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## Chapter 7

### Guiding Issues and Plan Goals

#### Background

The Master Plan provides a guide for action and a focus for the rate, type, location and quality of future growth. The Master Plan will be used to promote orderly land use transitions, provide a framework for managed change, guide policy-making, and influence public and private decisions which shape the community.

Most importantly, this Plan serves to acknowledge, reinforce, and remind us that Manistee is a community with values. We value our businesses and neighborhoods; our homes, old and new; our schools; our industries, large and small; our diverse population, historic buildings, parks; our churches; and the many other community services that better our quality of life. The future of Manistee will be built on these values and assets.

The vitality of any community is often measured in terms of its economic health. For the City of Manistee the economy is driven by the businesses in and near the downtown and the various industries within the city. Since the livelihood of many of the city's residents depend on the health and continued growth of business and industry, they will generally be supportive of helping maintain and improve the business climate.

Maintaining a healthy economic climate, while maintaining a high quality of life will require the City to wrestle with complex zoning and growth policy issues brought on by new development. The need to provide flexibility for development, coupled with the desire to maintain some degree of control, will provoke the need to find innovative zoning and land use policy solutions.

The City of Manistee Planning Commission and various individuals and agencies interviewed during the process of Plan preparation identified a number of important areas of concern that are important to the Master Plan effort and the entire community. The items detailed by a majority of those interviewed follow:

#### *What did people say about growth?*

- Growth is an accepted part of Manistee's future, but that growth should be properly directed, controlled, and planned in an efficient manner.
- Growth is generally a positive result for Manistee, but growth that is unplanned and without a purpose can be detrimental to the City.
- There must be a balance between the benefits of growth--jobs, tax base, economic prosperity--and the potentially negative effects of growth--loss of small town

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character, traffic, etc.

### **Maintaining Balanced Development**

There is no model for a perfect land use “balance” in a community. Rather, it is the function of the community to determine the ultimate direction for its use of land. This means identifying and achieving a reasonable balance between various types of uses, including housing, commercial, industrial, and public uses. Determining the “right” balance involves an examination of a combination of factors, including existing land uses, available land and infrastructure, and the overall community vision.

Achieving a balance of land use will require a recognition of changing economic and social conditions of the City, region, and the nation, with its shift toward retail and service employment, and the growing need for human services. As the demographics of the City change and the population ages, land use needs will vary as new services, housing, and other uses will be required. Moreover, Manistee is experiencing a change from an industrial community to one steeped in tourism and seasonal residents. This change can be beneficial if properly planned and managed.

#### ***What did people say about balanced development?***

- Economic and social stability in Manistee is dependent upon balanced development in the community. A range of land use opportunities and developments are important to the City’s success.
- Achieve balance by guiding development without being too restrictive.
- The balance of development will likely change as Manistee attempts to sustain its economic health and potentially compete with neighboring communities.

### **Providing Choices and Opportunities**

While the construction of housing is a function of the marketplace and the demand created by new residents, the City does have the ability to influence the quality and quantity of the housing produced. Similarly, the City's policies with respect to existing housing can influence its preservation and maintenance. Affordability remains an issue if Manistee is to attract or retain younger families.

Land for new residential construction within the City of Manistee is limited. Yet, the need for new homes in the Manistee area is growing as businesses expand and continue to add employees, and as the demand for seasonal (second) homes increases.

#### ***What did people say about housing?***

- Manistee needs to foster a variety of housing opportunities, including assisted living and elder care facilities, and price ranges to accommodate the needs of its citizens.
- The range of housing (e.g. neighborhoods) in the City, in its different geographic

sectors, should be viewed as a positive asset and efforts made to ensure that all residential areas receive equal treatment pursuant to the provision of public facilities and services, and to protection afforded by zoning and other regulatory tools.

- Historically, many residential areas have peacefully co-existed with nearby commercial and industrial uses. Some of the former commercial and industrial sites/sectors are now vacant and, if left unchecked, may deteriorate resulting in negative impacts on surrounding residential development.
- Many of the City's large, historic, homes are being transformed from single to multiple family use. This often creates problems pursuant to adequate parking and neighborhood compatibility.

### **Keeping a Safe Environment**

Among the many reasons that make Manistee a desirable place to live is because it is a clean, attractive community. Small cities in particular can quickly lose their character if attention is not paid to the physical environment. For the most part, maintaining this character and attractiveness is a matter of individual and community cooperation. Unfortunately not everyone always understands or places the same value on the physical environment. As a result, ordinances are needed to set regulations for maintenance of properties, protection of natural resources, and other aspects that make up Manistee's character.

#### ***What did people say about the local environment?***

- Maintenance of properties and the enforcement of current laws and regulations is important for a positive community image.
- Enhancement of the downtown area is necessary in order to maintain our historic character and to help ensure the long term economic viability of the City.
- Direct attention to the improvement of Manistee's natural features and parks and look for additional opportunities to improve these resources. In doing so, recognize that the needs of local residents are equally important to those of the City's tourists.
- Where possible, ensure that public access is provided to the area's water features.
- A citywide system of bike paths should be a priority.

### **Preserving our Heritage**

In a well developed community like Manistee land use conflicts will occur as nonresidential uses seek to expand and residential areas struggle to maintain their integrity. In many areas land use conflicts have existed for a number of years. As a result, these conflicts are sometimes absorbed into the fabric of the neighborhood. Others, however, may remain as a problem.

Managing growth, then, takes on a different meaning. Rather than managing large, vacant land areas, the challenge facing the City is to monitor and manage the pace of change. Rapid changes can tend to introduce instability, particularly in residential areas. The rate of change can be measured in various ways, including age changes in the population, household size, replacement of older land uses, and

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expansions of established uses.

One of the functions of the Master Plan is to anticipate and monitor these changes and determine what they may mean to the community. As with any land use change, the Planning Commission, City Council, and Zoning Board of Appeals must carefully review land use changes to determine their overall effect on individual neighborhoods and the city.

***What did people say about changes in land use?***

- Future land use changes should not disrupt cohesive neighborhoods.
- Greater attempts should be made to preserve the integrity of Manistee's neighborhoods by encouraging home ownership.
- Evaluate the benefits and limitations of mixed use areas and, as necessary, attempt to reduce conflicts.
- Recognize the importance of the downtown area and its role in Manistee's past, present and future.

**Commercial and Industrial Development**

A solid base of commercial and industrial development is important to the economic health of the City and to its ability to provide a full range of municipal facilities and services.

***What did people say about commercial and industrial development?***

- Commercial development in the City must compete with business growth occurring in the adjoining townships. Efforts should be made by the local units of government to coordinate commercial growth instead of fostering continued strip development along US-31.
- For the City, the primary focus of commercial development should be in/near the core downtown. Ongoing, aggressive, marketing and downtown improvement and promotion efforts must be continually applied.
- The long term preferred use of the Manistee Lake shoreline is for recreational and residential use. However, existing industries located along the shoreline should not be discouraged from improving and expanding.
- Aggressive efforts should be made pursuant to the marketing of the new Renaissance Industrial Park.
- New commercial opportunities should focus on local residents, and not just the tourism market.

**Intergovernmental Cooperation**

Manistee is not an isolated entity. It is surrounded by growth oriented townships projecting future opportunities for new residential, commercial, and industrial development. Ultimately, the growth of the townships will necessitate the implementation of a range of public facilities and services common to more urban locations. These include such items as the implementation of public water

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and sanitary sewer systems, improved roads, increased police and fire protection, and additional parks and playgrounds. Choices will have to be made by the respective units to either cooperate with the City on the provision of many of these facilities and services, or to create a series of redundant programs.

***What did the people say about intergovernmental cooperation and coordination?***

- The local history of intergovernmental cooperation, though improving, has not been as positive as it should be.
- The long term health and vitality of the local economy and the provision of public facilities and services is best accomplished through intergovernmental cooperation.
- It is important for the governmental units to respect the needs and desires of each other.
- Maintaining the desired character of the area and the quality of life is best achieved through intergovernmental cooperation, particularly in the areas of planning, zoning, utilities, and economic development.

## **The Vision for the City of Manistee**

The Master Plan calls for the City of Manistee to recognize the past and present, but to focus on the future. It is likely that the next five to ten years will be exciting, resulting in new changes and opportunities. And, even though the exact nature of these changes and opportunities cannot be fully anticipated, it is possible to establish a set of principles and guidelines that will accommodate change, yet provide a firm foundation for the commonly-held beliefs that bind the city. Accordingly:

- *The issue isn't whether the City can prosper--rather it is for us to decide how much, and to define the efforts that we will take to preserve the quality of life for those who live and work here.*
- *The issue isn't about whether growth will be good for us or bad--but how we will take advantage of the opportunities presented to us and address any problems that might arise.*

Managing growth is not a mystical process. The challenge in managing the future will be our adherence to sound planning principles, communicating to the public the values and practical benefits of a common Vision, and the need to work together to achieve that Vision. To that end, Manistee's Vision should act as a catalyst to encourage understanding of the need to work together as a community by uniting diverse interests and achieving common goals to shape the destiny of the city and its surroundings.

Goals guide the progress of a community by bringing the social, physical, economic, and political

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needs of the city into focus. Goals are statements of the intent of the community with respect to its future. The Master Plan defines actions which will be needed to carry out those intentions. This means that Goals must reflect a consensus of the community before realistic plans can be developed or implemented. The following Goals, when achieved, will bring about the Vision of this Master Plan.

### ***GOAL - BASE GROWTH ON SOUND DESIGN PRINCIPLES***

***Manistee is e a dynamic, unified community with stable neighborhoods and businesses. Our residents, businesses, government, and social organizations will work together to maintain and strengthen Manistee’s small town, historic, character. This will be achieved through growth and redevelopment that balances the encouragement of new uses of land with appropriate growth management principles, and cooperative decision making with the surrounding townships.***

#### **Supporting Statement**

Manistee is aware of the need to balance and properly integrate new growth opportunities with that of existing development such that harmonious relationships result. This will be achieved through the implementation of proper planning and growth management techniques and cooperation with neighboring communities

### ***GOAL - MAINTAIN BALANCED DEVELOPMENT***

***Land use decisions will be guided by the desire to achieve an equitable balance between land use, economic, and social benefits, and the costs associated with development. These decisions will acknowledge existing land use relationships in the City, as well as those of the adjoining townships.***

#### **Supporting Statement**

There is no model for a perfect land use “balance” in a community. Rather, it is the function of the community to determine the ultimate direction for its use of land. This means identifying and achieving a reasonable balance between various types of uses, including housing, commercial, industrial, and public uses. Determining the “ideal” balance involves an examination of a combination of factors, including existing land uses, available land and infrastructure, and the overall community vision.

Achieving a balance of land use will require a recognition of changing economic and social conditions of the region, state, and the nation, with its shift toward retail and service employment, and the

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growing need for human services. As the demographics of the community change and the population ages, land use needs will vary as new services, housing, and other uses will be required.

***GOAL - PROVIDE A RANGE OF HOUSING CHOICES AND OPPORTUNITIES***

***The City will foster a pro-active approach to ensure stable neighborhoods, with a broad range of housing choices and opportunities for Manistee residents and families.***

**Supporting Statement**

While the construction of housing is a function of the marketplace and demand created by new residents, the City does have the ability to influence the quality and quantity of the housing produced. Similarly, the City's policies with respect to existing housing can influence its preservation and maintenance. Affordability and access to opportunities provided by a range of housing sizes and types will remain an issue if Manistee is to attract or retain families. The need for new homes in the Manistee area is growing as businesses expand and continue to add employees and as the demand for seasonal (second) homes remains strong. The City of Manistee will continue to provide for a wide range of opportunities for new residential construction within its boundaries.

***GOAL - MAINTAIN A SMALL TOWN CHARACTER***

***Manistee's small town character will be preserved by maintaining property, continuing improvements to the downtown, protecting existing neighborhoods, and caring for the natural features and parks located within the City, making it an attractive place to live, work and play.***

**Supporting Statement**

Among the many reasons that Manistee is a desirable place to live is because it is a clean, attractive community. Small cities in particular can quickly lose their character if attention is not paid to the physical environment. Communicating the importance of the City's identity to the entire community is essential. Maintaining a positive, small town character and keeping the City attractive is largely a matter of individual and community cooperation. It also requires ordinances to assist in the enforcement of property maintenance, protection of natural resources and views (view sheds) of the City's lakes and rivers, and other aspects that make up Manistee's small town character.

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**GOAL - PRESERVE OUR HERITAGE**

*Decisions regarding growth in Manistee will recognize and preserve stable residential neighborhoods, and planned commercial and industrial areas. Areas of conflicting land use will be addressed in order to preserve and enhance the city's heritage.*

**Supporting Statement**

The small town, historic, heritage of the City of Manistee is one of strong neighborhoods, stable commercial and industrial areas, and an emphasis on protecting those areas from conflicting land uses. In a developed community, land use conflicts are inevitable as nonresidential uses seek to expand and residential areas strive to maintain their integrity. In many cases land use conflicts have existed for a number of years and have been comfortably absorbed into the fabric of the neighborhood, however, this is not always the case.

Managing growth, then, takes on a different meaning. Rather than managing large, vacant land areas, the challenge facing the City is managing the pace of change. Change can be measured in various ways, such as age, household size, land use, and expansions of established uses. Rapid change, if not properly planned, can tend to introduce instability, particularly in residential areas. Land use changes must be carefully reviewed by the Planning Commission, City Council, and Zoning Board of Appeals to minimize any undesirable effects on individual neighborhoods and the City.

**GOAL - ENCOURAGE MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

*While the mixing or integration of certain uses can result in conflict, the City has also discovered the positive opportunities to be achieved from well-planned and well-designed mixed-use developments. Opportunities for future mixed-use projects exist in several sectors of the City. The City supports well-planned and well designed mixed-use projects that compliment the City's other land uses.*

**Supporting Statement**

Much of the City's historic development mirrors "New Urbanism" philosophies in which residential, commercial, and industrial development are harmoniously mixed in an integrated fashion. Several areas of the City, in need of future redevelopment, may best be served by a mixed-use form of development.

***GOAL - PROMOTE A BALANCE OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY***

*The long term well-being of the City is based on a balance of commerce and industry. Therefore, the City supports efforts to provide suitable locations for each and to supply the necessary infrastructure and public services needed for economic success.*

**Supporting Statement**

The vitality of a community is often measured in terms of its economic health. The economy of the Manistee area is driven by the businesses and industries within the City. Since the livelihoods of many of the residents in the Manistee area depend on the health and continued growth of business and industry, those residents will generally support actions that maintain and improve the business climate. However, fostering a healthy economic climate can not be simply an exercise in “growth for the sake of growth.”