

REGIONAL PLANNING STRATEGIES

Master plans are written at all levels of government- community specific, regionally, state wide. A county master plan contains many of the same attributes found, and follows the same process, prepared for a single community. The focus is less precise as a municipal master plan as it sweeps over municipal boundaries considering factors that affect the county as a whole. Both Benzie and Manistee Counties have written county master plans that take a regional view within their respective boundaries.

Benzie County's Master Plan was prepared in 2000 while Manistee County's Master Plan was prepared in 2009. No matter what level of government the master plan is being prepared for it is influenced by the conditions found within the community at the time the plan is drafted, public interests of the day and the issues that extend beyond the municipal boundaries but have a significant impact locally. Despite the large difference in years that the two plans were written, and the vastly different economic and societal conditions that existed at the time of the plans preparation, there are commonalities in planning strategies.

The commonalities between the Manistee and Benzie County Master Plans speak to a land use strategy that guide development towards existing population centers, commitment to rural scenic character and a desire for coordination of planning with neighbors. Emphasis on retaining **rural scenic character** by preserving lands for forestry, agricultural and low density residential use as well as preserving the integrity of views, wetlands, rivers, streams, and Lake Michigan shoreline is a common theme strongly articulated within both plans. Natural resources and environmental protection are strong key components of both plans as well. In addition, both plans call for **coordination of planning** between municipalities and neighboring regions in order to obtain efficiencies in services.

The two largest differences between the Manistee County and Benzie County Master Plan lie in the type of plan that was written. The Manistee County Master Plan is services orientated while the Benzie County Master Plan is a growth management tool. They also differ in how they deal with local government sovereignty. Benzie County is focused on regionalism rather than Manistee's emphasis on the sovereign right of local governments to plan individually. How their strategies are articulated is also a difference of the two plans. Manistee County Master Plan has a series of goals and objectives that are categorized by topic. Benzie County Master Plan also has goals and objectives found in associated "Background Reports" however they are summarized in eight "fundamental principles". The fundamental principles, and associated policies, of the Benzie County Plan are what most communities use as their guiding basis for decisions as the "Background Reports" have been unavailable. Both plans lay out an articulated path for future development of their respective county.

BENZIE COUNTY 2020 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN-KEY STRATEGIES

- The Benzie Co. Master Plan has a **growth management** focus stating policies geared toward defining land use development patterns and practices in order to guide new development and services to specific areas of the County in order to stop urban sprawl and maintain a rural scenic character.
- Benzie Co. Master Plan focuses on **regional land use planning** emphasizing land use patterns and policy for the county as a whole regardless of individual municipal boundary lines.
- Economic development, character, transportation, land use issues, natural resources and environmental protection are topics that are encompassed within the scope of where and how to place development within the County, utilize the transportation system efficiently and install infrastructure improvements that builds on exiting systems. Efficiencies in land use patterns and services are key components to the success of the plan.
- **Urban Service Districts** are mapped out indicating where new public services may be extended to accommodate new development.
- **Rural scenic character preservation** is a key focus of the plan with policies that call for the development of corridor plans, buffer screening, conservation easements, design guidelines, night sky policies, additional design guidelines are among the many policies found within the plan to aid in the goal of rural scenic character preservation.
- Eight guiding fundamental principles are articulated followed by 4 strategies: balanced growth, environmental protection, protect the visual character of the landscape, protect the visual character of small towns.

2008 MANISTEE COUNTY MASTER PLAN-KEY STRATEGIES

- Manistee Co. Master Plan is geared towards capacity building, or the development and enhancement of programs, plans and facilities, of **public services and investment** in order to actualize their vision.
- The public services that would either be created or enhanced include topics such as recreation, housing, economic development, natural resources, infrastructure, and transportation. These topics collectively work to actualize the desired end result of the Master Plan. For example, the Manistee County Plan calls for the creation of a recreation plan and recreation department, alternative energy program, economic development programming, and solid waste management program. Capacity building of this type would aid in creating recreational opportunities and management of those programs, achieve greater alternative energy production, protection of the environmental and natural resources, and expand and grow the economic base.
- In Manistee County **community specific land use planning** is preferred honoring local planning efforts but does point to a few general regional land use goals such as compact development forms and coordination of planning efforts between municipalities.
- The Plan calls for nine categories of goals with associated objectives to achieve the goals.

MANISTEE AND BENZIE COUNTY MASTER PLAN GOALS AND PRINCIPLES		
MANISTEE COUNTY GOALS	BENZIE COUNTY PRINCIPLES	BENZIE COUNTY STRATEGIES (excerpts)
ECONOMY 1. Increase opportunities for business in the county. 2. Encourage the Alliance for Economic Success and the Greater Manistee Area Chamber of Commerce to diversity the industrial base to create more job opportunities and to create specialty groups. 3. Increase the ability of Manistee County to attract and retain technology-based businesses. Link economic development goals and objectives with those of the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians to provide broader, unified economic development programs. 4. Coordinate a collaborative planning program between the county and local units of government within the county, and adjoining counties.	ECONOMY 4. An economy built on renewable natural resources is sustainable and should continue to be the principal economic base for the future	BALANCED GROWTH 1. Encourage compact settlement pattern by curtailing sprawl and strip development 2. Ensure long-term viability of agriculture, forestry, recreation and tourism industries. 3. Establish Urban Service Boundaries. 4. Prepare corridor plans. 5. Improve emergency services. 6. Implement pay as you go policies in regards to public services. 7. Development of Capital Improvement Plans consistent with the County Master Plan 8. Road maintenance, pedestrian circulation, trail system, public transportation shall be consistent with the Master Plan. 9. Rural areas of the County shall be zoned low density.
HOUSING 1. Encourage the development of more assisted living facilities/senior housing options as the average age in the county rises, including development of support services to assist seniors to stay in their own homes. 2. Encourage housing options for a variety of income levels. 3. Discourage blight and nuisance housing areas.		
NATURAL RESOURCES PROTECTION 1. Encourage the reduction, and where possible, the elimination of environmentally contaminated lands which have a potential for damaging rivers, streams and groundwater. 2. Advocate for the creation and long term maintenance of a county-wide solid waste management program 3. Advocate for the maintenance of Manistee County's natural resources and the beauty of its landscape. 4. Encourage local governments to develop guidelines and criteria which protect natural features and sensitive areas. 5. Advocate for county-wide alternative energy programs and projects.	NATURAL RESOURCES PROTECTION 1. Scenic character should be preserved or enhanced wherever feasible in the County. 2. Natural resources in the County should be protected from inappropriate use or conversion. 3. The pristine natural environment of the County should be protected from degradation.	ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION 1. Prepare Watershed Management plans 2. Prepare Groundwater/wellhead protection plans 3. Compact development. 4. Agricultural use remains with the land unless it is proved to be not viable 5. Natural feature, surface water, ground water, wetlands, floodplains, sand dunes, high risk erosion areas and lands bordering lakes and streams preservation 6. Imperviousness overlay zones, setbacks, vegetative buffer requirements, performance standards on key environmentally sensitive areas. 7. Develop a purchase of development rights program and/or transfer of development rights program 8. Preservation of wildlife corridors 9. Greenways and recreation trail development

RECREATION 1. Continue to work on the development of the Manistee County Recreation Plan, including all areas of the county. 2. Encourage universal accessibility to all recreation sites. 3. Increase recreational opportunities for all ages. 4. Advocate for a Manistee County parks program including the preservation of open spaces for recreation purposes.		
AGRICULTURE 1. Advocate for agriculture and forest management activities which enhance Manistee County's economic base and quality of life. 2. Advocate that designate agricultural areas in the county remain primarily agricultural or low density residential.		
TRANSPORTATION 1. Advocate for the development of a coordinate county transportation plan. 2. Advocate for the awareness of the importance of our local airport for all travelers in the county. 3. Monitor projects and proposals to assess the maintenance of safe and efficient routes in and through the county while respecting the rural character. 4. Advocate for expansion of deep water port facilities, with linking to air, rail, highway connections and warehousing and distribution facilities. 5. Advocate for the continued study of the railroad relocation project.		
INFRASTRUCTURE 1. Advocate for the development of a county infrastructure plan. 2. Advocate for the effective and efficient location of public facilities and delivery of public services.		
LAND USE 1. County master planning will respect the goals and land use plans of local government, including the Little River Band... 2. Future growth will occur in existing and planned growth centers such as the City of Manistee and population centers as identified in each local government plan.	LAND USE 5. Future development should primarily take place in a compact development pattern. 6. Future land use, zoning, land division and public infrastructure decisions should be made consistent with this Plan. 8. The vision in this Plan must be achieved without violating protected property rights.	VISUAL CHARACTER OF THE LANDSCAPE 1. Development shall be encouraged to be designed consistent with the principles in the Grand Traverse Bay Guidebook. VISUAL CHARACTER OF SMALL TOWNS 1. Development shall be encouraged to be designed consistent with the principles found in the Grand Traverse Bay Guidebook.
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION	INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION 7. A strong effort should be made to achieve improved intergovernmental cooperation within Benzie County.	