



Village of Honor  
COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION STRATEGY

October 2011

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Cherry Bowl (*left*)  
Riverside (*right*)

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Village of Honor, Michigan  
**COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION STRATEGY**  
October 2011

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B R   
**Beckett & Raeder**





*Honor, Michigan - 1960's*

## Report Contents

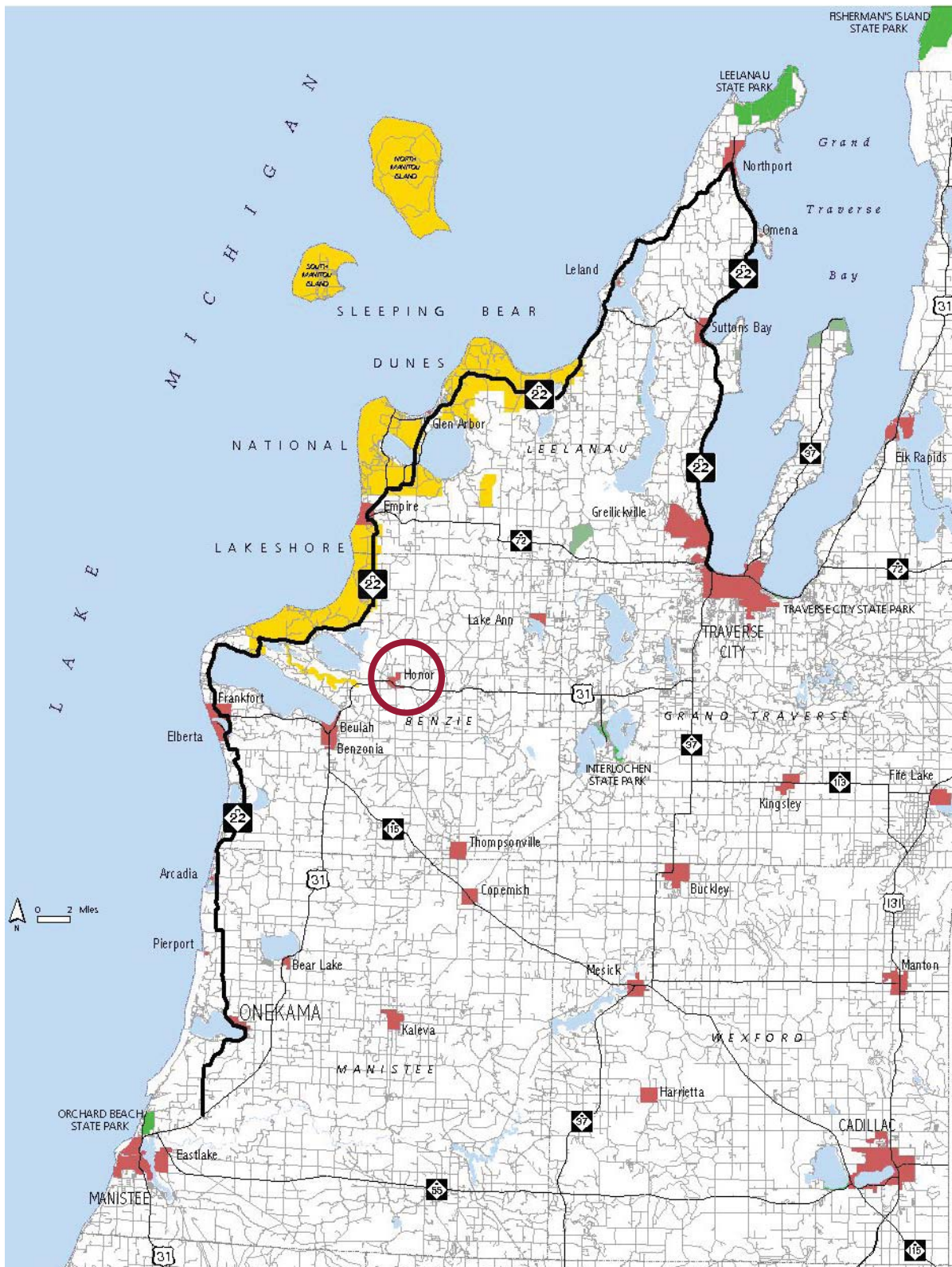
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Introduction	3
Community Participation	7
Retail "Patron" Survey	21
Physical Assessment	29
Goals & Strategies	39



Village of Honor  
Community Revitalization Strategy

Regional Location Map





### INTRODUCTION

Located in Northwest Michigan and Benzie County, the Village of Honor is a relatively small, historic, rural village at the south end of the Sleeping Near Duness National Lakeshore and just east of Crystal Lake, Platte Lake, and Little Platte Lake. Geologically, Honor is located in the scenic Betsie Valley along the Platte River.

Over the past several decades, year-round and seasonal residents who make the annual pilgrimage to northern Michigan has noticed the slow, but steady, decline in the downtown and the community. Although community pride is unquestionable; people recognize the lack of investment and the impacts associated with it. Seeking to reverse this trend community members from the greater Honor area established the Honor Area Restoration Project, known as HARP. HARP's mission is to preserve the area's history and protect its resources, encourage informed growth and development, and promote fiscal, recreational, and educational initiatives that benefit all citizens.

With the assistance of the Alliance for Economic Success (AES) and funding support from the Rotary Charities of Traverse City, the Village of Honor and the Honor Area Restoration Project (HARP) began a process to create a revitalization strategy for the greater Honor, Michigan area.

The purpose of the revitalization plan was to involve the greater Honor community in a dialogue of what issues and opportunities are present; create a consensus vision for the future; and put in place an actionable short-term strategy to begin the revitalization program.

On the evening of April 18, 2011, at the Platte River Elementary School, a crowd of a 140 residents gathered to begin the community conversation initiating the Honor Community Revitalization Strategy.



*U.S. Senator Carl Levin presenting a USDA check to the Village to begin installation of a sidewalk along US-31*



*Village officials and residents volunteer in August 2011 to clean-up and paint Village Hall.*





*"EnVision Honor" Community Involvement Session, Honor (MI)  
April 18, 2011*



## Contents

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"EnVision Honor" Community Workshop	7
Stakeholder Interviews	14



# ENVISION HONOR

**You Are Invited!!!**

**Monday, April 18th**

**6:30 p.m.**

**Platte River Elementary School Auditorium**

**11434 Main St., Honor, MI**



The Village of Honor, with support of the Honor Area Restoration Project (HARP) is inviting you to a Community Vision Workshop. This workshop is part of the effort to revitalize our town. Join us and share your thoughts that will help to 'envision' all that Honor can and could become to realize the full potential of our community!

**For More Information Call:**  
Bob Theobald, President  
Village of Honor  
231.499.7668

**Open to the public! Please join  
us! We want to know  
how YOU ENvision Honor!**

### “ENVISION HONOR” COMMUNITY VISION WORKSHOP

The Village of Honor, the Honor Area Restoration Project (HARP), and Beckett & Raeder held the “EnVision Honor” Community Vision Workshop at the Platte River Elementary School on the evening of Monday, April 18, 2011. Approximately one hundred and fifty people participated, representing various stakeholder groups within the village and the surrounding areas. The participants were assigned randomly to twenty-two groups, and then participated in a series of group brainstorming exercises related to the Community Revitalization Strategy. The results of those exercises are summarized on the following pages, and a complete inventory of the results for all the exercises will be included in the appendix of the final report.

#### *Exercise 1: Which one word best describes the “spirit” of Honor?*

The participants were given the challenge as groups to come up with a single word to describe the spirit of their community. Over 100 different words were listed among the twenty-two groups; some were mentioned by as many as fifteen groups, and many were mentioned by only one group. Answers ranged from words like “Friendly”, “Resilient”, and “Hopeful” to words such as “Dying”, “Neglected”, and “Dismal”. The words mentioned by three or more groups are listed in Figure 1, along with the number of groups that mentioned that particular word (or some variation of it).

#### *Exercise 2: What are the things that Honor has accomplished well?*

The groups were asked to list the projects, programs, events, improvements, etc. that have proven successful for the Honor community. Once those “done wells” have been identified, everyone in each group was asked to vote for the ONE greatest “done well” in their personal opinion. The twenty answers that received either the most individual votes and/or were mentioned by the most groups are summarized in Figure 2. The annual Coho Festival was mentioned the most times and received the most individual votes.

Figure 1.

What ONE word best describes the “spirit” of Honor?

One-Word Description	Times Mentioned by a Group
Friendly	15
Historic	8
Quaint	7
Sporty	6
Resilient	6
Hopeful	6
Potential	5
Platte River	5
Gateway	4
Coho Capital	3
Small	3
Tired	3
Determined	3
Convenient	3
Charming	3

#### *Exercise 3: What are the things Honor could have accomplished better?*

Similar to the “done well” exercise above, the groups were then asked to list the projects, programs, events, etc. in Honor that could have been “done better.” Once those “could’ve done better” were identified, each individual participant was asked to vote for the ONE most significant “could’ve done better” in their opinion. The sixteen answers that received either the most individual votes and/or were mentioned by the most groups are summarized in Figure 3. The highest vote-getter was the need to enforce the Village’s blight and zoning ordinances. Also cited was the need for beautification within downtown, along with promotion and development of business and industry.

**Figure 2**  
*What are the accomplishments that Honor has done well?*

"Done Well"	Times Mentioned by a Group	Votes Received
Coho Festival	17	12
Sportsman's paradise	5	10
Attracting government entities	3	7
Senior center	7	7
Homestead Park	3	6
Maley Park	8	5
Community support/generosity	2	4
Village clean-up	2	4
Theme	1	4
Farmer's Market	5	3
Gathering place	3	3
Schools	4	3
Good specialty business, Honor Market	5	3
Benzie Bus	4	3
Swimming	2	3
Rekindle the safe, friendly, small town atmosphere	6	2
Ball field/Recreation	9	2
Plaza	4	2
Cherry Bowl Drive-In	6	2
Improvements to infrastructure (septic/sewer)	5	2

**Exercises 4 & 5: What are the barriers impeding revitalization in Honor?**

The groups were asked to list the issues they perceive to be impediments to the revitalization of the Honor community (Exercise 4). Once the groups identified those issues, each participant was asked to vote for the THREE barriers they felt were most significant (Exercise 5). The twenty answers that either received the most

**Figure 3**  
*What are the accomplishments that Honor could have done better?*

"Could've Done Better"	Times Mentioned by a Group	Votes Received
Enforcing blight/zoning ordinances	10	20
Downtown clean-up/beautification	10	14
Business/Industry development/promotion	12	13
Capture tourist business – make village a "destination place"	3	9
Zoning/Planning	9	8
Building preservation/maintenance	5	6
Make Honor more pedestrian/snowmobiler/bike friendly	7	4
Focusing on the river/lake and other outdoor activities/recreation areas	7	4
Update/Modernize Coho Festival	6	4
More parking	5	3
Maintain sidewalks	4	3
Community involvement/pride	3	3
Natural resource management	2	3
Playscape/park for kids	2	2
Better use of river/river access	5	1
Better signage	5	1

individual votes or were mentioned by the most groups are summarized in Figure 4. The most cited answers included a lack of tax base and funding sources, along with vacant/dilapidated/blighted buildings, homes, and properties.



*Figure 4*  
*What are the barriers to Honor's revitalization?*

Barriers	Times Mentioned by a Group	Votes Received
Economy (Money/Funding)/ Limited tax base	21	44
Blight /Vacancies/Dilapidated buildings and homes	11	36
Accessibility to river/no signs for river	10	20
Apathy/Negative attitude toward change/progress	11	17
Lack of opportunity/employment (more in other areas)	9	11
Lack of zoning and planning/enforce ordinances	7	10
Visually unappealing/Junk around former "Bud's"	6	10
No bike lanes/sidewalks/trails	5	8
MDOT (Speed and traffic concerns), US 31	6	7
No attractions/tourist center	6	6
Lack of volunteers/community support/pride	10	5
Lack of leadership/vision	7	5
Lack of shopping/variety of business	8	5
Lack of activities within Village/no promotion/outdoor activities	4	4
Lack of affordable housing	3	4
Lack of County/local support	3	4
Not utilizing available resources (state land)	2	4
Red tape (Brownfield, etc.)	2	4
Task size is daunting	2	4
Lack of parking	8	2

*Exercises 6 & 7: Why is revitalization in Honor important?*

Each group was asked to think about the reasons why revitalization of the village of Honor is important to them (Exercise 6). Once the groups were given time to identify those reasons, each participant was asked to vote for the THREE reasons most important to them (Exercise 7). The thirteen reasons receiving three or more individual votes are summarized in Figure 5. The answer receiving the most votes was to encourage new business as well as retain existing businesses. Creating a sense of community pride as well as expanding the village's economic and tax base were also high vote-getters.

*Exercises 8 & 9: Who should be "In the Sandbox"?*

The groups were asked to think of the individuals, groups, agencies, businesses, etc. that should be involved in the revitalization of Honor (Exercise 8). Once each group created an inventory of those "players in the sandbox", each individual was asked to vote for the THREE "players" whose participation they believe is most important (Exercise 9). The sixteen "players" with the most votes are summarized in Figure 6. The two biggest vote-getters were the local and seasonal residents, and the local business community.

Figure 5  
Why is revitalization of Honor important?

Reasons revitalization is important	Times Mentioned by a Group	Votes Received
To encourage commerce/new businesses/retain old business	13	28
To create a sense of community/pride	16	24
Economic growth and development/improve tax base	14	24
To create a "destination place"/ Bring in tourists	15	20
To retain younger population/population growth	16	18
To improve quality of life/sustainable living	10	18
To create Jobs/ Improve employment	9	16
For our children/future generations	11	13
To increase property values	9	12
Preservation	6	5
To showcase natural amenities/resources/preserve character	4	5
Maintain/restore buildings, structures and houses	2	3
Re-localization	1	3

Figure 6  
Who should be "in the sandbox"?

"Players"	Times Mentioned by a Group	Votes Received
Local citizens/residents and seasonal residents	14	43
Local businesses (i.e. Fieldcraft)	18	40
Local government offices/officials (Village/Township/County)	15	17
State Officials (Law enforcement/DNR/MDOT, Road Commission)	13	14
HARP	5	11
Schools	6	7
Grant Writers/Providers	4	7
Home/Property owners and tax payers	3	7
Banks	7	5
Grand Traverse Band	2	5
Chambers of adjacent communities/Counties	5	4
USDA Rural Development	1	4
The National Lakeshore/National Park Service	5	3
Federal government	5	3
Youth	5	3
Builders/developers	3	3

*Exercises 10 & 11: How do you envision Honor in 2021?*

The groups were asked to picture themselves in Honor in the year 2021. What are the things they would like to see? Once the groups compiled their lists of visions (Exercise 10), each participant was asked to vote individually for their THREE top visions from the their group's list (Exercise 11). The twelve visions receiving four or more votes are summarized in Figure 7. Top vote-getters included a vibrant and attractive downtown with a planned streetscape, along with a downtown with a variety of businesses and industries supporting local needs and creating employment opportunities.

*Exercise 12: What are the actions needed to accomplish 2021 goals?*

Once the visions for 2021 were established in Exercises 10 and 11, the groups were asked how to go about getting from "here to there". The eight answers mentioned by more than one table are summarized in Figure 8.

*Figure 7  
Honor in 2021*

2021 Vision	Times Mentioned by a Group	Votes Received
Attractive streetscape / welcoming "look"/vibrant downtown/Stay quaint	19	44
Variety of new businesses/ industries that can support a growing community, plenty of employment opportunities	19	43
Focus on the river/natural resources access	16	28
Clean, tidy, well cared for homes and businesses	13	23
Teen recreation center/pool hall/ entertainment	10	16
Walkable, bikeable community with good sidewalks	12	11
World class fishery/sportsman's paradise	8	8
Tourist destination/an established identity	11	7
Real estate hot spot/affordable housing	7	6
Slower traffic/remove the 31 split/well-kept streets	5	5
Upscale restaurants	8	4
Well organized community to promote the town, its activities, attractions and events, and sustain growth	2	4

Figure 8  
Actions to accomplish 2021 vision

Actions for 2021 Vision	Times Mentioned by a Group
Create attractive streetscape/welcoming "look"/ vibrant, quaint downtown that is aesthetically pleasing and has culture	12
Create a team to investigate real estate near river and funding to develop these properties, focus on the river/natural resources access, create a sportsman's paradise	11
Bring in new businesses/ industries that can support a growing community, plenty of employment opportunities	11
Clean up homes and businesses and bring in tenants, make housing affordable	9
Create a tourist destination through establishing an identity and retaining historical land marks and through a variety of shopping locations, restaurants and art galleries.	6
Well organized community to promote the town, its activities, attractions and events, and sustain growth and successful planning and zoning to accomplish these goals	6
Planning for better traffic flow and adequate parking	3
Entertainment options, festivals, "things to do" for kids and adults	2





*Final Exercise: Collective Prioritization*

Finally, each group presented their results to the entire audience. Based on presentations by each group summarizing their top priorities, a collective priorities list was assembled. Many of the groups' visions were the same as or very similar to those of the other groups. By combining these overlapping visions, a total of 27 top visions for revitalizing Honor were created, representing the entire group of participants. As a final exercise, every

participant was asked to vote for their own THREE most important of the 27 priorities. The results of this voting are presented below.

*Figure 9*  
*Collective Prioritization*

Collective Priorities	Votes
New streetscape downtown	36
New recreation facilities	25
Destination businesses for tourism	20
Increase riverfront access (fishing, restrooms)	20
Walkable/bikeable connected community	18
Gateway to the Sleeping Bear Dunes	11
Fill empty store fronts	9
Relocate US-31 thru park	9
Art festival and galleries	8
Establish a town/village center	8
Retain historic landmarks and designate	7
Promote Honor for baby boomers	6
Well cared for homes and businesses	5
On-going organization to keep revitalization going (i.e. HARP)	5
Encourage a diversity of businesses	5
Relocate auto shops	5
Increase zoning and code enforcement	3
A sustainable and supportive community	3
Utilize our natural features	3
Vibrant and active downtown	3
Community-wide clean-up day	3
Acquisition for public access	3
Infill vacant sites in the Village for new development	2
Great school system	1
Community volunteerism	1
Good infrastructure (i.e. roads, water, sewer)	--
Clean up groundwater contamination	--

## STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

In addition to encouraging feedback and involvement from the general public, Beckett & Raeder conducted a series of interviews with key stakeholders in the Honor community to gain an “insider’s” perspective on the opportunities and challenges facing the community in its revitalization planning efforts. Their answers are summarized as follows, and full summaries of each individual interview will be included in the appendix of the final report.

1. What do you think are some of the assets of the district? In other words, what are some of the “good things” about the area – physical features, location, history, character, that can be built upon for redevelopment & revitalization?

Nearly all those interviewed discussed the natural amenities surrounding Honor, and opportunities for outdoor recreation that those amenities provide. Those amenities include the Platte River and Platte Lake, Crystal Lake, the Sleeping Bear Dunes and National Lakeshore, Lake Michigan, and the rolling terrain of the Betsie Valley. More than one interviewee called it an “outdoorsman’s paradise”, with Coho salmon fishing, boating, kayaking, canoeing, hiking and biking. Several discussed the village’s location along the US-31 corridor as an asset, providing a central location within Benzie County and easy access to Traverse City. The village’s history was cited several times as an asset, from its heritage as a lumbering community to its Civil War memorial and cemetery at Champion Hill. Many of the interviewees felt the village’s historic buildings are an asset that need to be preserved. They commended groups like the Honor Historical Society and HARP for their work. Several of those interviewed felt that the town’s name itself – Honor – is an asset that could attract certain types of uses that would want to be located in a community of that name.

2. What do you think are some of the barriers/challenges to the revitalization of the district? These can be....

- a. Physical
- b. Political/Institutional
- c. Geographical or
- d. Social (e.g., people’s attitudes about the area) barriers.

One of the most common themes cited as a barrier among the participants in the interviews is the attitudes of the leaders of and residents within the community. They say the leaders are stuck in their old ways of doing things, that they are resistant to change, and that they are territorial and not willing to collaborate with the township or the county. The community is said to have an attitude of “apathy” or “defeatism” because Honor has been “in decline” for so long that no one believes revitalization can ever truly occur. And whenever a group initiates measures to revitalize downtown, they are considered “outsiders” and are met with suspicion and resistance. Physical barriers were discussed as well; some feel the traffic on US-31 moves too fast through downtown and is too close to the buildings, sidewalks, and parked cars. Downtown is therefore not considered pedestrian-friendly by some; traffic-calming measures are needed. The roads and sidewalks themselves are said to be in serious need of repair. The downtown area has inappropriate land uses and buildings, and the village either does not have adequate zoning and building codes or fails to enforce what they have. Those interviewed discussed the blighted and vacant buildings within the village as a barrier, and the fact that those buildings’ and properties’ respective owners are not actively marketing or maintaining them. Some felt the village’s lack of parking is a barrier to revitalization, while others felt the village’s commercial properties are not marketable because they’re constrained by US-31 in the front and the hills behind them. Perhaps all these barriers are in some way symptomatic of the opinion that Honor has a limited tax base and limited employment opportunities, resulting in very limited funds for public improvements.

3. What types of things do you think will bring people into this area?
  - a. Businesses that are needed?
  - b. Services that are needed?
  - c. Housing types/quantity/quality?
  - d. Improved services – safety, transportation, parks, etc.

The stakeholders interviewed had many ideas for ways of drawing visitors and residents into Honor. Nearly all of them cited the need for more restaurants, including the possibility of ethnic restaurants (Chinese, Mexican, etc.) Given Honor's many outdoor recreation opportunities, several interviewees said an outdoor/sporting goods/bait & tackle store would both serve the local community as well as draw visitors. Many different types of retailers were discussed; gifts shops, clothing, shoes, wine, antiques, bakery, gas station/convenience store. Some felt new retail should serve the local population primarily, while others said new retail should focus on drawing in tourists. The need for more/better parking was cited frequently. There were varying opinions on the need for a better variety of housing options; some felt Honor needs more low-income housing, while others felt that would be a detriment and that new housing should be moderately-priced to attract those that work in Traverse City but cannot afford the housing there. Senior and assisted-living housing was a need discussed by several interviewees. There was also discussion on the need to improve the building stock in Honor, both residential and commercial, by improving code enforcement and developing commercial building guidelines. The need to beautify the downtown core was cited, via a combination of traffic-calming and tree-planting. Certain existing uses were discussed as undesirable within a historic downtown, including the car dealership, the Shell station, and the gravel pit.

4. How would you prioritize redevelopment, especially in the context of physical changes/improvements to the area? What do you think should be done first, and why? E.g., what are 2 or 3 "catalyst" projects, changes, etc.? For example – buildings that should be demolished, road repairs, beautification efforts, marketing the area, etc.

Beautification of downtown Honor was discussed by every stakeholder interviewed, and many of them had the same recommendations for how to accomplish this. Certain buildings – and particularly the old Hobsons store/"question mark" building – are beyond repair and need to be torn down and replaced. Other buildings need to be rehabilitated, and done so in such a way that is consistent with the downtown's historic heritage. Certain uses downtown need to be relocated, and their properties reused for a more appropriate downtown use. Downtown Honor needs a streetscape plan – sidewalks, street trees, traffic calming, signage, on-street parking, lighting, and pedestrian linkages between destinations like the school and the Honor Plaza. The village's roads and sidewalks are in need of repair in addition to any streetscape enhancements, and need to include a system of non-motorized pathways. Several interviewees felt Honor's history needs to be promoted through a coordinated system of signs and historic markers. Once un-useable buildings have been demolished, there were differences in opinion of what to do with the cleared properties; some felt infill development was most appropriate, while others favored a series of public parking lots. One interviewee felt Honor needs to develop a year-round recreation strategy to promote, market, and take advantage of the many surrounding recreational amenities. This might include development of a public access to the Platte River for canoes and kayaks, and a coordinated system of non-motorized paths. Finally, snow removal was discussed multiple times. Those interviewed felt that snow is simply pushed onto the adjacent sidewalks by the County's plows, making them impassable and unsafe, particularly for children walking to school.

*Village of Honor  
Community Revitalization Strategy*

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*Community Vision Session - April 2011*



5. Who are some of the major “players” in the community that would have a big impact on the success of revitalization efforts?

Nearly every stakeholder interviewed mentioned HARP, citing their passion, energy, and proven track record. Several mentioned local business-owners and merchants, including the Cherry Bowl Drive-In, the hotel, and the surrounding motels. The local chamber of commerce was cited, along with the Platte Lake Association and Honor Bank. Local, County, and State agencies are considered major players by most of the interviewees, including the local village president and council, adjacent local governments (township, villages, and cities), the Benzie County Road Commission, and the MDNRE. Individuals cited by name included Ingemar Johansson, Bob Theobald, Bob Rosa (and family), Jim Bedon, and Jeffie Jones.

6. Please share any other thoughts, ideas, comments, opinions, etc. you have about the district.

This question raised some thoughts among the interviewees that didn’t necessarily come out in the previous questions. Some of those are as follows:

- Honor needs a friendlier “look” and “feel”
- We need to put Honor “back on the map”
- Everyone needs to become more involved in Honor’s revitalization
- The M-22 bike path should be extended into Honor
- Downtown Honor should try to copy the successes and business model of the Honor Plaza
- Use Frankfort, Beulah, and Manistee as models for honor
- Enforce snowmobile laws and do not encourage new snowmobile routes
- Install low-maintenance gateway/entryway features welcoming visitors to Honor and giving a good first impression
- Install streetlights and improve sidewalks
- Stock the Platte River with trout





*Retail Establishments in Honor, MI*

## CHAPTER THREE

## RETAIL ("PATRON") SURVEY

### Contents

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Honor "Patron Survey"	23
Willingness To Drive	25
Retail Leakage Assessment	26
Profile of Honor Market	26

*Village of Honor  
Community Revitalization Strategy*

*Figure 11  
Location of Goods and Services acquired by residents of Zip Code 49640*

Good/Service	Honor	Franfort	Beulah/ Benzonia	Traverse City	Interlochen	Other/Not Listed	Response Count
Automobile Dealers	10	0	8	62	0	22	102
Other Motor Vehicle Dealers	8	1	3	44	0	45	101
Auto Parts/Accessories/ Tire Stores	57	0	13	35	1	6	112
Furniture Stores	0	5	1	74	0	20	101
Home Furnishing Stores	0	2	4	80	1	14	101
Electronics & Appliance Stores	2	0	15	79	0	11	107
Bldg Materials & Supplies Dealers	58	2	3	48	0	3	114
Lawn/Garden Eqp. Supplies Stores	23	8	7	61	2	10	111
Grocery Stores	50	4	43	47	6	5	155
Specialty Food Stores	14	1	7	65	1	20	108
Beer/Wine/Liquor Stores	47	1	22	26	1	24	121
Health & Personal Care Stores	34	1	18	56	1	9	119
Gasoline Stations	56	2	23	44	4	9	138
Clothing Stores	2	1	1	85	0	14	103
Shoe Stores	0	5	0	84	0	13	102
Jewelry/Luggage/Leather Goods Stores	0	0	5	73	0	25	103
Sporting Goods/Hobby/ Musical Instrument Stores	0	3	8	74	0	19	104
Book/Periodical/Music Stores	0	3	0	74	0	23	100
Department Stores	0	0	2	22	0	8	32
Florists	2	1	11	10	0	9	33
Office Supplies & Gift Stores	3	0	4	20	0	9	36
Used Merchandise Store	4	1	8	19	1	9	42
Electronic Stores	0	0	1	20	0	10	31
Full-Service Restaurants	14	8	11	22	5	10	70
Fast Food Restaurants	1	3	12	19	6	8	49
Drinking Establishments	11	4	6	11	3	14	49

*Good & Services acquired in Honor more than other places is highlighted in gray.*

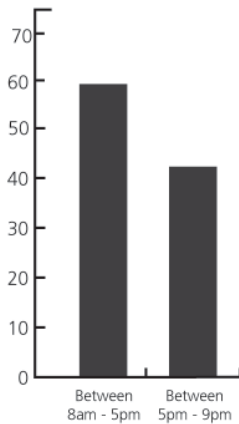


## HONOR PATRON SHOPPING SURVEY

During the “EnVision Honor” workshop on April 18, 2011, attendees were asked to fill out a short survey regarding their retail shopping habits. In addition, the survey was made available at local retail and office establishments during the months of June and July, 2011. This survey provided data of when, where, and how local residents do their shopping. This database provides necessary information to better understand the voids that could be filled in Honor’s retail offerings. Two hundred and nine surveys were completed and compiled; results of the survey are provided on the following pages.

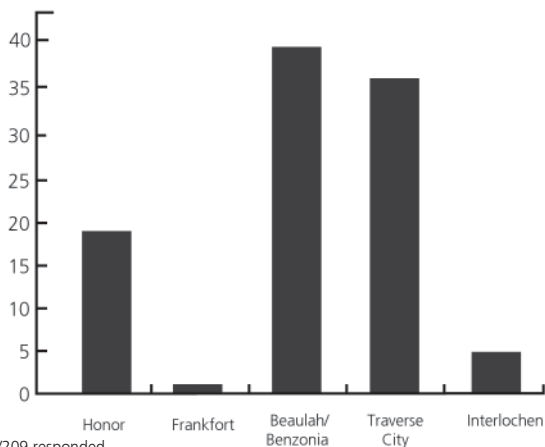
*Figure 10*  
*Survey Responses from all Respondents*

What are the best times for you to shop during the week? (select one)



207/209 responded

Where do you do most of your GROCERY shopping? (select one or more)

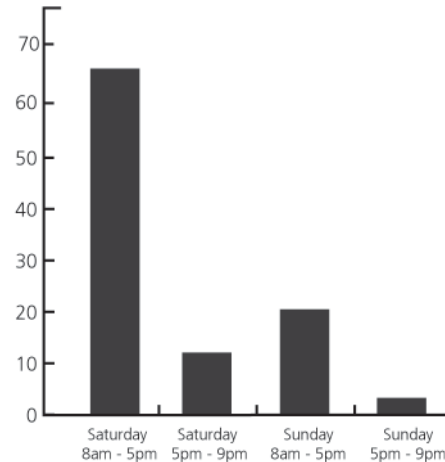


205/209 responded

Many residents must travel to neighboring communities to purchase goods ranging from groceries and clothing to sporting goods and lawn/garden supplies. In the chart shown left, goods & services acquired in Honor more than other places is highlighted in gray including auto [arts/accessories/tires, building materials, groceries, beer/wine/liquor, and gasoline.) While other goods and services are acquired locally many residents travel to other areas due to many reasons such as convenience of store hours, quality and variety.

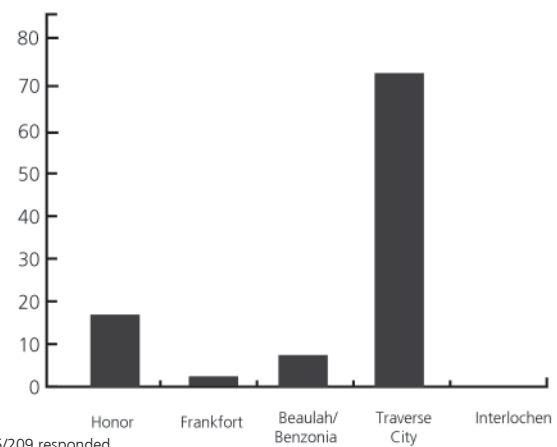
As one can see from the following graphs and charts, it is visible that while Honor provides some goods and services to its residents, many needs are unmet and provide opportunity for local commercial expansion.

What are the best times for you to shop during the weekend? (select one)



209/209 responded

Where do you do most of your NON-GROCERY shopping? (select one or more)



205/209 responded

Figure 11  
Honor, Michigan Drive Time Analysis



## WILLINGNESS TO DRIVE

As part of the Honor Patron Shopping Survey, participants were asked to first provide reasons for shopping outside of Honor. Results are shown to the right. Of the 209 participants, 14 individuals skipped this question, resulting in 195 responses. Approximately 79% of respondents attributed variety of stores and attractions as the primary reason for shopping in places other than Honor. Over 50% of all respondents selected price as another primary reason for shopping elsewhere. Additionally, 23% of respondents marked convenient store hours as another reason for shopping in other communities. These results paired with the willingness of most respondents to drive between 30 and 45-minutes indicates the needs of Honor residents is not met locally.

The map, shown right, shows that several small communities are located within a 30-minute drive from Honor. Traverse City, a common resource for Honor residents is located within a 30 to 45-minute drive depending on the area of the city desired.

Figure 12

What are you primary reasons for shopping OUTSIDE of HONOR? (select one or more)

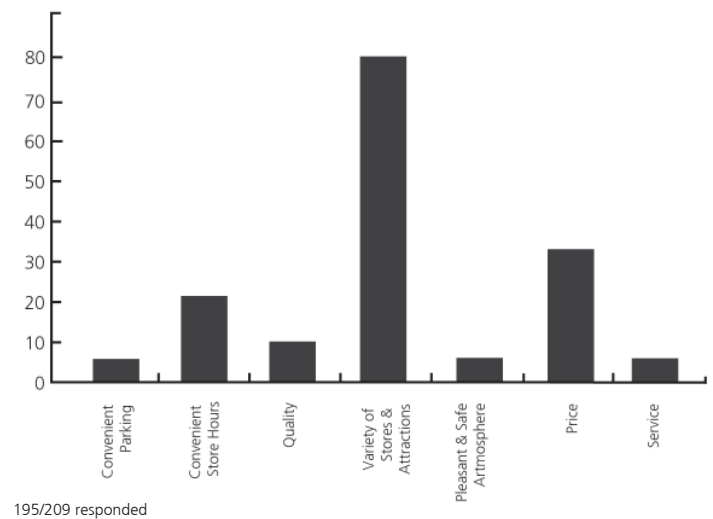
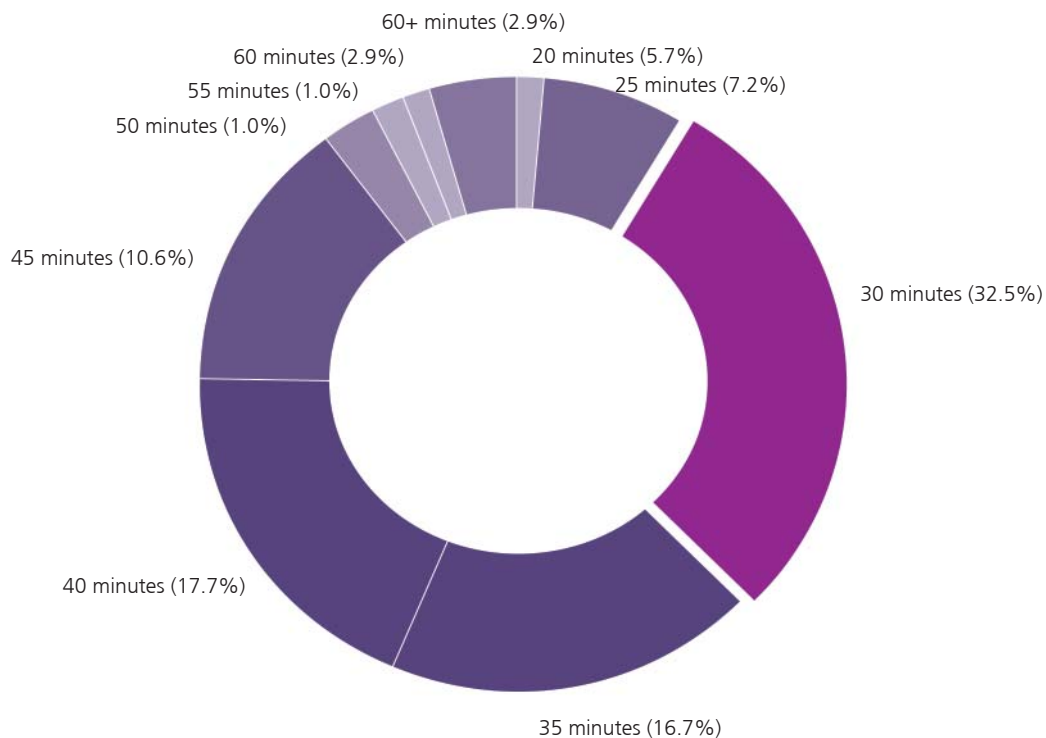


Figure 13

When you need to travel outside of HONOR for goods and services what is your estimated time in minutes that you are willing to drive ONE-WAY for these services? (select one)



## RETAIL LEAKAGE ASSESSMENT

Based on the results of the Patron Survey, residents within the immediate Honor market area travel 30 minutes or more to Traverse City to procure many of their personal goods. Items sought outside of the Honor area include clothing, shoes, jewelry, sporting goods, books, electronics, and full-service restaurants. These retail preferences are supported by the Retail Leakage Assessment acquired from ESRI Business Analyst for a 10-minute drive time from downtown Honor. This data, noted in Figure 14, identifies the retail sales made outside of the Honor market (leakage) for many of the same retail preferences noted by survey participants.

A further review of Figure 14 shows the impact that tourism has on the local economy. For example, based on the data the demand for grocery expenditures is approximately \$3.0 million dollars annually, however, retail sales are estimated around \$9.0 million. Similar inflow of retail sales are noted for food & beverage stores, beer, wine and liquor stores, gasoline stations, and general merchandise. Although residents may travel outside the Honor market for household purchases; visitors and tourists appear to buy local resulting in the difference between retail demand and retail spending.

*Figure 14*  
*Retail Leakage Outside of Honor - 10 Minute Drive Time from Downtown Honor*

Industry Group	Demand (Retail Potential)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Retail Gap	Surplus / Leakage Factor
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers (NAICS 441)	\$5,042,154	\$4,136,445	\$905,709	9.9
Automobile Dealers (NAICS 4411)	\$4,203,013	\$2,678,670	\$1,524,343	22.2
Other Motor Vehicle Dealers (NAICS 4412)	628,295	\$984,799	-\$356,504	-22.1
Auto Parts, Accessories, and Tire Stores (NAICS 4413)	\$210,846	\$472,976	-\$262,130	-38.3
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores (NAICS 442)	\$446,198	\$480,612	-\$34,414	-3.7
Furniture Stores (NAICS 4421)	\$241,298	\$229,929	\$11,369	2.4
Home Furnishings Stores (NAICS 4422)	\$204,900	\$250,683	-\$45,783	-10.0
Electronics & Appliance Stores (NAICS 443/NAICS 4431)	\$577,062	\$543,687	\$33,375	3.0
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores (NAICS 444)	\$853,016	\$1,207,023	-\$354,007	-17.2
Building Material and Supplies Dealers (NAICS 4441)	\$746,209	\$1,083,979	-\$337,770	-18.5

## PROFILE OF THE HONOR MARKET

The year-round Honor market is composed of households who have similar buying preferences based on their socio-economic profiles. Market segmentation operates on the theory that people with similar tastes, lifestyles, and behaviors seek others with the same tastes - "like seeks like." These behaviors can be measured, predicted, and targeted. So who are the market segments in the Honor market? Within the 10-minute drive time we have two predominate groups: Rural Resort Dwellers and Senior Sun Seekers which comprise 83% of the households.

Rural Resort Dwellers (62% households) - These residents live modestly and have simple tastes. They often work on home improvement and remodeling projects and own garden equipment to maintain their yards. They cook and bake at home. Many households own multiple pets, particularly dogs and cats. Riding lawn mowers and satellite dishes are familiar sights in these areas, along with multiple vehicles, including a truck.

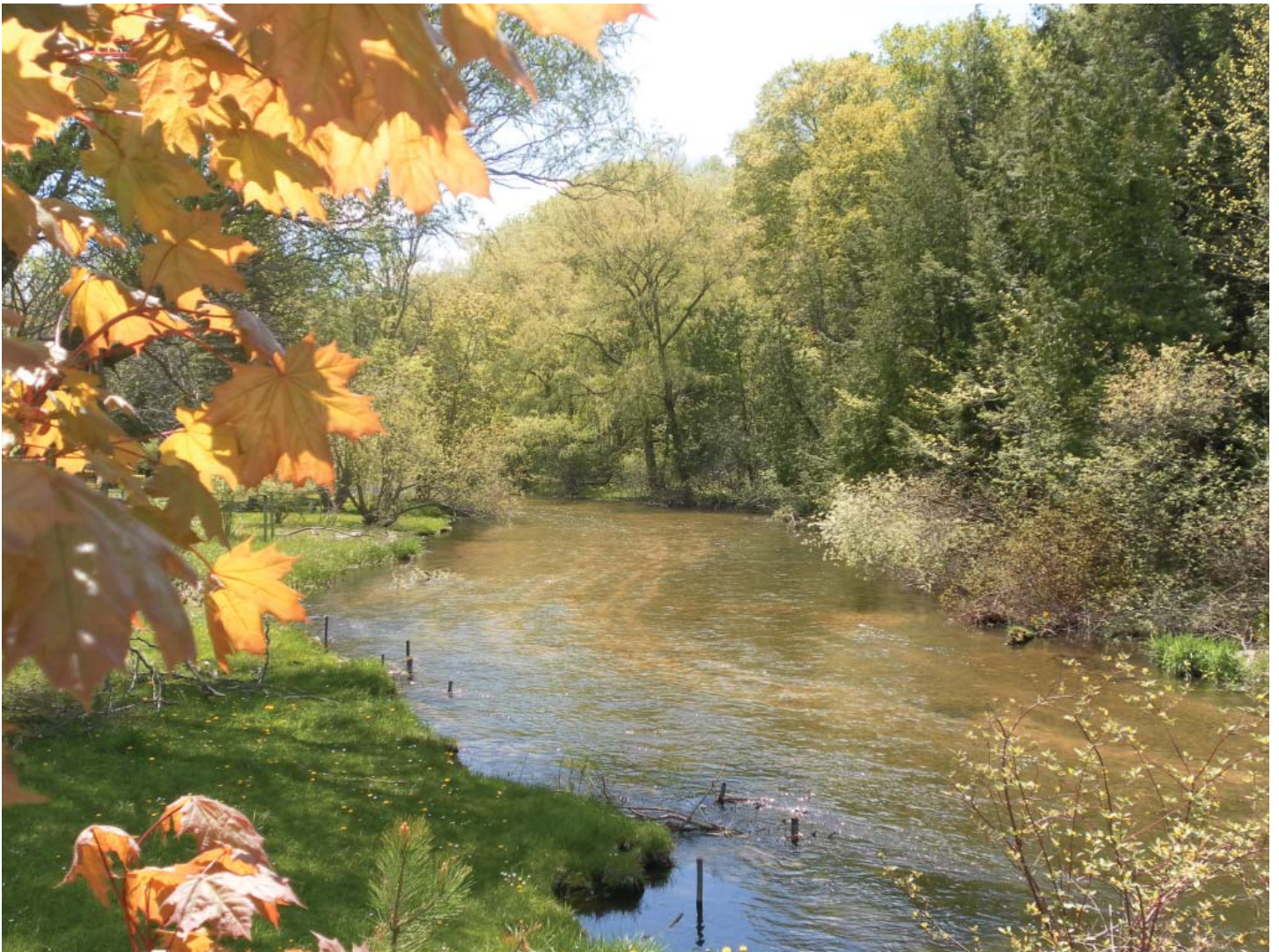
Senior Sun Seekers (21% households) - They eat out frequently at family restaurants and fast-food establishments. They own all kinds of insurance including life, travel, long-term care, and personal liability. They consult with a financial advisor about their finances. They invest time and limited funds in home improvement projects such as painting and fencing the yard. Some enjoy gardening and working on their own landscaping projects. Many join veterans' clubs or fraternal orders and do charity work through these organizations.

## RETAIL (PATRON SURVEY)

	Demand (Retail Potential)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Retail Gap	Surplus / Leakage Factor
Lawn and Garden Equipment and Supplies Stores (NAICS 4442)	\$108,807	\$123,044	-\$16,237	-7.1
Food & Beverage Stores (NAICS 445)	\$3,242,091	\$10,128,880	-\$6886,789	-51.5
Grocery Stores (NAICS 4451)	\$2,914,480	\$8,776,364	-\$5,861,884	-50.1
Specialty Food Stores (NAICS 4452)	\$248,345	\$1,047,010	-\$798,665	-61.7
Beer, Wine, and Liquor Stores (NAICS 4453)	\$79,266	\$305,506	-226,240	-58.8
Health & Personal Care Stores (NAICS 446/NAICS 4461)	\$694,332	\$1,412,961	-718,639	-34.1
Gasoline Stations (NAICS 447/NAICS 4471)	\$3,891,313	\$9,277,377	-\$5,386,064	-40.9
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores (NAICS 448)	\$616,726	\$353,635	\$263,091	27.1
Clothing Stores (NAICS 4481)	\$520,960	\$164,972	\$355,989	51.9
Shoe Stores (NAICS 4482)	\$48,849	\$91,687	-\$42,838	-30.5
Jewelry, Luggage, and Leather Goods Stores (NAICS 4483)	\$46,917	\$96,976	-\$50,059	-34.8
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, and Music Stores (NAICS 451)	\$159,618	\$303,039	-\$143,421	-31.0
Sporting Goods/Hobby/Musical Instrument Stores (NAICS 4511)	\$114,132	\$303,039	-\$188,907	-45.3
Book, Periodical, and Music Stores (NAICS 4512)	\$45,486	\$0	\$45,486	100.0
General Merchandise Stores (NAICS 452)	\$5,232,926	\$20,905,027	-\$15,672,101	-60.0
Department Stores Excluding Leased Depts. (NAICS 4521)	\$1,002,605	\$1,291,462	-\$288,857	-12.6
Other General Merchandise Stores (NAICS 4529)	\$4,230,321	\$19,613,565	-\$15,383,344	-64.5
Miscellaneous Store Retailers (NAICS 453)	\$304,593	\$667,875	-\$363,283	-37.4
Florists (NAICS 4531)	\$18,031	\$69,540	-\$51,509	-58.8
Office Supplies, Stationery, and Gift Stores (NAICS 4532)	\$175,156	\$273,266	-\$98,110	-21.9
Used Merchandise Stores (NAICS 4533)	\$38,333	\$70,187	-\$31,854	-29.4
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers (NAICS 4539)	\$73,072	\$254,882	-\$181,810	-55.4
Nonstore Retailers (NAICS 454)	\$96,240	\$0	\$96,240	100.0
Electronic Shopping and Mail-Order Houses (NAICS 4541)	\$1,282	\$0	\$1,282	100.0
Vending Machine Operators (NAICS 4542)	\$39,734	\$0	\$39,734	100.0
Direct Selling Establishments (NAICS 4543)	\$55,724	\$0	\$55,724	100.0
Food Services & Drinking Places (NAICS 722)	\$2,951,267	\$3,185,481	-\$234,214	-3.8
Full-Service Restaurants (NAICS 7221)	\$1,849,754	\$2,083,317	-\$233,563	-5.9
Limited-Service Eating Places (NAICS 7222)	\$485,547	\$229,541	\$256,006	35.8
Special Food Services (NAICS 7223)	\$505,315	\$824,886	-\$319,571	-24.0
Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages (NAICS 7224)	\$110,651	\$47,737	\$62,914	39.7

 Green indicates retail leakage or local opportunity





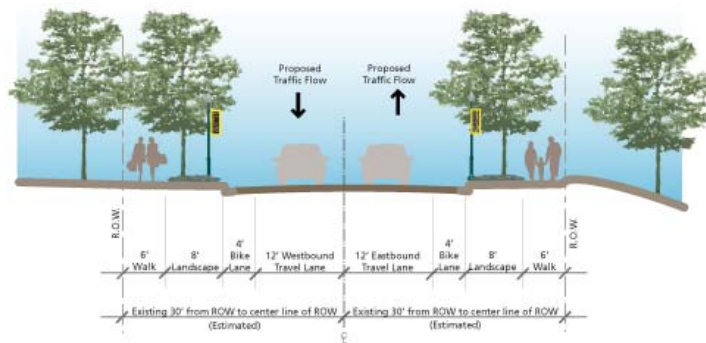
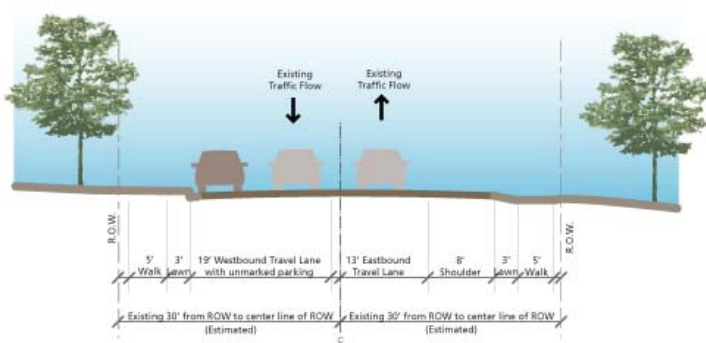
*Platte River - Honor, Michigan*

## Contents

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US-31 Corridor Arrival Experience	31
Downtown Character	31
Neighborhood Character	33
“Village in the Valley” Character	34
Public Access to the Platte River	35
Gateway to the Sleeping Bear Dunes	37





## PHYSICAL ASSESSMENT AND OPPORTUNITIES

### US-31 Corridor Arrival Experience

The arrival experience into the Honor area on US-31 is subtly defined by topography, land use development patterns, roadway treatments, and signage. Although not currently perceived by most visitors, the first indication of arrival into the Honor area is US-31's descent into the Platte River valley. When arriving from the west, this occurs just west of Covey Road and is soon followed by views of the Cherry Bowl drive-in theater which serves as a memorable landmark. Visitors then proceed through rural character commercial development along US-31 and cross the Platte River before entering the Village of Honor. Entrance into the village is visually signified by passing Honor Plaza shopping mall and A.B. Maley Park. Once in the Village, visitors pass by an auto repair business and roadside motel before entering the core of Honor. Arrival from the east is similar in experience to that of the west in that visitors descend into the Platte River valley just east of Pioneer Road and then pass rural scale development before entering the core of Honor.

Detracting from the otherwise pleasant corridor are several commercial and public properties that have very prominent amounts of parking and driveway pavements that lack interior green space or perimeter screening. Also present, are several properties with unscreened outdoor storage. The community's arrival experience could benefit significantly from a combination of increased code enforcement and a Property Enhancement Grant Program. Another challenge faced by Honor is the relative scale of the community compared to its geographic setting. The core of Honor occupies an approximately ½-mile distance along the US-31 corridor of which approximately 700-feet is downtown. Without a significant and definitive sense of arrival, many visitors enter and then exit the Village core before they recognize it as more than just a small cluster of development. To enhance Honor's sense of place, the community would benefit from an expanded presence and elongated sense of arrival along the US-31 corridor. By extending a common aesthetic throughout the river valley between Covey Road and Pioneer Road, the community's presence is pushed outward giving visitors a sense of arrival long before they enter the Village core.

In a practical sense, this can be achieved through hierarchical levels of corridor improvements including street trees, decorative and functional lighting, banners, holiday and seasonal displays, landscape treatments, flower plantings, signage, and other enhancements.

#### Key Considerations

- Increase code enforcement
- Initiate a Property Enhancement Grant Program
- US-31 Corridor Improvements including street trees, lighting, banners, flower plantings, etc. between Covey Road and Pioneer Road.

#### Downtown Character

Currently, first impressions of downtown are dominated by the US-31 roadway and vacant buildings. Those factors combined with lack of street trees, pedestrian lighting, or other enhancements create a rather uninviting business district – just the opposite of the people of Honor. While one vacant structure is in overwhelmingly severe disrepair, others also show visible signs of deferred maintenance. Many others have historically inappropriate façade treatments such as vinyl siding that detract from Honor's desired quaint village character. In addition, there are a few properties downtown that have large, unscreened vehicle parking and storage that detract from the character of downtown.

However, a closer look at downtown reveals some very unique and interesting opportunities. While many of the buildings have contemporary façade treatments, hints of historical architectural details are visible behind the modern materials. Because many façade modernizations are only surface applied, often buildings can be returned to historical appearances at relatively low cost. A Property Enhancement Grant Program could support owners of existing buildings in this effort. Development and implementation of design guidelines for downtown would also ensure façade renovations and new developments are consistent with Honor's desired quaint village character. Also consistent with desired character, Complete Streets guided improvements to US-31 would greatly improve the walkability, ambiance and general business environment downtown. Currently, the 50' wide roadway dominates impressions and creates an uncomfortable pedestrian experience on the relatively narrow 8' sidewalks.



## Village of Honor Community Revitalization Strategy

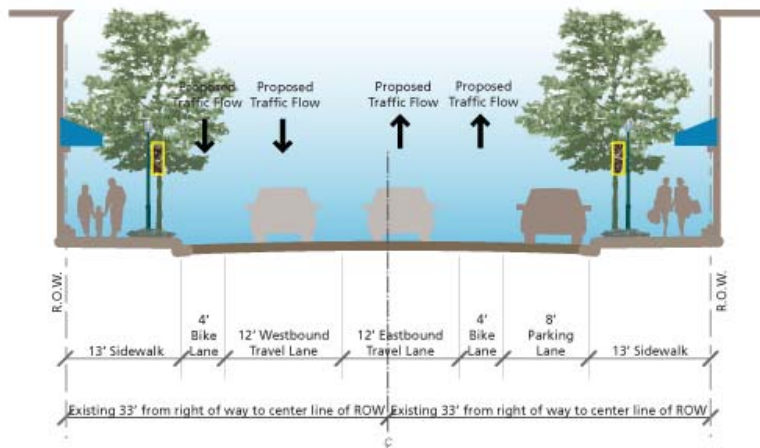


By narrowing the excessively wide lanes to downtown appropriate dimensions, adding bike lanes, widening sidewalks, and defining on-street parking, the downtown becomes a more balanced and pleasant environment for all users. Rebalancing the uses requires a reduction of the vehicular use areas. The most appropriate way to do so is to designate on-street parallel parking only on the south side of US-31. In order to provide adequate parking on the north side of US-31, a downtown site with US-31 frontage should be sought to develop an off-street public parking facility that is sensitive to the pedestrian street environment. The suggested Complete Streets guided road reconstruction and streetscape project should also include character defining amenities such as pedestrian lighting, street trees, flower planters, benches, banners, signage, etc.

In addition the public right-of-way, there are two very interesting privately owned "pocket" spaces in downtown. One is the old Post Office property and the second is a small courtyard space behind the former barber shop. Both offer wonderful potential to be developed into outdoor dining areas, seating areas, outdoor retail spaces, or other similar functions that contribute vitality and interest to the public realm.

### Key Considerations

- Increase code enforcement
- Initiate a Property Enhancement Grant Program
- Develop and implement Design Guidelines for downtown
- Develop downtown district parking facility
- Pursue private or public development of outdoor dining/gathering spaces at old Post Office property and behind former barber shop
- US-31 Complete Streets Improvements including reduced roadway width, bike lanes, widened sidewalks, street trees, lighting, banners, flower plantings, etc.



*Proposed downtown character with corridor improvements.*



## Neighborhood Character

Two very different neighborhoods exist within the Village core. Both have significant contributions to the function and character of the Village but in divergent ways. The neighborhood north of US-31 contains appropriately scaled streets, mature street trees, and an abundance of historic homes. All contribute positively toward a very pleasant village character. This character is evident from downtown when looking at side streets and between buildings. Because the Village Hall, Post Office, and bank have physical presence within the neighborhood or at its edges, downtown and the north neighborhood share an interesting public/private interaction that positively contributes to the overall Village character.



In many ways, the neighborhood south of US-31 is just the opposite of its northern counterpart. Housing stock is a mix of stick-built homes, modular homes, manufactured homes and permanently configured recreational vehicles. Much of the south neighborhood's housing stock is in some level of disrepair. Streets lack curbs, sidewalks, and street trees. The disinvested neighborhood is visible from downtown when looking at side streets or between buildings and negatively impacts the character of downtown.



Both neighborhoods, but particularly the neighborhood south of US-31, could benefit from increased code enforcement. Zoning should be reviewed and revised as needed to restrict the size, method, and character of residential construction. Because the neighborhoods have a close physical and perceptual relationship to the overall Village character, residential street improvements such as curbing, sidewalks, and street trees should be implemented where they do not already exist.



### Key Considerations

- Review/revise zoning for allowable residential construction
- Increase code enforcement
- Residential street improvements including curbing, sidewalks, and street trees



### “Village in the Valley” Character

As mentioned previously, the arrival experience to the Honor area is partially defined by its topography and the Platte River. While the river itself is not currently a foreground element within the Village core, the sense of being in the river valley is very evident. Adjacent bluffs north and south of the Village core are visible from just about any location and create a unique “living in the shadows” feel not often found in Michigan. The sense of the natural feature is strong enough that residents refer to Honor as the “Village in the Valley”.

Because it is very fitting of the local environment and community and evolved from local culture, the “Village in the Valley” phrase is a natural beginning for community branding. Use of the phrase could be expanded to include an associated logo, identification and wayfinding signage, street banners, tourism campaign, and other marketing purposes. Just as the US-31 corridor improvements discussed earlier expand the community’s perceived physical presence over a larger geographical area, unified branding of a community helps expand awareness in minds of visitors and potential visitors.



While the “living in the shadows” feel is an important character asset for the community, equally important is the adjacent bluffs and the opportunities they provide. Sharon Rosa Circle situated on the bluff north of the Village core offers spectacular views of the Platte River valley, Platte Lake, and surrounding countryside. The location is also an incredible vantage point for evening sunsets and is an ideal location for a small public park and overlook.

### Key Considerations

- Brand Honor as the “Village in the Valley”
- Implement unified family of identification and wayfinding signage
- Develop public overlook park on Sharon Rosa Circle





### Public Access to the Platte River

Arguably, Honor's greatest asset is the Platte River. It's valley largely defines the community's physical and cultural character and is the playground of local and vacationing outdoor enthusiasts alike. However, although the river is only 900' from downtown, it does not currently have a foreground presence in the community and is a greatly underutilized "backyard" asset without provisions for direct public access.

In order to realize common synergies between the Platte River as a recreational asset and downtown as an active business district, Henry and South Streets should be developed as physical connections between the two. In addition to serving functional aspects of vehicular and pedestrian connections, the corridors also need to be planned and designed to bring the river and downtown together in mindset. In other words, the corridors need to convert the river from a "backyard" asset into an integral element within the community. This can be accomplished in part by planning appropriate future development and land uses that better transition the corridors between the river and downtown. This opportunity is greatest along Henry Street with its connection directly to the center of downtown. The larger land use context also needs to be reinforced with unified corridor improvements such as non-motorized facilities, pedestrian lighting, landscape treatments, unified signage, etc.

In tandem with connections to downtown, the community should seek opportunities for significantly sized public access wherever available. Of particular interest are opportunities for riverfront public land adjacent to the Henry and South Street connection corridors. Again, the greatest potential is adjacent to Henry Street because of its direct connection to the center of downtown.

Opportunities for access from public road right-of-ways should also be explored. Currently, informal parking and river access occurs at Henry Street and, to a greater extent, along South Street where the river flows parallel to the road for approximately 400'. Improvements could be made at both locations to formalize on-street parking and provide for safe access to the water. These improvements become particularly important in the short term if significant riverfront land is not immediately available.

### Key Considerations

- Develop Henry and South Streets as connections between downtown and the Platte River
- Seek opportunities for riverfront public land adjacent to the Henry and South Street downtown connections
- Develop public road right-of-ways to facilitate public access when adjacent to the Platte River





*Village of Honor  
Community Revitalization Strategy*

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### Gateway to Sleeping Bear Dunes

While major GPS and mapping software does not route regional visitors from Traverse City or downstate through Honor, CR-708 is a vital local connection between Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, Platte Lake resort associations, and the nearest significant offering of goods and services in Honor. The distance between Honor and Platte Lake along CR-708, also known as Deadstream Road, is approximately 2-miles. The National Lakeshore is approximately 5-miles from Honor along CR-708. Both are within easy biking distance of the goods and services in Honor. Although non-motorized improvements are not currently present, Deadstream Road is a relatively popular biking route within the Platte Lake area and, to some extent, between the resort associations and Honor. Developing and implementing a regional non-motorized plan for CR-708 between Sleeping Bear Dunes and Honor would enhance this recreational opportunity and provide expanded economic opportunities within the Village.

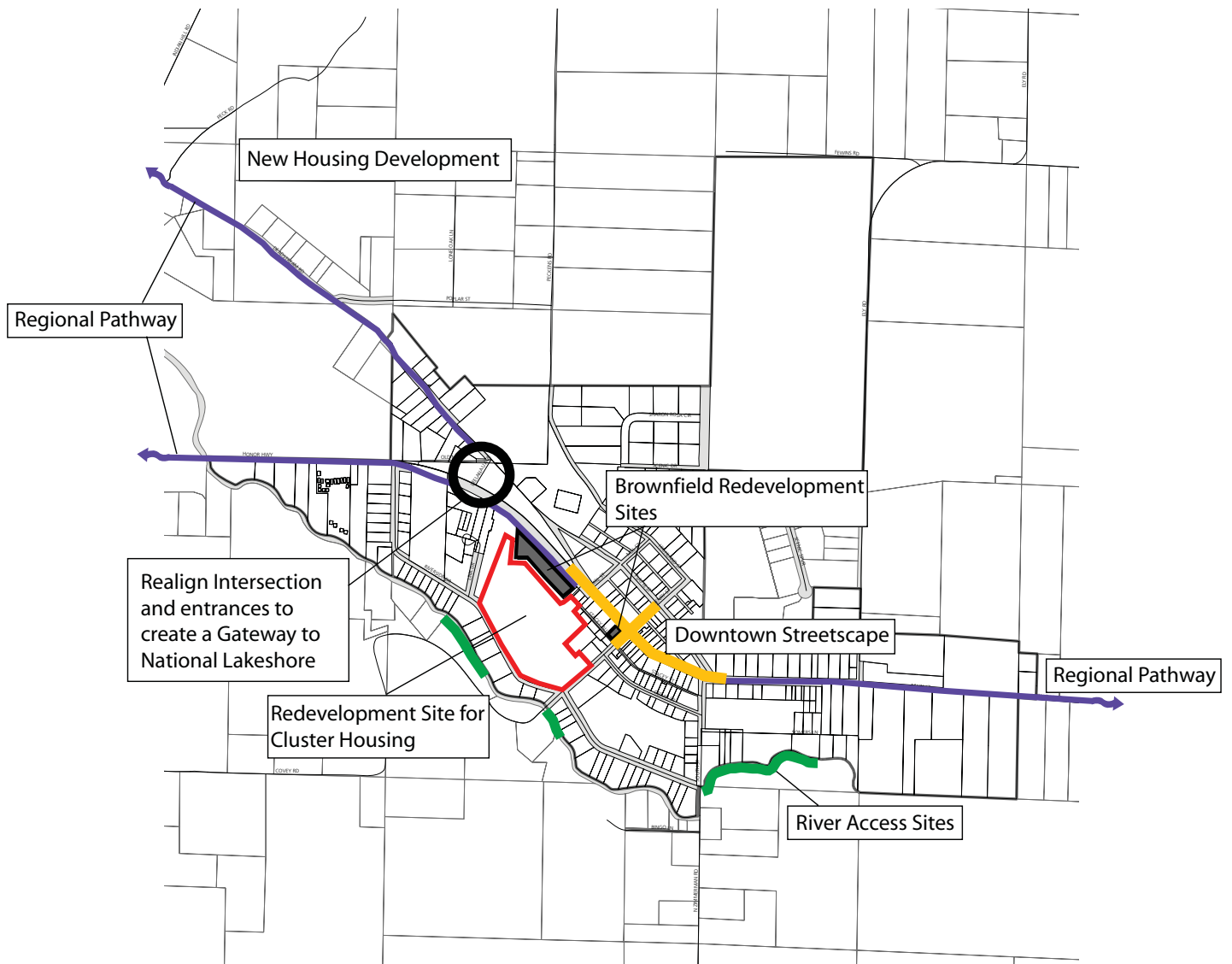
While not a primary regional route to the Dunes, CR-708 is still an important local connection for many seasonal vacationers exploring the area on US-31 or M-22. However, the intersection of CR-708 (Deadstream Road) and US-31 is currently a rather unmemorable intersection marked only by a fairly inconspicuous Sleeping Bear Dunes roadway sign. Creating a more significant gateway to Sleeping Bear Dunes will help solidify Honor as the nearest neighboring community to the Dunes in the minds of those travelling US-31. With that mindset, travelers are much more likely to consider Honor their “base of operations” for exploring the area. To that end, re-designating a portion of CR-708 and enhancement of A.B. Maley Park could create a memorable showcase gateway along US-31. In order to provide a safer and more recognizable CR-708/US-31 intersection, Leelanau Street could be designated as CR-708 in place of Deadstream Road between Leelanau Street and US-31. The newly undesignated portion of Deadstream Road could then be visually de-emphasized as a Village road to further accentuate the Leelanau Street gateway. As part of the gateway experience, A.B. Maley Park could be enhanced with significantly scaled signage, banners, landscape treatments, enhanced picnic shelters, play equipment, etc.

Unfortunately, one of the primary views when on Leelanau Street or Deadstream Road is the existing sand and gravel pit. While the operation is privately owned and operated, it has a large and detrimental visual presence at the gateway. The Village should work with the owner to develop a long term land use plan for the property that capitalizes on the gateways economic potential and is more visually fitting to the gateway experience.

#### Key Considerations

- Develop and implement regional non-motorized plan for CR-708 between Sleeping Bear Dunes and Honor
- Re-designate Leelanau Street as CR-708 in place of Deadstream Road between Leelanau and US-31.
- Develop A.B. Maley Park as a gateway to Sleeping Bear Dunes
- Develop long term land use plan for sand and gravel pit





*Revitalization Program - Opportunities*

## Contents

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Honor Revitalization Strategy	39
Assessing the Institutional Framework	43
Establish a Downtown Development Authority	43
Establish a Brownfield Redevelopment Authority	43
Eligible Distressed Area DDesignation	45
Putting Projects and Programs on Paper	45
Recommended “First-Step” Strategies	45

Village of Honor  
Community Revitalization Strategy

Figure 15  
Focus Areas for the Honor Revitalization Plan

Grand Vision - Guiding Principles	Six Pillars for Prosperity					
	Attractive Cities and Neighborhoods	Highly Competitive Schools	Knowledge-Based Technologies	Thriving Agriculture	Natural Resources - Recreation and Jobs	Entrepreneurial Culture
Increasing Employment Opportunities and Economic Security						HRP
Improving the Region's Transportation Network						
Unique Villages, that form a Region	HRP				HRP	
Expanding Housing Choices	HRP					
Food, Farming and Rural Development						
Protecting and Preserving Natural Resources	HRP					



## HONOR REVITALIZATION STRATEGY

The Village of Honor is at a critical crossroad. Although it is located along northwest Michigan's primary transportation corridor; US-31, and serves as the principle jumping off point to the recreational offerings of the Bestie Valley, Crystal Lake, Lake Michigan, the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, and the Platte River, it benefits little from the daily traffic of commuters and tourists. The answer is simple: disinvestment.

When participants at the April 18, 2011 Community Vision Session were asked to identify the "barriers" affecting revitalization of the Village the most often mentioned reasons were the Village's limited tax base, blight and dilapidated buildings and homes, lack of access to the river, and a prevailing negative attitude toward change and progress. Why was revitalization important to the 140 plus participants at the Community Vision Session? Because they determined that revitalization of Honor would encourage commerce and new business, and help retain existing businesses in the community. They also noted that revitalization would create a sense of "community."

It is important to note the last reason expressed – "to create a sense of community." This grassroots desire to create a sense of community is embodied in two policy documents; the Grand Vision and the Six Pillars for Prosperity. Figure 15 identifies how the two regional and state-wide strategies support the local aspirations "to create a sense of community" or what is referred to as "placemaking." Vision participants and interviewed stakeholders all pointed out the need to improve the visual and aesthetic environment of Honor which is creating attractive cities and neighborhoods. Participants also noted that greater emphasis should be made to open public access to the Platte River and leverage vehicular access to the Sleeping Bear National Lakeshore Park because they would help stimulate job opportunities. As a result, creating an attractive village and utilizing the natural resource base for greater recreation access and jobs will help make Honor "unique" and more desirous as a place to visit, do business, and reside.

An outcome from our unfortunate state and national economic downturn has been an insightful acknowledgement that those communities who have embraced strategies focused on improving quality of place (sustainable neighborhoods, vibrant downtowns, competitive schools, etc.) are the communities that have maintained or experienced minimal decline in their housing values, retained and created jobs, and are benefitting from in-migration from people seeking employment and residency. In other words, communities who used "quality of place" as an economic development strategy are the winners.

So, how can the Village of Honor use this strategy of reinvestment focused on "quality of place?" And, what steps are needed to begin the process?

### Recognizing and Practicing the Cornerstones for Effective Community Revitalization

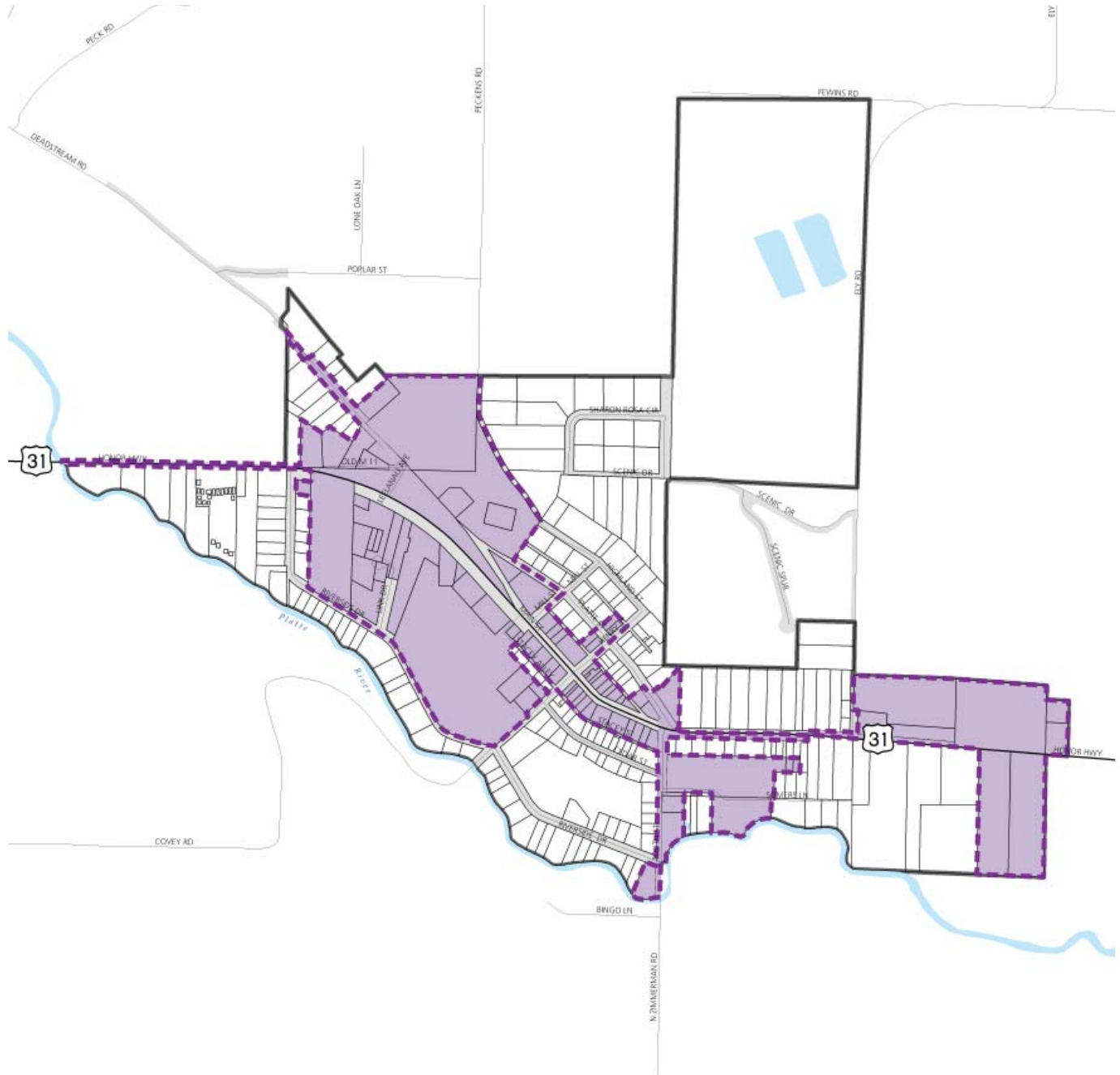
Effective community revitalization begins with an understanding of three important cornerstones; vision, leadership, and collaboration. Failure to recognize and employ these cornerstones results in missed opportunities, duplication of valuable resources, waning community interest through inaction, and eventually - disinvestment. The attributes of each cornerstone can be summarized as follows:

- Vision: A description of what an organization would like to achieve or accomplish in the mid-term or long-term future. (Goals)
- Leadership: The ability to successfully integrate and maximize available resources within the internal and external environment for the attainment of organizational goals. (Vision)
- Collaboration: process where two or more people or organizations work together to realize shared goals. Successful collaboration involves leadership.

As a result of the April 2011 EnVision Honor community vision session we believe the Village has a concise direction on local expectations for change and improvement. Also, HARP has provided the forum for collaboration with local and regional partners. The missing cornerstone in Honor is leadership; or having an organizational "champion" to facilitate and implement the revitalization process.

Village of Honor  
Community Revitalization Strategy

Figure 16  
Suggested Downtown Development Authority (DDA) District



VILLAGE OF HONOR

## Downtown Development Authority District

- District Boundary
- Property Inside District



### Assessing the Institutional Framework

Prior to commencing a community revitalization effort one needs to assess the underlying institutional framework of the municipality. This includes:

- What individual(s) or organization(s) establishes public policy and drives the local development agenda.
- What is the relationship between local government, chamber of commerce, local (county) economic development agency, merchant association, and the area real estate community?
- Who are major stakeholders?
- Identifying any stressful or strained relationships, which may impede the revitalization process and success of the program.
- Identifying individual(s) and organization(s) who will champion revitalization.

The Village of Honor Village Council establishes public policy for the community and sets the tempo for revitalization. Unfortunately, prior Village Council's have done little planning and economic development which is now reflected in the condition of the community and its tax base. The current Village Council is interested in beginning the revitalization process but lacks the capacity, and subsequently, the confidence to get it started.

Helping bolster the confidence in pursuing community revitalization is HARP (Honor Area Restoration Project) which is a group of very interested citizens and businesses. HARP has been very instrumental in bringing interested parties together to address issues affecting the Honor area and how to best leverage its assets. Through its e-mail contact database HARP has been able to mobilize residents to attend meetings and events, and keep the community informed of the plans and potential projects. Our assessment of Honor points to the Village Council and HARP as being the primary stakeholders in the revitalization process, and HARP as serving as the "champion" for local area revitalization.

Honor businesses are members of the Benzie County Chamber of Commerce which does a very good job of highlighting opportunities in Honor, Benzonia, and other Benzie County communities. Unfortunately, Benzie County is a non-player in the Honor revitalization and economic development process.

The key to any successful revitalization process is having a person or entity that can champion the process and get things accomplished. Although HARP has been identified as the "champion" it lacks the formal institutional structure. To compensate for this deficiency we are recommending the formation of a Downtown Development Authority (Public Act 197 of 1975) to carry forward the initiatives needed to achieve Honor's vision.

### Establish a Downtown Development Authority

We are recommending that the establishment of a Downtown Development Authority be used as means to formally constitute a formal business organization which would promote the US-31 corridor and downtown Honor. Once the Board has had an opportunity to prepare a development plan as required by State statute, we would then recommend the use of tax increment financing to assist with the implementation of programs and projects. Tax increment financing is a process where the annual taxable valuation growth in a district, over and above the base year (year the TIF is established), is captured by the DDA and used to finance projects and programs identified in the development plan. Because the DDA is considered a "municipal entity" it has the ability to seek and procure grants and donations for their projects and programs. This focus of the revitalization effort is based on an agreed upon vision, as defined in April 2011 at the EnVision Honor session, and is as important as the ability to collect tax increment revenues. All plans and budgets are subject to local review and approval by the Village Board.

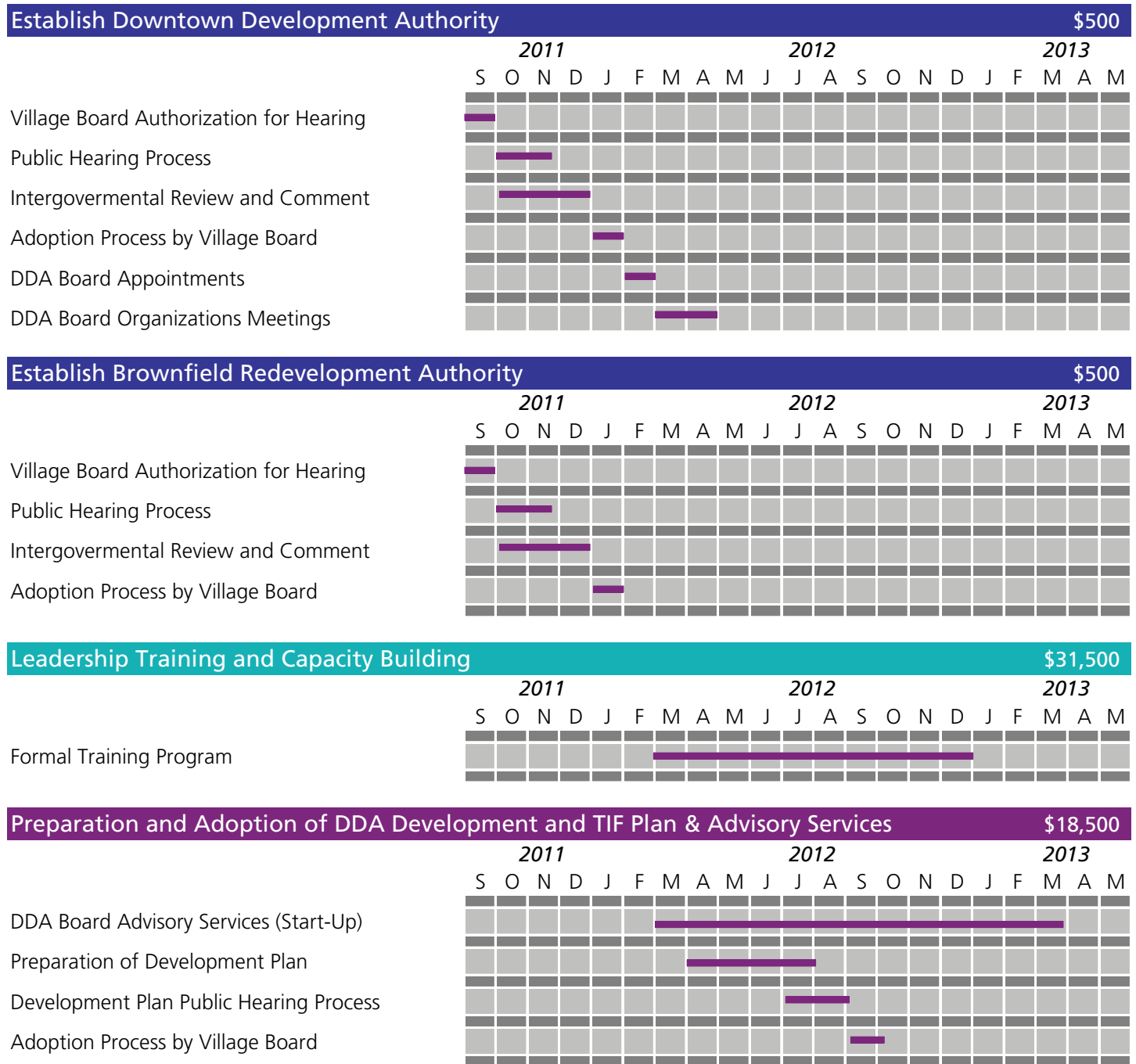
The DDA Board should be limited to nine (9) members consisting of the Village President (or designated elected official) and eight other appointed members. Because the legislation requires at least a majority of the board members to have an interest (own/rent) in the DDA district at least four (4) members can come from outside the DDA or from within the HARP committee.

### Establish a Brownfield Redevelopment Financing Authority

Concurrent with the establishment of a Downtown Development Authority we are recommending the creation of a Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (BRA) constituted under Public Act 381 of 1996. Establishment of the BRA follows the same notification and public hearing schedule of the DDA and unlike the DDA which is created by ordinance the BRA is created by resolution.

Village of Honor  
Community Revitalization Strategy

Figure 17  
Revitalization Strategy - Sequence of Activities



Based on a review of the MDEQ environmental database most of the known open and closed underground storage tanks or contaminated sites are located along US-31 in the same area as the proposed DDA district. Section 5 of the Brownfield Redevelopment Financing Act also allows the Downtown Development Authority to serve as the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority which will streamline the redevelopment process.

### **Eligible Distressed Area**

Eligible Distressed Areas are those cities, villages and townships which exhibit higher than statewide average levels of economic distress. Applicants for certain competitive MSHDA programming who are located in an Eligible Distressed Area may receive enhancements to their applications. Section 11 of Public Act 346 of 1966 defines an "eligible distressed" community as one that meets all of the following requirements (formula allocation):

- A. The municipality shows a negative population change from 1970 to the date of the most recent federal decennial census.
- B. The municipality shows an overall increase in the state equalized value of real and personal property of less than the statewide average increase since 1972.
- C. The municipality has a poverty rate, as defined by the most recent decennial census, greater than the statewide average.
- D. The municipality has had an unemployment rate higher than the statewide average unemployment rate for three of the preceding five years.

The reason for seeking "eligible distressed status" is to increase grant competitiveness on various state grant and loan programs. In Northwest Michigan the communities of Baldwin, Beulah, Kalkaska, Leland, Cadillac, Charlevoix, Bellaire, Petoskey, and Traverse City are classified as "eligible distressed areas." The Village of Honor should review the criteria to determine its eligibility.

### **Putting Projects and Programs on Paper**

The Village of Honor lacks sufficient statutory and program plans to apply for a variety of project funding. Documents that are absent include a community master plan, MDNR approved parks and recreation plan and a greenway/non-motorized trail plan. The MDNR approved plan is needed if the Village wants to solicit funding for land acquisition and property development along the Platte River. The Community Master Plan identifies deficiencies in infrastructure, housing, and community facilities, and helps form the foundation for a well-rounded capital improvements program and zoning ordinance. Community policies such as, blight and code enforcement, housing rehabilitation, traffic, pedestrian improvements, park improvements, etc. are discussed and identified in this document. Effective alignment of community documents helps leverage state and federal funding opportunities because it presents a broader picture of where the community is going and how the projects interrelate.

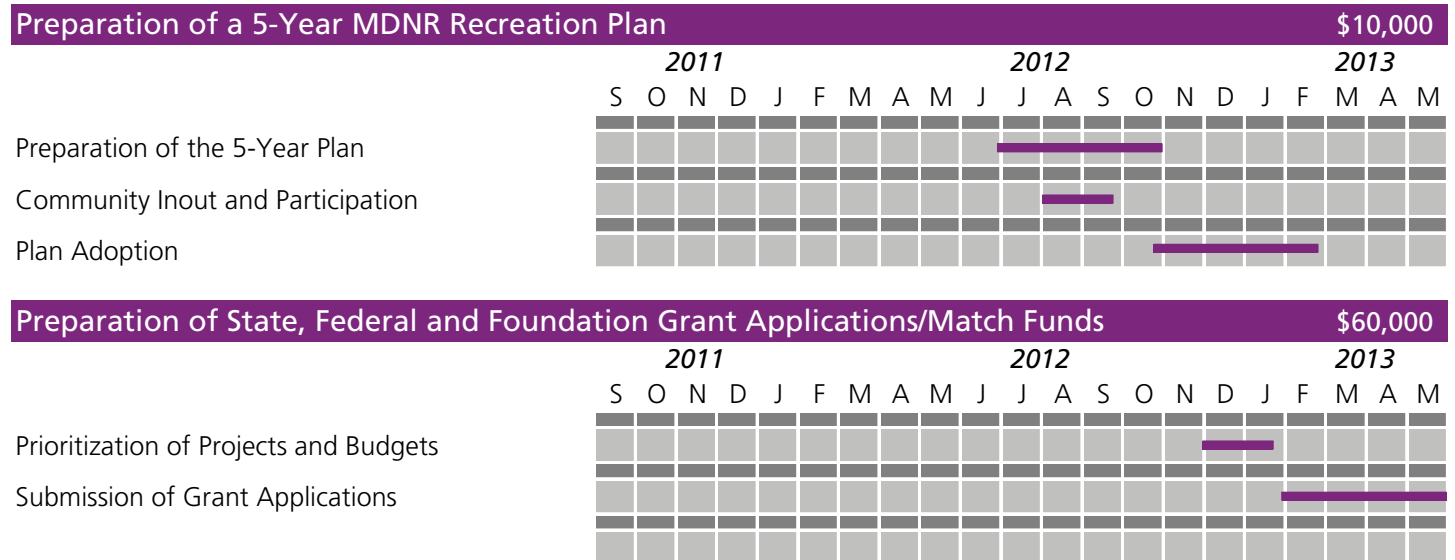
### **Recommended "First-Step" Strategies**

The community revitalization strategy is a series of actions that the Village of Honor and its collaborators can follow to begin the process of revitalization. The actions are considered near-term; meaning that they will be accomplished within a three year time horizon. The programs identified are not overly aggressive if the steps recommended are followed. Remember, revitalization is not an individual endeavor but a shared community commitment.

Figure 16 lists the recommended strategies and outlines a schedule for completion. Because of the Village's financial position we are recommending that the Village, through its relationship with the Alliance for Economic Success (AES) approach Rotary Charities for multi-year funding to complete the first steps of the strategy. At the conclusion of the three year commitment the revitalization strategy will be updated to reflect the accomplishments and outline the next series of projects and programs for the Village.

Village of Honor  
Community Revitalization Strategy

Figure 16  
Revitalization Strategy - Sequence of Activities



The recommended revitalization strategy is a combination of establishing institutional organizations which can address problems and leverage opportunities, capacity building and training, and have “seed” funds to use as match for an initial project(s).

Although there is some reluctance to move forward by the Village Council we are recommending the formation of a Downtown Development Authority and Brownfield Redevelopment Authority. Since the Brownfield Authority legislation allows the Downtown Development Authority to serve as the Board for the Brownfield Authority we believe establishment of both authorities concurrently will provide more efficient use of volunteer time. The cost to incorporate both authorities are limited to two advertisements of the public hearing in the local newspaper and sending a notification of the public hearing to all property owners in the proposed DDA district.

We are recommending that the Village of Honor working with the Alliance for Economic Success (AES) pursue a three-year commitment from Rotary Charities to initiate the revitalization process. The first year’s funding from Rotary Charities would be used to create and deliver a leadership training and capacity building program to members of the Village Council and a core group of HARP members. We believe this program could be a prototype for other communities within the Grand Vision region and should be crafted specifically for smaller rural communities like Honor. Leadership training and capacity building is critical for Honor. Coordinated by AES, potential contributing organizations would be the Heartland Institute for Leadership Development, Community Economic Development Association of Michigan (CEDAM), Michigan Rural Network, Michigan Municipal League and MSU Extension Service. We envision the preparation of a formal training program for elected officials and community activists dealing with leadership roles, how to identify and maximize local community assets, assess capabilities, how to build effective partnerships, and how to achieve effective fund raising.

The next three elements of the strategy involve the preparation of documents and design plans for the Downtown Development Authority and the Village. These include the preparation of a development plan as required by the DDA statute and a Five-Year Recreation Plan to comply with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources guidelines for recreation-related grants.

In addition to preparing the development plan we have included funding for advisory services to provide technical assistance to the DDA Board for the first year of operation. The third element is a detailed design plan for downtown Honor and the US-31 corridor which will be used to solicit funding for roadway and streetscape improvements.

The balance of the multi-year commitment would be applied toward matching funds for an initial project or projects. This will alleviate the need for the Village to allocate local general funds for this effort and it will provide a venue for those individuals completing the leadership training and fund development training program to apply their skills at state, federal, and foundation grants.

The key to revitalization is that it does not occur spontaneously; a community must want it and apply the resources to make it happen. The Village is at an important crossroads where Village Council and HARP Board leadership and continued volunteer/resident involvement will determine the course of future actions.



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