



LAKES TO LAND REGIONAL INITIATIVE

Implementation



Priority Sharing

The original scope of work for the collaboration, designed at the very beginning of the process, was focused on respecting and honoring the individuality and unique qualities of communities while developing opportunities for partnership and collaboration.

Given their potential utility to other communities, the appendix includes a generic copy of the resolutions that Lakes to Land governing bodies were asked to consider and pass to signify grassroots acceptance and understanding of Lakes to Land goals and principles. Just as Lakes to Land began within a collaborative framework, a culmination was envisioned in which all of the participating communities brought their completed master plans—whether written with Lakes to Land or independently—together to share their content and discuss the potential for implementation partnerships. The event was to be called a “Convention of Communities,” and would be both a working session and a celebration of the successful master planning process.

But it’s hard to accurately predict the conditions at the end of a pioneering undertaking. The Leadership Team’s monthly meetings over the course of the year and a half spent writing the master plans forged some deep and personal connections among the communities’ planning commissioners and leaders, and excitement to share in each others’ work built as the drafts neared completion. There is a long, quiet administrative stretch between when a planning commission completes its draft and when it is formally and finally adopted, and the Leadership Team wanted to capitalize on and spread some of the enthusiasm before it dissipated. Accordingly, they invited planning commissioners and appointed and elected officials from all of the participating communities as well

as the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians to a “Priority Sharing Meeting” on June 27, 2013. Fifty-nine people, including a couple of members of the public, attended. This unprecedented gathering of community planners and leaders was exciting and dynamic, occurring at the right time under the right circumstances—a situation that could hardly be planned even by the best planners.

The meeting opened with a locally-sourced, zero-waste feast of pizza and veggies organized by Crystal Lake Township leadership team member Sharron May. In preparation for the meeting, communities were asked to choose five priorities that could serve as an initial step to advance their goals and vision, and the consultant team presented the full list of 69 priorities before consolidating them into ten categories in order to indicate potential alliances. Demonstrating both the value and effect of momentum, Tim Ervin of Manistee Alliance for Success introduced a new grant awarded to the Initiative by the Michigan Department of Treasury for implementation and explained that the grant was written to target support for zoning and the development of an Agriculture Innovation District—both common themes that had emerged through the collaborative goal-setting process.

Ten posters, one for each theme and its associated priorities, were affixed to the wall. Participants were given





5.1 Shared Community Priorities table

SHARED COMMUNITY PRIORITIES	
AGRICULTURE	
Blaine	Consider developing an agriculture vitality strategy
Pleasanton	Develop agriculture -based economic development.
REDUCE BLIGHT AND NUISANCES	
Crystal Lake	Ordinances should be adopted and enforced from nuisances such as blight, noise, air, smoke, light and water pollution
Joyfield	Multi-township household dump day
Gilmore	Blight
Honor	Development of a blight/junk ordinance.
Bear Lake Twp	Develop an enforceable blight and junk ordinance and take steps to implement it.
Bear Lake Village	Eliminate blight
IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS	
Crystal Lake	Improve communication and cooperation between Crystal Lake Township and its citizens and other local units of government.
Manistee	Reinstitute semi-annual meetings with neighboring townships
Manistee	Expand/Use Web Page and Facebook to promote Manistee and link to CVB, Chamber & AES
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	
Crystal Lake	Encouraged development in locations with public services and consistent with the density, character, and development in the area and our Cornerstones
Elberta	Historic Life Saving Station Preservation
Joyfield	Growth in light industry/small business (training, zoning issues)
Manistee	Work with Main Street/DDA to recruit more business options
Manistee	Promote Guidebook for Economic Development/Job Creation
Honor	Develop design guidelines that expresses the community's vision for achieving a desired Village character.
Arcadia	Implement commercial streetscape improvements.
Manistee Twp.	Continue to welcome construction of large retail stores in the township
Bear Lake Village	Revitalize downtown



INFRASTRUCTURE: EXPAND AND IMPROVE	
Elberta	Sewer/Water infrastructure
Joyfield	Infrastructure - wireless, natural gas
Joyfield	Township roads - assessment, upgrades, trails
Blaine	Develop a road improvement plan to cover maintenance, site plans (private roads) and good communication and coordination with MDOT and County Road Commission.
Gilmore	Technology
Arcadia	Project analysis and feasibility study of installing a sanitary sewer system.
Arcadia	Utilize and develop the facilities at the Pleasant Valley Community Center to be the local and regional trail hub.
Frankfort	Create and Improve Way-finding signage and Enhance the commercial corridor through traffic controls and improved pedestrian/non-motorized access and off-street parking.
Frankfort	Adopt Energy Independence Plans, including community energy generation and reduction in grid-based energy based on fossil fuels.
Bear Lake Village	Affordable sewer
Onokama	High-speed Internet infrastructure
M-22 SCENIC HIGHWAY	
Gilmore	M-22 Scenic Highway Designation
Onokama	M-22 corridor/ Scenic Heritage route
EXPAND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES AND IMPROVE EXISTING FACILITIES	
Honor	Purchase the vacant properties along South Street for the purpose of developing a public access point to the Platte River.
Elberta	Penfold Park Marina (dredging, raised boardwalk/fishing deck, kayak/canoe launch, connect to Betsie Valley Trail)
Elberta	Elberta beach park development (parking, picnic tables, restrooms, changing area, play area/landscaping)
Elberta	Elberta Dunes South (trail signs, benches, lookout platforms, natural-history signage, promote year round activities, self-composting style permanent restrooms)
Frankfort	Create new standards for public facilities in recreational destinations and develop public private partnership(s) to build these facilities
Manistee Twp.	Provide more access to the Big Manistee River
Bear Lake Twp.	Develop a parks and recreation plan.
Bear Lake Village	Community Center
Bear Lake Village	Park Facility/Public Restrooms
Bear Lake Village	5 year Recreation Plan



SPECIAL REGULATIONS / ZONING

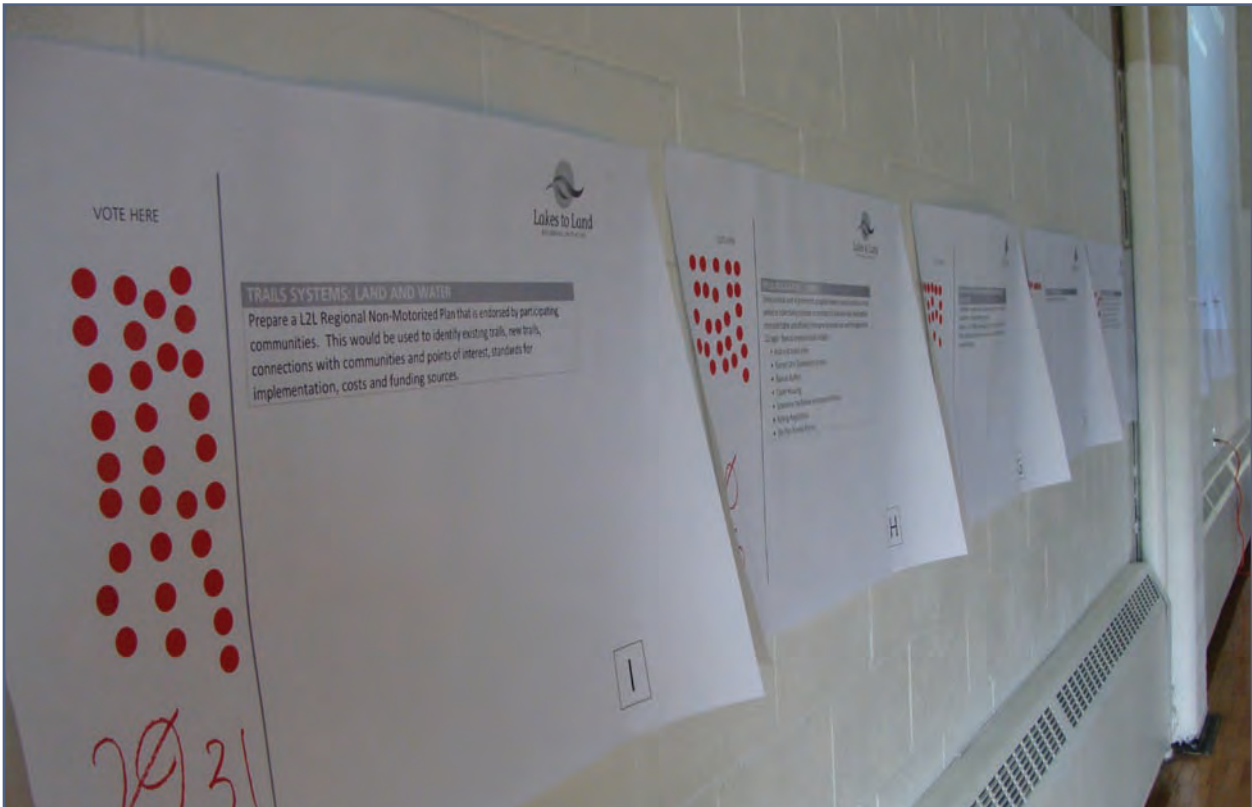
Crystal Lake	Review and revise Rural Preservation Zoning District of the Zoning Ordinance
Blaine	Develop a scenic view protection plan
Blaine	Simplify PUD process
Elberta	Zoning Ordinance critique and revision
Gilmore	Funding to incorporate zoning revisions and provide for legal review of zoning ordinance.
Gilmore	Rural scenic charioteer preservation.
Honor	Revisions to the zoning ordinance.
Pleasanton	Update the Zoning Ordinance.
Frankfort	Update Parking regulations and standard
Frankfort	Develop Zoning Ordinance(s) for Alternative and Renewable Energy collection, storage and use along with conservation standards that will bring about the reduction in energy demand.
Manistee Twp.	Require buffers & connections between different land use districts
Manistee Twp.	Streamline permitting processes
Onkama	Zoning ordinance rewrite
Onkama	Protection of "Natural Resources" (watershed, agriculture, etc.)

TRAILS SYSTEMS: LAND AND WATER

Gilmore	Trail Systems
Honor	Develop a non-motorized transportation route through the Village linking the Village to the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.
Pleasanton	Develop a multi-user trail system throughout the Township that also connects to regional trail systems.
Arcadia	Development of blue and green non-motorized transportation trails.
Bear Lake Twp.	Develop trail systems throughout the community and provide linkages to regional trail systems.
Onkama	Bike/ hiking pathway/ trail plan
Joyfield	Trails / bridge over Betsie River

WATER QUALITY

Crystal Lake	Incorporate water quality and storm water MDEQ BMP's into land use planning and zoning processes.
Blaine	Develop a watershed plan, including management, committee and protection
Arcadia	Develop a Watershed Plan.
Manistee Twp.	Encourage buffers around lakes & streams



5.2 Volunteer card



Lakes to Land
REGIONAL INITIATIVE

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Shared Priorities

- A. Agriculture
- B. Reduce Blight and Nuisances
- C. Improve Communications
- D. Economic Development
- E. Expand and Improve Infrastructure
- F. M-22 Scenic Highway
- G. Expand Recreation and Improve Facilities
- H. Special Regulations / Zoning
- I. Trails Systems (Land and Water)
- J. Water Quality

I am interested in working on one of these priorities:

First choice

Second choice

Third choice

Thank you!

four sticker “dots” and asked to vote for the four topics they considered to be of the highest priority. As indicated by the table below, the topics that received the greatest number of votes were trail systems, infrastructure, and economic development. Each participant was also given a card with all ten of the priorities listed and asked to provide their names, contact information, and their top three choices of topics on which

they would like to work. Based on that selection, they convened with other interested parties at the table marked with that topic’s letter for a discussion about that issue. In this way, the meeting both created a communication mechanism for future committee work and began to foster the relationships required to build it.

In many ways, the Priority Sharing Meeting accomplished much of

what was hoped would be done at the Convention of Communities by providing a forum to view and discuss the collaboration as a whole with fresh plans in hand, and by presenting the collaboration to a wider audience. Accordingly, later discussions among the Leadership began exploring the best format for the collaboration’s next steps with an eye toward turning the Convention of Communities into an event meant for a future purpose.

5.3 Regional Collective Priorities table

REGIONAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITIES	
Priority	Votes
Trail Systems: Land and Water	31
Infrastructure: Expand and Improve	29
Economic development	28
Special Regulations / Zoning	25
Reduce Blight and Nuisances	23
Recreation: Expand Opportunities and Improve Facilities	19
Water Quality	16
Agriculture	15
M-22 Scenic Highway	9
Improve Communications	7



Collaboration

As the project's focus began to shift from planning to implementation, it became clear that the structure of the collaboration may also need to adapt.

Planning commissions are designated by Michigan law as the principal authors of a master plan, and so the candidates for members of a planning collaborative were relatively easy to identify. Implementation, on the other hand, is best practiced with all available hands. The preliminary work committees suggested at the Priority Sharing Meeting represented a possible pool of participants, but need a firmer formation and leadership.

Items that rose to the top of the collaboration's immediate needs included a new organizational structure to replace the one that had been guided by the project's initial documents, the capacity to assume responsibility for that structure without the constant oversight of consultants, and partnerships with state agencies, foundations, and other entities who could assist with the implementation. An important step toward capacity building came with the training of 23 of the planning commissioners serving

jurisdictions within the collaboration through the Michigan State University Extension Citizen Planner program. Those who took the class reported learning a great deal about planning in general and also had yet another opportunity to interact with other planning commissioners, sharing strategies and forming relationships.

Being armed with knowledge is important, but putting that knowledge to use is what L2L is all about. With the master plans written, communities are faced with the charge of implementing them. After several meetings and discussions, a core group of Lakes to Land leaders with the help of Manistee Alliance for Economic Success recommended creation of a 501(c)(3) as the appropriate structure under which to organize the collaboration's future efforts towards implementing the newly adopted master plans. Much of the work at developing this backbone entity is still being determined, but it is assured that the philosophy is based

on a community collective action model. The desire is to help communities collaborate and co-generate knowledge in order to achieve community change. This organization would be a framework for cross sector implementation and collaboration, providing a backbone of support services to L2L participants to help implement and achieve their priorities and goals. The entity would be a hub for a collective action model that would develop and “connect the dots” between public agency, private foundation, academic and other resources and master plan priorities, including those involving multiple jurisdictions. The application and supporting documentation has been prepared and the official filing with the Internal Revenue Service is anticipated in 2014.

The implementation arm of the L2L Initiative is also faced with a larger question centered on the involvement of partners. Many, such as the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, had very clearly-outlined procedures for any given community to request grant funds and other assistance, but no procedures at all to accommodate a request shared among many communities. This represented more of an opportunity than an insurmountable hurdle, especially given the gubernatorial administration’s overall emphasis on collaboration as evidenced by a complete restructuring of the state’s revenue sharing program to reward communities that could demonstrate wise use of resources through shared services. However, it is always challenging to make broad changes to business-as-usual in a large bureaucracy, and several methods of

communication were bandied about: Would it be better to have the agency present all its options and then try to fit one as closely as possible? Or should L2L representatives lay their case on the table and ask the agency to design a procedure around it? Would it be better to talk to a number of partners at once to garner a “big-picture” discussion, or would one-on-one meetings allow for more attention to detail? Meetings have been held with regional representatives from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, and the Michigan Department

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of Agriculture and Rural Development, and both the “backbone entity” and the implementation partners are learning together how to collaborate to fulfill each others’ goals. This is a process that will no doubt continue into the future.

At the time of this writing, the above mentioned questions continue to be a topic of discussion and action among the Leadership Team members, a roster that has swelled over the last two years to include the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians as well as additional planning commissioners and other officials who have taken an interest in the project as it has grown. Even as attention to the master planning

process is waning to a narrow focus on adoption procedures, the collaborative structure that produced an unprecedented nine coordinated plans, woven together with shared geography and concerns, continues to hum with anticipation. Work has begun on launching a food innovation district, designating an M-22 scenic byway, and new protections for the Arcadia Lake watershed. With the assistance of the Executive Office, a meeting has been held with State department leadership to review the process, results, and priorities of the L2L. In addition, L2L is also on the agenda for

the October Annual Meeting of the Council of Michigan Foundations. Foundations will learn about L2L and, more importantly, have an opportunity to become part of a collective action framework for implementation. Another

implementation grant opportunity is being developed that would design a water and land trail system within the region, connecting with trails outside of the region and look at ways that L2L participants can better manage and develop recreational assets.

Even as these steps toward tangible progress are underway, it is also appropriate to reflect on a passage from the April 2014 minutes of the L2L Leadership Team: “The master plan is not the most valuable thing that has come from this. Building relationships has been the biggest value. The network is being built from the citizens up.”

5.4 Lakes to Land Master Plan covers

