

# Lake Township

## Master Plan

### Lake Township Planning Commission

2010

*Note: This document is the text of the Lake Township Master Plan adopted in 2010 and reviewed and ratified in 2015 and 2020. The full Master Plan includes some maps that are not reproduced here. Copies of the full Master Plan are available for review at the Township offices. This copy of the text of the Plan is being posted online as part of the effort by the Lake Township Planning Commission to review and update the Master Plan, and to allow members of the public to compare the existing Plan with any updates as they are proposed and considered, which should take place in the later part of 2021 and into 2022. The public is encouraged to check this portion of the Township's website for further updates regarding the new Master Plan, including opportunities for providing input and suggestions.*

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## Glossary of Terms Used in this Plan

Chief Elected Official – The Supervisor of the Legislative Body of Lake Township.

Legislative Body – The Lake Township Board of Trustees.

Planning Commission – An official body created by the Lake Township Board of Trustees in accordance with the provision of Act 33 of 2008, as amended, being the Michigan Planning Enabling Act.

Planning Area – The territorial area of Lake Township and its environs.

Planning Jurisdiction – The territorial area of Lake Township outside of any incorporated cities and villages.

Environs – The area of Lake Township and the immediately surrounding area of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore and the townships of Platte, Benzonia, and Crystal Lake.

SBDNL – The Sleeping Berar Dunes National Lakeshore

## **Lake Township Master Plan Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

The general purpose of a master plan is to guide and accomplish, in the planning jurisdiction and its environs, development that satisfies all of the following criteria:

- a. Is coordinated, adjusted, harmonious, efficient and economical.
- b. Considers the character of the planning jurisdiction and its suitability for particular uses, judged in terms of such factors as trends in land and population development.
- c. Will, in accordance with present and future needs, best promote public health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare.
- d. Includes, among other things, promotion of or adequate provision for 1 or more of the following:
  - i) A system of transportation to lessen congestion on streets.
  - ii) Safety for fire and other dangers.
  - iii) Light and air.
  - iv) Healthful and convenient distribution of population.
  - v) Good civic design and arrangement and wise and efficient expenditure of public funds.
  - vi) Public utilities such as sewage disposal and water supply and other public improvements.
  - vii) Recreation.
  - viii) The use of resources in accordance with their character and adaptability.

The planning statute requires the planning commission to make and approve a master plan to serve as a guide for the development of the Township according to the following provisions as applicable:

- a. Make careful and comprehensive surveys and studies of present conditions and future growth within the planning area with due regard to its relationship to neighboring jurisdictions.
- b. Consult with representatives of adjacent units of government with respect to their planning so that conflicts in master plans and zoning may be avoided.
- c. Cooperate with all departments of the state and federal government and other public agencies concerned with programs for economic, social and physical development within the planning jurisdiction and seek the maximum coordination of the Township with these agencies.

## **About this Plan**

The Lake Township Master Plan is intended to comply with the legal requirements of a community plan in Michigan as noted above, and, in addition, to provide for the proper management of the community resources, to protect as well as enhance the community's integrity.

Lake Township, an internationally renowned place of extraordinary natural beauty and excellent environmental quality, has undergone relatively intense development pressures. The Township realizes that growth management measures are essential in order to maintain the quality living environment for future populations, while satisfying in a controlled manner, reasonable demands for growth.

The recommendations detailed in this Plan are designed to offer guidance in managing intense development pressures that are presently being exerted on the Township land, water and other resources. This growth pressure is most evident in the increased influx of seasonal residents and tourists, particularly in the recreational and seasonal home developments that provide accommodations and services for these transient populations. This development activity places inordinate burdens on the land and environmental resources of the Township, as well as public services and facilities.

While incremental growth pressures do pose additional burdens on Township resources, the possibility of large scale commercial recreation development will pose the most serious problem for the Township resources in the future. Fortunately, the Township recognizes this potential, and this Plan is created in part to help overcome this potential threat to the long term environmental quality of the Township.

The SBDNL is a dominant feature of the Township, and in addition to its size, places development impacts on the Township due to the ancillary and supplemental uses that are attracted here due to the Lakeshore's existence.

Thus, while it is obvious that the economic benefits of tourism and seasonal population are known, the potential economic costs and loss of environmental quality of such growth to the area have not been fully considered in the past. The planning challenge of the Township is to properly manage seasonal growth pressures while providing growth management programs to maintain long term environmental quality. That is the purpose and guiding principal of this Plan.

## **Legal Authority**

This Plan is created as a "Future Land Use Plan" as defined in Act 33 of 2008, being the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, as amended. Lake Township is creating this Plan under the authority granted to townships by Act 33 of 2008, as referenced above.

## **Lake Township History**

Lake Township was established in 1873. The Township was made up of forests, Otter Creek, Bass Lake, Otter Lake, Long Lake, Platte Lake, Little Platte Lake, Loon Lake (originally Round Lake), part of Crystal Lake, and the lower Platte River.

In the late 1800's lumbering and commercial fishing were the major economic forces in Lake Township. In 1858 the Point Betsie Lighthouse was established as the Manitou Passage was used by 100 sailing or steam vessels in a single day. In 1875 the life-saving station was established.

In 1883 the towns of Edgewater and Aral were established in Lake Township. Edgewater was located on the northwest shore of Platte Lake, and Aral was located near Otter Creek. A narrow gauge railroad was built to carry lumber from the Platte Lumber Company to Lake Michigan. Extensive docks were built at the Lake Michigan shore so that the lumber could be loaded onto ships. In 1891, the Otter Creek Lumber Company was established. It is reported that extensive shipments of lumber went to the rebuilding of Chicago after the great fire of 1871. Lumbering took most of the maple, ash, oak, elm, basswood, hemlock and beech trees. By 1910 these towns were gone due to the depletion of the forests.

Resorts were the other main economic staple for fishing, hunting, and summer guests. Chimney Corners was established in 1910, and Crystal Downs (known as one of the best golf courses in the United States) was established in 1927. Other resorts were formed around the lakes.

Due to poor soil conditions agriculture was not sustainable, although orchards were developed in the 1920's. The largest one in Lake Township was Crystal Highlands Orchards. The crop was cherries. There were also apple, blueberry and Christmas tree farms in the area.

Lake Township has been primarily a resort community for the past seventy years. Congress established the SBDNL in 1970. Over the next ten years and even today, much of Lake Township was purchased (as authorized) by the federal government. With some exceptions, all buildings and structures have been removed and the sites returned to a natural condition.

Lake Township has few businesses; Crystal Downs, Point Betsie, Chimney Corners, canoe rentals, party stores and the SBDNL. The rest of the Township is owned by families: many are summer residents, although more and more are making this their permanent home. Tourism is the main economic force.

Lake Township has a great deal of water and forest covered ridges that make this a most special Township. The residents deeply care about their Township.

## Chapter Two Existing Conditions

An important part of preparing a good plan for the future is to understand where the Township is now, where it has been in the recent past, and where trends show it will likely be in the near future.

This is accomplished by examining the demographic elements of the Township, that is, the population and economic characteristics that make up the Township population. In addition, a visual image of existing land use patterns is very helpful in determining what future land use patterns will be the most successful in managing future growth.

### Population Characteristics

**Table 1 - Population Change – 1990 – 2007**

Governmental Unit	1990 Population	2000 Population	% change 1990-2000	2007 Population	% change 2000-2007
Benzie County	12,200	15,998	31.1	17,510	8.7
Lake Twp.	508	635	25.0	687	7.5

Source: US Census Bureau, Northwest Michigan Council of Governments. Table by Williams Consulting Services

Table 1 shows a history of population growth for both Benzie County and Lake Township in 1990 and 2000, and the projected population for 2007. Note that the ten year population change from 1990 to 2000 was over 31 percent for the County and 25 percent for Lake Township. However, the percent change was only 8.7 percent for the County and 7.5 percent for the Township in the seven year period of 2000 to 2007.

A closer examination of population statistics shows that the year 2006 was the peak in population growth for both the County at 17,597 and 691 for Lake Township. In this case, the population of Benzie County went down .5 percent from 2006 to 2007, while the population of Lake Township went down .6 percent during that same time period. Clearly, the growth pressures of the 1990's and early 2000's is gone and in fact the area is losing population.

### Share of County Population

When comparing the population of Lake Township to the total population of the County as expressed as a percentage over the past several Federal Census's, the Township has remained fairly stable, ranging only between 3.3 percent in 1960 and 4.4 percent in 1970. It is estimated that Lake Township was 3.9 percent of the total County population for the 2005 population estimate, and was recorded as 4.0 percent at the time of the 2000 Census.

The townships adjoining Lake have also experienced fairly stable population as expressed as a percentage of County population. The main reason that Lake Township slipped slightly as a percentage of total county population is the strong growth of Almira, Homestead and Inland Townships during the same time period.

## Age and Sex Composition of the 2000 Population

**Table 2 – Age and Sex - 2000**

Census	Number	Percent
Total Population	635	100.0
Sex and Age		
Male	316	49.8
Female	319	50.2
Under 5 years	14	2.2
5 to 9 years	15	2.4
10 to 14 years	21	3.3
15 to 19 years	13	2.0
20 to 24 years	12	1.9
25 to 34 years	26	4.1
35 to 44 years	56	8.8
46 to 54 years	85	13.4
55 to 59 years	52	8.2
60 to 64 years	91	14.3
65 to 74 years	155	24.4
75 to 84 years	75	11.8
85 and over	20	3.1
Median age	61.3 years	
18 years and older	575	90.6
Male	285	44.9
Female	290	45.7
21 years and over	569	89.6
62 years and over	306	48.2
65 and over	250	39.4
Male	130	20.5
Female	120	18.9

Source: US Census Bureau, Northwest Michigan Council of Governments. Chart by Williams Consulting Services.

Please note that the median age of the Township population is 61.3 years. This is the highest median age in the County. Adjacent Townships of Platte, Benzonia, and Crystal Lake are 43.7, 44.5 and 48.1 respectively. The average median age of all governmental units in the County, including cities, villages and townships is 42.1.

Lake Township's median age is significantly above that of any other unit of government and means that the Township contains a higher than average number of older citizens.

### Housing

According to the 2000 Census, there were 1,106 housing units in the Township at that time. This was a modest increase in housing units of 7.6 percent from the 1990 census report of 1,028 units. An increase of 78 housing units in ten years, for an average of 7.8 new housing units per year.

As table 3 below shows, a very significant aspect of housing in the Township is the number of vacant units.

<b>Table 3 – Housing Units</b>	Number	Percent
Total Housing Units	1,106	100.0
Occupied Units	318	28.8
Vacant Units – seasonal use	744	67.3
Vacant Units - other	44	12.2
Homeowner vacancy %		3.6
Rental vacancy %		45.5
Occupied housing units	318	100.0
Owner occupied units	294	92.5
Renter occupied units	24	7.5
Average household size of owner occupied units	2.03	
Average household size of renter-occupied units	1.63	
Average household size	2.00	
Households with individuals age 65 and over	167	52.5
Non-family households	91	28.6
Householder living alone	79	24.8
Units in the structure – one unit, detached	1,048	97.0
Median value of all housing units	\$230,500.00	

Source: US Census Bureau, Northwest Michigan Council of Governments. Chart by Williams Consulting Services.

This chart shows that there are predominantly (over 67 percent) seasonal homes existing in Lake Township. While current records show that this situation is gradually changing, that is, more homes are being occupied on a year round basis, the percentage will remain above 50 percent for a number of years. Note: The percentage of owner occupied in 1990 was 23.1 percent as compared to 28.8 percent in 2000.

### **Employment and Income**

There were 574 persons over 16 years of age in 2000 living in the Township. There were 198, or 34.5 percent that were considered in the labor force.

Workers 16 years and older that commute to work were 186. 154 or 82.8 percent of these workers commuted to work in an auto and traveled alone. 19 persons worked at home.

The mean travel time to work in 2000 was 26.2 minutes, up from 21.9 minutes in 1990.

79.6 percent of these workers were in professional or sales and office occupations. The balance of the workers were in service, construction and maintenance occupations.

### Household Income in 1999

Households	Number	Percent
Less than \$10,000	13	4.1
\$10,000 to \$14,999	29	9.2
\$15,000 to \$24,999	53	16.8
\$25,000 to \$34,999	24	7.6
\$35,000 to \$49,999	57	18.1
\$50,000 to \$74,999	72	22.9
\$75,000 to \$99,999	20	6.3
\$100,000 to \$149,999	23	7.3
\$150,000 to \$199,999	12	3.8
\$200,000 or more	12	3.8
Median household income	\$46,979	
With earnings	\$60,207	
With Social Security	\$14,896	
With retirement income	\$21,194	

Source: US Census Bureau, Northwest Michigan Council of Governments. Chart by Williams Consulting Services.

### Existing Land Use

The most current existing land use information is from the Benzie County Master Plan and dated 1997. By far the predominant land use in the Township is associated with the SBDNL. Approximately 2/3 of the township land area lies within the boundary of the SBDNL, and consists of forested hills, meadows, dunes and lakeshores. The uses within this area are very low intensity trails, picnic areas, launching ramps and a campground. Outside of the SBDNL it is primarily residential of moderate density around lakes and streams, and very low density in rural settings.

There are very few commercial uses. There are canoe liveries, restaurants, and small convenience and party stores.

## Existing Land Use Map

## **Community Facilities**

### **Government Services:**

Lake Township is governed by a five member board of trustees, elected for four year terms, and consisting of a Supervisor, Clerk and Treasurer and two trustees.

The Board of Trustees maintains an office and meeting room at 5153 Scenic Highway (M-22). The Board of Trustees maintains office hours at the office and holds monthly meetings for the transaction of the official business of the Township.

### **Emergency Services:**

The planning area is served by enhanced 911 service that dispatches fire, ambulance and law enforcement services from the Benzie County Sheriff's Office located on US 31 in Beulah.

Fire Department: Lake Township contracts with the Frankfort fire department and maintains a substation located at the Township offices at 5153 Scenic Highway.

Ambulance Service: Benzie County operates an ambulance/first responder service. The nearest station is located near Paul Oliver Hospital in Frankfort or Homestead Township at Honor.

### **Culture and Recreation:**

Library Services: All Township residents may use the Benzonia and Beulah libraries free of charge and the Frankfort Library by purchase of a private membership.

Other cultural attractions that serve the Township residents are the Benzonia Historical Society, the Crystal Lake Art Center, and the Interlochen Arts Academy.

Recreation: The Township owns and operates a park on Lake Michigan and the Platte River at Platte River Point in section 20. While this property is surrounded by the SBDNL, the Township has worked out a cooperative agreement with the SBDNL to share some facilities to allow for access to both Township residents and SBDNL visitors. The Township Park offers picnic and water access facilities and access to restroom facilities. Access for watercraft is also provided at M-22 and the Platte River. The MDNR weir on the Platte River is also a point of interest.

The SBDNL also operates a picnic area near M-22 and the Platte River.

#### **Access Sites:**

Benzie County owns the Point Betsie Light House facility located on Lake Michigan located in Section 4. This is an historical site consisting of the Lighthouse and accessory

buildings, and offers access to Lake Michigan. Much of the lands around this site are owned by The Nature Conservancy and are being returned to a natural condition. Trails and informal picnic facilities are also provided.

There are public access sites for the following lakes:

Long Lake – public access off Bancroft Road in Section 6

Little Platte Lake – an access site on the North side of the Lake off Saffron Road in Section 25.

Platte Lake – an access site off Arborvitae Drive on the West end of the Lake in Section 33.

Loon Lake – There is an access provided to Loon Lake in Section 28 provided by the SBDNL.

Lake Michigan – There is access to Lake Michigan at the Western end of Esch Road in Section 1, walking access at Peterson Road, and at the Township Park.

Campgrounds:

The SBDNL operates a campground near the Platte River in Section 27 and the White Pine backcountry campground (walk-in only) east of Peterson Road.

The American Resort, a travel trailer facility is located in Section 35 on Deadstream Road with a nearby convenience commercial business and canoe livery.

**Utilities:**

Electrical service is provided by Consumers Energy.

Natural gas service is provided to most residential areas by DTE Energy with the balance served primarily with Propane gas.

Phone service is provided by Century Tel and AT & T.

Internet service is provided by Charter Communications in most areas of the Township.

Cell phone services are also available and one cell tower is located in Section 5 off Cooper Road and currently operated by Verizon.

Solid Waste: Individuals and businesses contract privately for solid waste services

Schools: Lake Township is located within both the Benzie County Central School District and the Frankfort Elberta School District.

Elementary Schools are located in Frankfort and Honor.

The high schools are Benzie Central High School located on Homestead Road in Homestead Township and Frankfort High School located in Frankfort.

### **Transportation**

M-22 is the main transportation artery that traverses the Township generally in a north/south direction. Most residents and visitors use this main access to get to Frankfort and Empire, nearby urban centers.

Platte Road and Deadstream Road are used to gain access to the Village of Honor. Residents of Crystal Downs and the north shore of Crystal Lake utilize Crystal Drive to gain access to Beulah and Benzonia. Frankfort is approximately three miles south of the Township boundary, Empire is approximately five miles north of the northern Township boundary, and Honor approximately five miles to the East.

The Benzie County Road Commission, with headquarters located in Honor, maintains all of the county roads in the Township. While much of the land area of the Township has been incorporated into the SBDNL, the Road Commission has retained ownership and thus maintenance responsibility of the many of the roads now located within the SBDNL. These roads are now classified as “seasonal roads” and are not plowed in the winter months but do receive maintenance during the summer. The SBDNL also owns and maintains some roads within the Township.

Benzie County operates a public Transportation system called Benzie Bus. This system offers public transportation services to the residents and visitors of the Township. Service is provided on an “on call” basis.

### **Civic Organizations:**

- Lakeshores Garden Club
- Benzie Chamber of Commerce
- Frankfort Chamber of Commerce
- Rotary, Lions and Kiwanis Service Clubs
- Benzie County Visitors Bureau

### **The Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore:**

Senator Phil Hart’s Bill to create the SBDNL was signed into law by President Richard Nixon on October 21, 1970.

On October 22, 1977 the SBDNL was officially dedicated as the Nation’s newest national lakeshore.

SBDNL facilities and programs in Lake Township:

The Platte River Campground – Located on Lake Michigan Road. This is a year round camping facility consisting of approximately 179 sites with some electric service, restrooms, showers, trash receptacles and potable water available throughout the campground. In addition there are four group camping sites that can accommodate up to 25 campers each and some 20 walk-in campsites where campers can back pack into a remote camp site.

Other facilities offered are a canoe launch on the Platte River, a fish cleaning station, a sanitary dump station, bicycle access to Peterson Road, a picnic area across Lake Michigan Road from the campground on the Platte River, and a Ranger Station with public phones.

The Platte Plains Trail – A hiking and cross country ski trail system of about 15 total miles between the Platte River Campground and Otter Creek at Esch Road. The trail is through maple, beech and pine forests and low dunes. There are many branches and loops to this system with several scenic look out points to Lake Michigan, and remote back pack-only sites at the White Pine backcountry campground.

The Old Indian Trail – This is a trail of about 2.5 miles that is very popular for winter skiing and snowshoeing. The trail travels through a maple beech forest and low dunes to a view of Lake Michigan.

### **Natural Resources and Features**

Basic Geology – The bedrock underlying the Township was created during the Devonian Age of the Paleozoic Era. The surface area we see today was formed some 10,000 years ago as a result of glacial activity and the activity of the winds off Lake Michigan. Glaciers advanced and retreated, resulting in a mix of soils due to the erosion and the depositions of various soils. Sandy soils at the shore of Lake Michigan resulted in the creation of extensive dunes.

The result of all of this activity over many hundreds of years is a wide variety of topography from plains to steep hillsides, valleys, dunes and swamps.

Soils – According to the Natural Resource Conservation Service, in general, the soils of the Township are predominantly sands, with a wide variety of slopes, some very steep up to 25% and steeper. Some clay deposits also exist. Soils in stream valleys and around lakes often contain high organic material such as mucks and may contain high water tables.

These sandy soils often do not contain any impermeable barrier such as clay in the lower levels, which makes the use of on-site septic systems problematic. In addition, these soils often have very poor filtering capacity so that on site investigation is needed for septic system use to prevent ground water contamination.

The very nature of the basic soils, along with the glacial and wind actions, have created a beautiful natural environment, but one that results in steep slopes and ridges, as well as poor soils for on site septic systems, both of which will need development regulations that respect the uniqueness of the Township's natural features.

**Forests** – The predominant land cover in the Township is forests. These forests consist of typical northern Michigan forest types of maple, beech, pine and oak in the higher areas and cedar, swamp maple, tamarack, spruce and balsam in the lower high water table areas. The forests not only provide good habitat for wildlife, but have provided timber resources in the past and have provided protection of the fragile sands from water and wind erosion. In addition, many residents find a pleasant residential setting in the Michigan north woods.

**Surface Water** – The Platte River Watershed is some 193 square miles in area and extends into Leelanau, Grand Traverse and most of the Northern half of Benzie County. The Platte River Valley is about 14 miles in length. The predominant land cover in the total watershed is forest, open space and wetlands at approximately 82 percent of the land area. Second is agriculture with 12 percent, and urban uses at about 6 percent. Approximately 76 percent of the total watershed is publicly owned by either the National Park Service as the SBDNL or the State of Michigan as the Pere Marquette State Forest.

The predominant surface water features in the Township in addition to Lake Michigan, are Crystal Lake, Platte and Little Platte Lakes, the Platte River, Long Lake, Rush Lake, Round Lake, Loon Lake, Mud Lake, Bass Lake and Otter Lake all lie within the boundary of the SBDNL.

**Existing Land Use** – A 2005 aerial map of the Township, combined with the assessor's map shows the predominant land use as public lands with fairly high density residential uses along most of the water frontage in the Township, outside of the National Lakeshore. There are modest agricultural uses north of Crystal Lake, with the Crystal Downs golf course and residential development another important land use.

### **Chapter Three Trends and Projections**

While the Township has lost significant land area to the SBDNL, and many homes that were within the SBDNL boundary were removed, the land value remains the highest in Benzie County. This fact speaks to the high value of the homes developed within the Township. These homes are located along Crystal Lake, at Crystal Downs, Platte and Little Platte Lakes and other small lakes.

The vast majority of the land available for growth and development is already in use. There are a few remaining parcels of acreage that could be developed in the future, as either site condominiums or other types of residential development, but there is very little land available for future growth.

There are few commercial development areas, and no urban centers. A canoe rental and convenience store is located on M-22 at the Platte River, within the SBDNL, a small convenience store and private campground is located on Deadstream Road that has frontage on Little Platte Lake, and the Manitou Restaurant located on M-22 near Sutter Road. Also the golf course and club house for Crystal Downs development is another commercial component of the Township. There appears to be very little opportunity to develop additional commercial uses in other areas in the future.

The Township will continue to face growth pressures from persons wanting to build a retirement home in the Township, and in addition, as visitors to the SBDNL continue to increase in future years, this will bring pressure for more recreational enterprises and tourist accommodations.

Also, as the trend to more year-round residential use continues, this will place some pressure on the Township for the type of community services expected by year-round residents; such as mail delivery, trash pickup, improved roads, health services, community rooms, library services, convenience commercial and additional recreation services.

The impact of the SBDNL; past, present and future –

History shows that interest in the lakes and woods of northern Michigan began in the 1940's with the increased mobility and relative prosperity of workers in southern Michigan, Indiana, Ohio and Illinois.

Beginning in the 1950's and continuing into the early 1970's there was a struggle back and forth concerning the national importance of the natural beauty of the Lake Michigan shoreline in Benzie and Leelanau Counties. Several bills were introduced in Congress and contested hearings held in Northern Michigan and in Washington. When the SBDNL was finally established, bitter feelings were experienced by local citizens and vacation home owners who had invested in homes and cottages in the area that were scheduled for purchase and demolition.

Most of the land purchases have been completed, park planning and development has occurred, and homes and other structures within the park boundary have been removed. However, hard feelings still exist among the descendents of the former owners of homes within the Park.

The SBDNL offers a wide variety of outdoor activities and tourist oriented events. Many businesses as far away as Traverse City advertise and offer services to SBDNL visitors. The SBDNL has 46 permanent and 84 seasonal employees, and experienced over 1,100,000 visitors in 2008. While the economic impact of the SBDNL can be felt in the multi-county area, very little actual economic gain is experienced in the Township.

As visitor use continues to increase in future years, and more activities are included within the SBDNL facilities and programs, there will be a spin-off effect in the surrounding area for increased tourist accommodations and related recreational enterprises.

## **Chapter Four Goals and Objectives**

These goals and objectives are created in response to the requirements of Act 33 of 2008, as amended, to provide a platform and basis for growth management and maintenance of the Township's natural qualities while planning for continued growth and prosperity for township residents and businesses by:

- 1) Identify environmentally sensitive areas which should be protected and methods of protection.
- 2) Establish appropriate land use densities.
- 3) Providing for a full variety of land uses; Commercial, Industrial, Residential, Recreation, Agriculture, Public and Semipublic.
- 4) Maximize the utilization of water and scenic features and other resources for the greatest benefit of the residents of the entire community.
- 5) Establish a basis for long term economic stability with suitable related growth.
- 6) Identify realistic future community land use potential and population.
- 7) Protect values people find in the area which establish and enhance the quality of life.
- 8) Provide for variety in development with appropriate separation to limit conflict between land uses.
- 9) Implement Dark Night Sky principals through zoning and other regulations.

### Natural Resources –

**Goal:** Optimum utilization of land, water, air and natural resources, including their preservation and conservation.

**Objectives:** Provide opportunities, methods and controls to:

- ▶ Assure continued and future use and conservation of valuable natural resources by preventing inappropriate development of conflicting land uses.
- ▶ Preserve and enhance the unique character of the Township, particularly its relationship to the SBDNL.

## Open Space –

Goal: Encourage maintenance, quality and quantity of open space, scenic and natural areas throughout the Township.

Objectives: Provide opportunities, methods or controls to assure:

- ▶ Preservation of lands with open space potential.
- ▶ Promotion of multiple land uses which encourage or enhance private ownership of non-developed lands.
- ▶ Promotion of recreation purposes of public owned open space and woodlands.
- ▶ Protection of unique natural areas, swampland, forests and water-courses from urban types of development.
- ▶ Encouragement of open space, appropriately located, in all land use areas.

## Recreation –

Goal:

1. Maintain public ownership of recreation land at existing or expanded levels.
2. Consolidate or ensure creation of commercial recreation enterprises in appropriate locations.
3. Promote an adequate range of recreation opportunities, both public and private.

Objectives: Provide opportunities, methods or controls to assure:

- ▶ Maintenance of local, state and federally owned recreation in such a manner that there is optimum utilization of appropriate locations with a minimum of conflict with adjoining and land uses.
- ▶ Reservation of sufficient recreation lands to serve desired population growth with both active and passive recreation potentials.
- ▶ Where possible, multifunctional use of recreation areas for open space, forestry, flood plain or water resource conservation and historic preservation.

- ▶ Preservation of unique natural areas which cannot be replaced if destroyed misused or neglected.
- ▶ Non-pollution of soil, water and air resource by any segment of the community be it government, agricultural or private.
- ▶ Shape and guide the pattern of land use development away from ecologically sensitive areas.

#### Population Density –

Goal: Guide and control population densities and distribution in order to maintain a rural atmosphere, ecological balance, open space, high levels of sanitation and low levels of pollution.

Objectives: Provide opportunities, methods or controls to assure:

- ▶ Provide a control of population density in such a manner to protect natural resources and maintain a rural atmosphere.
- ▶ Provide for the rational control of Township development growth through proper zoning, subdivision and land division regulations, development standards, code enforcement and administration.

#### Housing – Residential –

Goal: A decent home and environment for every citizen of the Township

Objectives: Provide opportunities, methods or controls to assure:

- ▶ An adequate supply of housing for existing and desired populations.
- ▶ Housing is conveniently located in relation to necessary and desirable public and private facilities and services.
- ▶ That housing for all of the people of the Township is sound, safe and healthful.
- ▶ That a broad range of housing types are available throughout the Township.
- ▶ That residential development takes place in an orderly fashion with respect to adjacent land uses; public utility service and transportation capacities, and natural conditions and limitations while serving the resident's needs for individual utility, character and aesthetics.

- ▶ Gradual renewal and rejuvenation of deteriorating residential structures or areas.
- ▶ The institution, maintenances and strict enforcement (or administration) of adequate and effective zoning, development regulations, and housing and building codes.
- ▶ Utilization of higher density clustering in combination with open space preservation to achieve greatest economic and aesthetic values in residential development.

#### Commercial –

Goal: Concentrate new commercial business development at identifiable community centers and encourage the improvement and consolidation of existing commercial facilities.

Objectives: Provide opportunities, methods and controls to assure;

- ▶ Development of any new commercial facilities in such a way as to minimize conflicts with other land uses.
- ▶ Creation of higher development and design standards and enforcement procedures to discourage commercial “strip” development.
- ▶ Consolidation, revitalization and improvement of existing commercial areas, both aesthetically and functionally, into strong unified and active service centers.
- ▶ Adequate access and public service for all commercial locations.

#### Agriculture -

Goal: Encourage the maintenance of a viable agriculture, where economically feasible in existing agricultural areas.

Objectives: Provide opportunities, methods or controls to assure:

- ▶ Development of marginal agricultural lands for other uses such as forestry, recreation or open space and conservation.
- ▶ Appropriate and orderly residential development in agricultural areas by discouraging high density, premature, scattered or sprawling development of agricultural lands.

- ▶ High quality of water and air resources.
- ▶ To allow for existing agricultural uses as a compatible use.

Public and Community Services –

Goal: Provide adequate and appropriate public facilities and services for the benefit of the people of the Township.

Objectives: Provide opportunities, methods or controls to assure:

- ▶ Highest quality facilities and services necessary to guide and maintain orderly future development.
- ▶ Development of sewer and/or water systems necessary to prevent further pollution of Township water resources.
- ▶ Limitation of all development unless appropriate health and safety standards are complied with and services provided.
- ▶ Interdepartmental cooperation and coordination of police, fire and resource services to achieve Township wide coverage availability.
- ▶ A cooperative effort with county and regional agencies to promote expansion of educational facilities and services to make available to all people the widest range of educational opportunities.

Transportation -

Goal: To preserve the character of the present road system through the planning of a transportation system which causes a minimum of environmental or ecological damage to the Township.

Objectives: Provide opportunities, methods of controls to assure:

- ▶ Improvement and modernization of the present road system to provide optimum capacity, efficiency and safety while maintaining wherever possible, the natural character of the roads and surrounding areas.
- ▶ Utilize State roads for the major portion of through traffic.
- ▶ Coordination of transportation facility development with projected growth areas.

- ▶ Coordination with county, state and general transportation systems.
- ▶ Adequate parking in areas of greater residential, commercial and recreational development intensity.

Employment –

Goal: Provide an increased and wider variety of employment opportunities on a year round basis.

Objectives: Provide opportunities, methods or controls to assure;

- ▶ Cooperation with county, regional, state and federal agencies to aid in development and maintenance of manpower training and vocational rehabilitation programs to combat unemployment or underemployment.
- ▶ The revitalization, growth and expansion of existing year-round commercial activities in the region.
- ▶ Provision of roads, services, facilities and educational opportunities necessary to gain and keep qualified personnel for area employers.

## **Chapter Five Future Land Use**

***The Future Land Use Plan:*** This Plan is based primarily on the findings of the Lake Township Planning Commission in their investigation of trends and projections and an open invitation to the citizens of the Township to meet informally with them on July 14, 2009.

Also, this plan is based in general on the Benzie County 2020 Comprehensive Plan, and in particular the concepts developed subsequently as part of the Benzie County Open Space and Natural Resources Protection Plan. A key component of the Plan is the identification of the “Benzie Corridor”, also known as “Crystal Ridge”, shown on the Open Space Threats Map below. This natural feature is within the SBDNL boundary and is identified for special protection from development of any type.

Other foundations of this Plan are the Benzie County Soil Survey prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture, the Platte River Watershed Overlay Plan and other Township information.

The Benzie County 2020 Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Plan:

This Plan shows no urban service areas within Lake Township. The urban service boundaries of Frankfort, Beulah/Benzonia and Honor are shown as expanded for future growth, and of course the boundary of the SBDNL is identified. Medium density residential development is shown around Crystal, Platte and Little Platte lakes and the balance of the Township is shown as rural. There are no commercial areas shown within Lake Township in this Plan.

The Benzie County Future Land Use Plan is shown on the next page.

## Benzie County Future Land Use Map

## **Master Plan Principals:**

The Lake Township growth management concept is to guide and control population densities and distribution, and business growth in order to maintain the rural, open space and woodland atmosphere. The Township will strive to maintain an ecological balance, open space, high levels of sanitation and low levels of pollution.

This Plan intends to guide population growth to protect natural resources and open space. This can be accomplished in part with a general understanding by the citizens and others of the community goals. A rational management of the Township's development through a well crafted zoning ordinance and other development regulations will also be helpful in this effort.

The officials of Lake Township have joined in a partnership to create this Plan, with the Board of Trustees retaining the right of final approval, thus insuring that the Board fully understands and endorses the goals and management objectives developed by the Planning Commission.

A principal foundation of this Plan is that the maintenance of the unique and high value environment of the planning area is the primary goal of this effort.

Certainly the Township will be faced with typical incremental development that, if not wisely managed, has the potential to degrade not only the natural environment, but may result in general urban type sprawl, placing public service burdens on the citizens and taxpayers, along with a reduction of the basic attractiveness of the Township for residents and visitors alike.

The Benzie County Open Space and Natural Resource Protection Plan identified visible ridge top development in Lake Township as one of the biggest threats to Open Space and Natural Resource protection. This ridge feature is shown on page 5-1, and deserves special recognition and protection.

Continued, but modest growth projections over the next twenty years gives the Township the opportunity to direct new growth into areas that already are experiencing development, and have the proper support facilities to accommodate the new development. The projected increases in population do not appear to be so significant that proper management of this new growth is not possible.

A continued shift from seasonal to year round residential use will also have an impact on the Township in a reduction of taxable value due to Michigan property tax policies, plus the potential need for more community type services than are presently provided. This may also lead to pressure to develop convenience commercial facilities and specialty commercial businesses within the Township.

***Lake Township Future Land Use Recommendations:***

The planning area is generally divided into three main land use categories;

The SBDNL, comprising most of the lands in the north and central portions of the Township, low density residential in the balance of the Township outside of the waterfront areas around the lakes, and moderate density residential along the lakeshores.

Commercial use will be limited to existing uses with very minor expansion anticipated.

Densities are planned generally to be one to five acres in the low density rural residential area, ½ acre or 20,000 square feet to one acre in the moderate density areas around the lakes, and 5,000 to 10,000 square feet for any expansion of commercial uses.

To implement this Plan, a range of residential densities should be considered through zoning standards, both from the standpoint of providing affordable housing opportunities, but to also retain the rural, open space character of the planning area. While some citizens wish to have a compact, manageable home site, others may prefer more spacious acreage for their home.

*Lake Township will consider this planning effort a success if there is very little change in the Township land use over the next twenty years.*

## **Bibliography**

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2. Benzie County Open Space and Natural Resources Protection Plan – April 2002
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4. Benzie County Equalization Department – GIS maps.
5. Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore – Final General Management Plan/Wilderness Study/Environmental Impact Statement – October 2008
6. United States Bureau of the Census 2000
7. Northwest Michigan Council of Governments – Demographic Profile of Northwest Michigan - 2007.
8. Benzie County Historical Society.
9. Natural Resource Conservation Service – United States Department of Agriculture – Benzie County Soil Survey.