larger community of Paw Paw.

- ❖ **Watershed Protection** – establishing land use patterns responsive to watershed boundaries; transforming watershed protection elements into tourism opportunities.

- ❖ **Coordinated Planning** – exploring coordinated land use efforts between Township and Village planning officials; recognizing Paw Paw Township and the Village of Paw are a community with shared assets; recognizing the Paw Paw community as an active partner in Van Buren County and Region 8 – Southwest Michigan Prosperity Region.

These planning issues provide the foundation for the planning principles (*values, vision, goals, and strategies*) outlined in Chapter 4 - Planning Principles.