

CHAPTER 7 GOALS

Goals are created as the foundation of a community planning program, as outlined in the County Planning Statute. The statute requires a county to prepare the plan based on careful study of existing conditions and with analysis of probable future trends and conditions. The result of this effort is to be a guide for accomplishing the coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the county in accordance with present and future needs.

The planning commission linked the visions and goals of the enVision Manistee County project to the following goals to accomplish the development strategy as referenced in the State planning statute.

A goal, to be truly effective as a guide for the county, must contain the following characteristics: It should be measurable, it should be reasonable; it should be attainable, be easily understood, applicable county wide, and able to be broken down into logical steps.

The following guidelines are created to be used in conjunction with the goals as a way to effectively manage the implementation of the Manistee County Master Plan. The planning commission will utilize these guidelines in the ongoing administration, procedures, policies and programs of the county planning commission involving the Master Plan, and other plans and policies of Manistee County, including a Capital Improvement Plan.

- ▶ Monitoring – Review proposals as compared to the Master Plan objectives
- ▶ Linking – Connecting proposals to known helpful resources
- ▶ Coordinating – Assist with linking to assistance and follow up
- ▶ Assessing – Determine if the process is working, and are adjustments needed
- ▶ Advocate – Encourage support for the vision of the Master Plan in all reviews of projects, plans and zoning ordinances coming before the Planning Commission.

It is further the intent of this plan that universal accessibility be a key component to all goals that follow.

Goals categories:

Economy:

1. Increase opportunities for business in the county.

Objective: Manistee County will be an advocate for the promotion of collaborative planning between the county and local governmental units in economic development decisions.

2. Encourage the Alliance for Economic Success and the Greater Manistee Area Chamber of Commerce to diversify the industrial base to create more job opportunities and to create specialty groups.

Objective: Work with the community college to develop locally available hospitality courses and degree programs to educate workers to energize a local spirit of hospitality.

Objective: Advocate for diligent pursuit of gifts, grants and loans to support economic growth and for financial support for all goal categories.

Objective: Link agencies and businesses to promote the provision of child care services by businesses to enhance employment opportunities for more citizens.

Objective: Advocate for expansion of both physical and mental health care services to diversify the employment base and enhance health care in the county.

3. Increase the ability of Manistee County to attract and retain technology-based businesses.

Objective: Work with the community college, area high schools and the Intermediate School District to expand technology-based curriculums to prepare the workforce for technology-based jobs.

Objective: Advocate for expansion and relocation of smaller business and start-up companies, including home-based business.

Objective: Monitor opportunities for expansion of technology-based business in regard to broadband services.

4. Link economic development goals and objectives with those of the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians to provide broader, unified economic development programs.

5. Coordinate a collaborative planning program between the county and local units of government within the county, and adjoining counties.

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.

Objective: Advocate for a mix in housing types and increased emphasis on senior housing options.

Objective: Advocate for continuum of care facilities to be available to the full range of citizens.

2. Encourage housing options for a variety of income levels.

Objective: Assist in linking housing developers with agencies advocating for various income levels.

Objective: Link housing agencies with funding agencies to enhance a wide range of housing opportunities.

3. Discourage blight and nuisance housing areas.

Objective: Assist local government and related agencies with zoning standards and related ordinances, such as a County Housing Authority, and encourage collaboration with the Manistee City Housing Authority.

Objective: Advocate for tax incentives to improve housing conditions.

Objective: Link housing and social organizations with developers and local government to offer incentive programs and projects to improve housing conditions.

Objective: Advocate for inspection of rental housing to assure that all rental housing meets minimum safety standards.

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.

Objective: Advocate for the Manistee County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority to pursue grants for cleaning up properties.

2. Advocate for the creation and long term maintenance of a county-wide solid waste management program.

Objective: Establish milestones or intermediate objectives in aiming towards a total, ongoing and sustainable county-wide recycling program.

Objective: Monitor projects coming before the planning commission to assess application of recycling principals.

Objective: Advocate for utilization of alternate energy sources including capture and use of methane generated at the landfill.

3. Advocate for the maintenance of Manistee County's natural resources and the beauty of its landscape.

Objective: Assess how projects and programs coming before the planning commission address this goal.

Objective: Link the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians with other natural resource agencies where feasible.

Objective: Continue and increase efforts to eradicate and prevent additional growth of non-native and invasive species.

4. Encourage local governments to develop guidelines and criteria which protect natural features and sensitive areas.

Objective: Advocate for protection of all surface and ground water resources, and the establishment by the Board of Commissioners of a policy to protect the natural resources of the County from excessive use and depletion, such as:

“In order to insure that the general welfare of the residents of Manistee County now, and for future years to come, is not infringed upon by the removal of any unnecessary water use from its watershed or aquifers, any withdrawals of water from Manistee County's watershed or aquifers which have no direct benefits to the residents of the county and which do not increase public safety, health, or welfare shall be prohibited.”

Objective: Link local government with agencies and programs that will provide guides and criteria for natural resource protection useful in project review.

Objective: Support preservation of lakeshore properties for use by the public.

5. Advocate for county-wide alternative energy programs and projects.

Recreation:

1. Continue to work on the development of the Manistee County Recreation Plan, including all areas of the county.

Objective: Advocate for the identification of special and unique environments as part of the County Recreation Plan.

Objective: Work with the Manistee Community Foundation in completing the county recreation plan with the county planning commission taking the lead in the project.

Objective: Encourage universal accessibility to all recreation sites.

Objective: Increase recreational opportunities for all ages.

Objective: Advocate for a Manistee County parks program including the preservation of open spaces for recreation purposes.

2. Advocate for the promotion and enhancement of the county's many recreational amenities.

Objective: Assess projects and programs that enhance and expand upon the existing and potential recreational amenities throughout the entire county.

Objective: Advocate for expansion of fishing and marina facilities, where appropriate, to provide a base for continued growth of tourism.

Objective: Advocate for the public use of public road ends throughout the county, particularly where they provide lake access.

Objective: Link various agencies for the building of and use of a county trail system, possibly using old railroad tracks.

Objective: Advocate for a community recreation facility.

Objective: Link agencies and programs to utilize public and private schools for after hours recreation programs.

Agriculture:

1. Advocate for agriculture and forest management activities which enhance Manistee County's economic base and quality of life.

Objective: Encourage farm businesses and farmers' market enterprises within the county.

Objective: Advocate for expansion and enhancement of agri-tourism opportunities.

2. Advocate that designated agricultural areas in the county remain primarily agricultural or low density residential.

Objective: Support the importance of agriculture in the county.

Objective: Support applications of agricultural land owners to enroll in agricultural land preservation programs.

Transportation:

1. Advocate for the development of a coordinated county transportation plan.

Objective: Support Dial-A-Ride services to all areas of the county.

Objective: Support universal accessibility for all modes of public transportation.

Objective: Develop countywide scheduled bus service.

Objective: Link transportation planning goals with those of the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians.
2. Advocate for the awareness of the importance of our local airport for all travelers in the county.

Objective: Assist in linking business needs with expansion of airport.

Objective: Support additional scheduled flights.
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.

Objective: Support county improvements across jurisdictional boundaries as outlined in the Michigan Planning Enabling Act.

Objective: Advocate for the development of high speed internet throughout the county.
2. Advocate for the effective and efficient location of public facilities and delivery of public services.

Objective: Support the county 2-1-1 system.

Objective: Participate in inter-jurisdictional planning efforts.

Objective: Encourage sidewalks, bike lanes and trails in developing areas to create safe, non-motorized options for citizens.

Manistee County A Vision of the Future

The Manistee County Planning Commission has spent extensive time and energy developing goals to guide this plan. They have based the goals on the general concept that they should be positive, but realistic; that they should cause the county to reach somewhat beyond current thinking, and that they be an inspiration to current and future members of the planning commission in particular, and county government in general.

This image of Manistee County is set 25 years in the future. The Master Plan will doubtless be reviewed several times before that point, and the planning commission must be ready to reconsider and revise these goals as county needs change. This is a “best guess” at a future vision.

As we fly over the county, we see farmlands, woodlands, and the relatively uninterrupted flow of the Big and Little Manistee Rivers. We also see a few of our county-wide buses, picking up and delivering residents on their daily scheduled routes. Perhaps we rode a bus to Blacker Airport for our aerial excursion, in which case we’d have had to wait for runway clearance, in order to avoid scheduled arrivals and departures of our local airline.

Below we’ll see ships using our deepwater port to service our industries along Manistee Lake. We might be able to see how port deliveries and pick-ups work with our reconfigured rail service, warehouses, and cargo air to move products and raw materials in and out of the county.

We’ll come down to ground level to observe other changes. The county has several new assisted living facilities, each with a range of housing from independent apartments to traditional nursing home care. Throughout the county we have many more elderly or physically-limited folks still living in their family homes, assisted by the various sorts of help they might need, from light housekeeping to full time nursing or hospice care. Our area community colleges now do a great job of providing us with all the nurses and techs our hospital needs.

Now more elderly people can choose to live near family or friends, in housing that combines the best of old and new styles. These communities, now dotting our county landscape, place houses traditionally near each other, with smaller front yards, bigger front porches and sidewalks, so it’s easier for residents to get to know their neighbors. Adjoining open areas, available to all, range from parkland, wild lands or wetlands with plenty of trails. Farms of varying sizes, more now using natural or organic agricultural methods, occur throughout the county. Agri-tourism has become an integral part of the tourism industry of the county. Special agricultural crops such as high value berries, nuts and fruits, and local crafts along with on-site processing have helped agriculture to expand its economic base. Livestock farms have a ratio of animals to acreage that prevents unmanageable manure loads—such prevention is aided by humane range-plus-shelter operations.

Villages, cities and rural areas all present a landscape of home styles and prices, and home-based workers abound now that full connectivity and greater access to high-level tech training exist in the Manistee area. Several large software development firms have moved to the area, but their low-profile, home-based businesses make it hard to tell that they've got 25 or more employees. Many of these companies have located here to take advantage of the available labor and the high quality living, working and recreating environment.

All Manistee County residents can partake of the many forms of recreation we have available. The Manistee County Park System is operated in partnership with the National Forest, local recreation facilities and programs, and Little River Band recreation areas. A highlight of the system is the use of common signage and collaborative programming for recreation facilities and activities. Cleaner watersheds and growing efforts to eradicate and prevent invasive non-native species mean that our native game, fish, plants and wildlife are showing resurgence. We have an abundance of paved and unpaved, motorized and non-motorized trails throughout the county, connecting urban centers with parks, open spaces, waterfronts and historic and tourist attractions. Docks, piers, toilets, and other ancillary facilities are fully accessible.

Our waters and landscapes are cleaner now, due to limited lot sizes on lakes and streams, and the use of sewer systems wherever water bodies and population densities coincide. The threat of wholesale water withdrawals has long been resolved with strong great lakes basin water law, (the Milliken-Blanchard Act) led by the efforts of Manistee County in 2009. More and more villages or smaller populations are installing wetlands-based grey- and even black-water cleansing systems. Landfills have been reduced in size due to better recycling and reuse programs. The county's remaining landfill now allows the deposit of grass, leaves and road-mowing waste, so it generates methane for heating.

Much more local electricity is now produced by clean and sustainable means. The county contains many individual windmills and several small wind farms, and almost all new homes include passive and/or active solar-energy generating methods. Many previously-built homes have been rehabbed for solar, wind or geothermal electricity as well. About a third of the county's residents now drive electric or biodiesel vehicles; it is hoped that within another 25 years they will become affordable for all.

The county's planning process has become more streamlined and inclusive, as it has developed a well respected collaborative working relationship with local government, including the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians. The county planning commission supplies demographic data, and provides a forum to discuss and resolve issues that cross political boundaries. This has allowed the county to plan and build infrastructure in areas where growth is expected, therefore avoiding capacity overflow. Smooth planning and progress toward goals is making Manistee County an even better place to live.