

City of Manistee Community Visioning Summary

Introduction

The City of Manistee Planning Commission is in the process of updating its Master Plan. A Visioning Session was held on November 21, 2013 at City Hall for the purpose of gathering input from the public for use in formulating the long range priorities, goals, and strategies for the plan. The session was held as part of the Lakes to Land Regional Initiative (www.lakeistoland.org), a 16-community planning collaboration in northwest Michigan.

Sixteen people attended the Visioning Session that was facilitated by Beckett & Raeder, Inc., the consultancy serving the Lakes to Land Regional Initiative. The process used was as follows:

The attendees arrived to find seven tables set with exercise sheets and other materials. Groups sat at four of the seven tables: # 2, 3, 5, 7. These numbers are referenced throughout this summary.

The facilitator asked a series of 6 questions, giving the groups approximately 5 minutes to develop as many answers as possible to them.

Each individual then used dot stickers to indicate their preferred answers. They voted for one item on the first question and two items on questions 2-6.

When each table had generated and voted on their top three visions for the future, participants were asked to offer three strategies for achieving each vision. The groups then presented these visions and strategies to the audience as a whole.

Each group's top three visions were then written on poster-sized sheets and hung near the exit. Attendees were asked to use their remaining three voting stickers to indicate their top priorities among all of the suggested visions.

This summary includes the results of the Visioning Session along with one citizen email. The Collective Prioritization will be used to develop an online survey to confirm the priorities in the wider community.

City of Manistee Community Visioning Summary
One Word Description

"One word"	Mentioned at (Tables 2, 3, 5, 7)	Mentioned (Tally)	Votes Received
Economically challenged	5	1	2
Quaint	2, 5, 7	3	1
Beaches; beachy	5, 7	2	1
Friendly	2, 7	2	1
Historic	3, 7	2	1
Trying; trying to grow	3, 5	2	1
Closed	5	1	1
Confused	3	1	1
Developing	7	1	1
Lacking	3	1	1
Minimal citizen involvement	3	1	1
Restrictive	5	1	1
Retirement	2	1	1
Tired	5	1	1
Undiscovered	7	1	1
Victorian	2	1	1
Beautiful; beautiful spot	3, 7	2	
Vacant; empty downtown	3, 5	2	
Assets	7	1	
Deepwater Point	7	1	
Home	7	1	
Inviting	3	1	
Judgemental	5	1	
Mayberry	3	1	
Movie set	3	1	
No collaboration	5	1	
Possibilities	5	1	
Self-involved	3	1	
Shangri La	3	1	
Tourist haven	2	1	
Under-developed	5	1	
Unrealized	7	1	
Water	7	1	

City of Manistee Community Visioning Summary
What We Have Done Well

"Done well"	Mentioned at (Tables 2, 3, 5, 7)	Mentioned (Tally)	Votes Received
Parks	2, 3	2	4
Volunteerism; involvement when inspired	3, 7	2	4
Apply/receive grants	3	1	3
Historical preservation	5	1	3
Survived for generations	5	1	3
Accentuate lake/river; beach amenities / beach plans; beaches	2, 3, 7	3	2
Vogue redevelopment ; fund theatre and projects	3, 7	2	2
Collaboration between entities	7	1	2
Cultivated caring community	5	1	2
Riverwalk, existing and future	7	1	2
Festivals; Fourth of July; Snowbell	2, 3, 7	3	1
Marina; marina building	2, 7	2	1
Maintained / developed infrastructure	5	1	1
Maintained traditions	5	1	1
Museum	2	1	1
Promoting Manistee	3	1	1
Promoting tourism	3	1	1
Ramsdell	2	1	1
Services	2	1	1
Balance between residents' needs and visitors' wants	7	1	
Blossom Blvd.	3	1	
City Hall	2	1	
Downtown façade improvements	7	1	
Full time fire department / medical	7	1	
Improving downtown	7	1	
Non-motorized trails	3	1	
Policed well	3	1	
Retain jobs	3	1	
Street department	3	1	

City of Manistee Community Visioning Summary
What We Could Have Done Better

"Could've done better"	Mentioned at (Tables 2, 3, 5, 7)	Mentioned (Tally)	Votes Received
City leadership needs to actively recruit new businesses with employment opportunities - beyond retail, at livable wage	5	1	5
Retain jobs	3	1	4
Blight; stricter blight law	2, 3	2	3
Lack of community support of downtown	7	1	3
Marketing	2	1	3
Be open to change	5	1	2
Industrial park overlooking Lake Michigan	7	1	2
Provide incentives for (new) businesses to come to Manistee	5	1	2
Us vs. them mentality	7	1	2
Roads; road maintenance	2, 3	2	1
Around the lake sewer system in 1980s - could have been 90% funded	7	1	1
Beach structures	2	1	1
Evening-based city / promote night access	3	1	1
Inspire investment	3	1	1
Marina	2	1	1
Promote themed downtown (theme not right)	3	1	1
Protect water and air	5	1	1
Retain businesses	3	1	1
Streetscape	3	1	1
Be more welcoming	5	1	
Blend modern with historical	5	1	
Communicate with citizens	5	1	
Condos unfinished	3	1	
Connecting river to downtown	7	1	
Cultivate employment opportunities for youth, existing residents	5	1	
Develop Manistee Lake	3	1	
Get word out - promote state-wide and nationally	5	1	
Promote downtown	3	1	
Taking advantage of natural resources	7	1	
Timing on projects	3	1	

City of Manistee Community Visioning Summary
Barriers to Our Goals

"Barriers"	Mentioned at (Tables 2, 3, 5, 7)	Mentioned (Tally)	Votes Received
Jobs; lack of jobs	2, 5	2	5
Money; capital	2, 3, 7	3	4
Apathy	3	1	3
Closed minded	5	1	3
Imagination	2	1	3
Transportation locations; railroad tracks (relocation)	3, 7	2	2
Divided opinion on direction of city	3	1	2
Good ol' boys	5	1	2
High millage rate/taxes	3	1	2
Keep doing the same things and expect different results	5	1	2
Stubbornness	7	1	2
Aggressiveness	3	1	1
Leadership	7	1	1
Post high-school graduation rate in county	7	1	1
Too attached to the Victorian Port City identity	5	1	1
Volatility of state	7	1	1
Water/sewer rates	3	1	1
Always been done that way	7	1	
Attitudes	2	1	
Bridges	3	1	
Climate	7	1	
Community support	7	1	
Lack of freeway	3	1	
Limited opportunities for youth and young families / adults to work	5	1	
Negative perception	3	1	
Uncarding, greedy	3	1	
Unions	3	1	

City of Manistee Community Visioning Summary
Who Should Be in the Sandbox

"In the Sandbox"	Mentioned at (Tables 2, 3, 5, 7)	Mentioned (Tally)	Votes Received
Small Business Association of Michigan	5	1	4
City Council	2, 5	2	3
City commissions	3	1	3
Community Developer	5	1	3
Active citizens / volunteers; residents; go-getters (individuals)	3, 5, 7	3	2
Neighboring government units / council; area communities	3, 7	2	2
Planning commission	2, 3	2	2
Visitors bureau	2, 3	2	2
MEDC / State	7	1	2
Property owners	5	1	2
Regional collaboration	3	1	2
Industrial Development Council; manufacturing council	3, 5	2	1
Alliance for Economic Success	3	1	1
Brownfield	2	1	1
Entrepreneurs / business climate	7	1	1
Little River Band of Ottawa Indians	7	1	1
People with money	3	1	1
Positive attitudes	7	1	1
Students / youth	7	1	1
Zoning	2	1	1
Chamber of commerce	2, 3, 5	3	
DDA	2, 5	2	
Casino	3	1	
City volunteer groups (Rotary, Jaycees, Lions)	3	1	
County commissioner	5	1	
Historic commission	2	1	
Legislators - state reps	5	1	
Parks department	2	1	

City of Manistee Community Visioning Summary
Envisioning Our Future

"Our future"	Mentioned at (Tables 2, 3, 5, 7)	Times Mentioned (Tally)	Votes Received
Vibrant community, welcoming; vibrant downtown; stronger downtown	3, 5, 7	3	5
Riverwalk starting point for citywide recreational trail system	7	1	5
Clean air, clean water, clean government	5	1	4
Diverse new businesses with a blended economic base of tourism, industry, and agriculture	5	1	4
Filled industrial park	3	1	4
Vibrant restaurant community; more/better restaurants	2, 7	2	3
Strong neighborhoods / less blight; eliminate blight	2, 7	2	2
Entrepreneurial / inventors capitol	3	1	2
Expanded retail	2	1	2
Jobs for anyone who wants one	3	1	2
Less city debt	7	1	2
Reduced taxes	3	1	2
Trendsetter and stable incubator for businesses	5	1	2
Tourist destination spot; tourism is key	3, 7	2	1
Best place in America	3	1	1
Expanded medical facilities	2	1	1
Less poverty	2	1	1
North corridor developed into art community	7	1	1
River and downtown tied together	7	1	1
Increased waterfront accessibility; expanded riverfront (San Antonio)	3, 7	2	
Culturally, economically, aesthetically attractive	5	1	
Direct flights to anywhere	3	1	
Discovered	7	1	
Equitable	5	1	
Expansion of City borders	3	1	
Open-minded, embraces change	5	1	
Placemaking	3	1	
Rec Center	3	1	
Relocated industrial park off of Lake Michigan	7	1	
Repaved streets	3	1	
Revitalized downtown	5	1	
Two-way traffic downtown	7	1	

City of Manistee Community Visioning Summary
Accomplishing Our Vision

table	Expanded retail	Better restaurants	Eliminate blight	Vibrant community	Jobs
2	Tax relief on commercial properties				
2	Search for more grants				
2	Better marketing effort				
2		Eat out more!			
2			Less money for tourists		
3				Create jobs	
3				Inspire entrepreneurs to come here	
3				Reduce taxes to retain citizens	
3				Business friendly	
3				Tax abatements	
3				Seek out grants	
3				Tie-in with casino	
3					Reduce taxes / abatements
3					Training
3					Business support group
3					Marketing aggressiveness (recruit)

City of Manistee Community Visioning Summary
Accomplishing Our Vision (2)

		Blended economic base of tourism, industry, and agriculture			Clean air, clean water, clean government	Trendsetter, stable business incubator
table	Filled industrial park					
3	Tax abatement					
3	Marketing aggressiveness					
3	Renaissance zone					
3	Lower utility rates					
3	Incentives for business					
5		Draw livable wage jobs				
5		Incentives (tax abatements / credits) for newly located businesses				
5		Develop needed employee skill set				
5		Actively recruit nationally and globally				
5			Set and enforce emissions standards			
5			Transparency of government activities			
5			Reduce debt			
5			Careful use of land			
5						Link employment needs with education programs
5						Entrepreneurs
5						Technology

City of Manistee Community Visioning Summary
Accomplishing Our Vision (3)

Expanded riverwalk trail			
table	system	Less city debt	Stronger downtown
7	Property acquisition / easements		
7	Capital		
7	Maintenance plan		
7		Spend less than you get in reveue, or at least do not spend more	
7		Maintain current assets and infrastructure	
7		Continued strategic plan	
7			More business recruitment
7			Increased livable wage
7			Viable restaurants

City of Manistee Community Visioning Summary
Collective Prioritization

Collective Prioritization	Votes
Jobs and economic base	12
Vibrant community	9
Be a trend-setter	8
Stronger downtown and expanded retail	7
Less city debt	6
Eliminate blight	5
Clean water, clean air, clean government	5
Fill industrial parks	2
Expanded riverwalk trail	2
Better restaurants	1

Citizen input received via email:

The vision for Manistee should be: "Take care of the residents, pride will return, people will see and come"

It should come as no surprise that the top priorities for Manistee should be:

1. Local Streets
2. Ending Subsidies to all City Enterprises
3. Tax incentives for Home Improvements
4. Jobs
5. Business Growth
6. Population Growth

I have listed them in order of controllability by the City and which can be most directly impacted by the City.

Manistee's current Strategic Plan is extremely weak and does not contain measurable quantifiable goals or clear responsibility. In Example, the goal for the Industrial Park is to be at 100% capacity. But When? In 2100? What is the goal for 2014, 2015, 2016? Who is responsible if the goal is not met? If you are not going to have measurable goals and clear accountability you don't have a Strategic Plan.

The future projected debt subsidies to the Ramdell Theatre exceeding \$1.6 million must cease immediately. Way too much money has been spent on that facility which the City projects will still not be a breakeven business by 2028! Shame on the City for throwing millions of good money after millions of bad.

Jobs and Business growth really go hand in hand. Manistee must draw larges retail businesses to keep the shopping local and stop residents traveling to Ludington and Traverse City to shop.

No City funds should be spent for ANY new Recreational or Tourist based Capital Projects. The majority of Manistee's tourists are drawn by the Casino not a City facility.

Manistee is a Blue Collar town and it needs to return to its roots.