

The Village of Beulah

# Master Plan

Guidelines for Future Growth  
in the Village of Beulah

2024 DRAFT

Policy Guidance/Oversight from:  
Beulah Village Council  
Village of Beulah Master Planning Group

**BEULAH VILLAGE COUNCIL**

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**MASTER PLANNING GROUP**

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**VILLAGE OFFICIALS**

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# PREFACE

## Introduction

The Village of Beulah Master Plan was developed with the support and guidance of Village citizens to offer an overview with inner consistency on the issues of future Village land use. It is founded on the principle that all land use and infrastructure decisions should be carefully coordinated with adjacent jurisdictions and appropriate county agencies. This partnership can be built on mutual respect in areas of overlapping responsibilities and mutual support in areas where responsibilities are separate but compatible in pursuit of common goals and benefits. It is envisioned that future Village planning efforts and implementation policies will be compatible with this Plan.

It is hoped the Village of Beulah Master Plan is not merely a "land use plan" even though it has a strong land use component. The ultimate success of the Plan will largely depend on the commitment that is made to implementation. Commitment will need to come from Village government, Benzonia Township, Benzie County, various state and federal authorities as well as a broad spectrum of Village citizens. It would be easy to ignore addressing the issue of implementation in the Plan, but that would only delay discussion on this most important issue until much later, and forego several opportunities for meaningful public input. As a result, Chapter 5 of this plan proposes an implementation strategy.

## Process Used to Develop the Plan

Broad citizen involvement in this planning process was encouraged from the onset of the project. As explained in the following quote, Village officials felt this single objective was among the most important to the ultimate success of this project:

*"Involving people in the planning process means acknowledging that everyone has something of value to contribute. This system seeks to avoid setting up citizens, developers, environmentalists, or local governments as "the enemy". Recognition of this fundamental can change the dynamics of growth management from "us against them" to "we 're all in this together".*

Appendix B documents some of the key input and findings on the route to preparation of this Plan. Chapters three and four are especially significant in documenting the shared common vision of the citizenry.

The authors of this plan wish to acknowledge that the structural organization of the **Village of Beulah Master Plan** owes some of its existence to the award winning 1990 **Howard County (Maryland) General Plan** (which received a prestigious American Planning Association Award in 1991) and the 1994 **Leelanau General Plan** (which received an Outstanding Planning Award from the Michigan Chapter of the American Planning Association in 1995). The simple straightforward organization of those plans, the names of some of its chapters and their contents strongly

influenced the structure of this plan.

## Relationship to Other Village Operations

This Master Plan is intended to guide the actions of the Village planners and many of the priorities of the Village Council. It will play a major role in guiding future public facility and infrastructure decisions of the Village Council and other departments and agencies (such as the Downtown Development Authority) after capital improvement programs compatible with the Plan are prepared. Chapter five discusses these issues and the institutional changes that need to occur for this goal to be accomplished.

It is believed that common pursuit of the policy guidelines in this plan will encourage support and ultimately lead to integrated and coordinated planning throughout the immediate area. It is hoped a new mutually supportive working relationship between the Village, the Village of Benzonia, Benzonia Township, Benzie County and other local units of government in the area can build from the positive experience in the development of this plan.

## Master Plan Updates

The Master Plan places much emphasis on mutually supportive relationships in pursuit of mutual goals. To ensure that these relationships and goals remain mutual, it will be important to periodically reexamine the plan and update it. Chapter five advocates the preparation of annual reports to document actions taken to implement the plan as well as the preparation of annual work programs and budgets. The **Village of Beulah Master Plan** should be thoroughly reviewed and updated at least every five years to ensure it continues to reflect a common vision for the future of the Village.

## Perspective

The Village of Beulah Master Plan assumes future growth will occur at about the same rate in the next 20 years as in the recent past. At the present time, the most significant economic development activity in the Village is in service occupations. Few new dwellings were constructed in the Village between 1980 and 1996. Almost all of new commercial development activity has been along the US-31 corridor. ***Left unchecked, it is very likely that uncoordinated development patterns will destroy the present character and traditional economic vitality of the Village.*** Citizens and local government officials have two choices: maintain the status quo and accept whatever comes along (even if this means a diminished quality of life) or promote development patterns that are consistent with the visions and desires of the community. This Master Plan advocates the latter.

## Principal Strategies

The Village of Beulah Master Plan proposes policies to encourage location of future land

development in and near the present Village. It proposes infrastructure management policies to achieve and reinforce this land use pattern. It encourages open space zoning to encourage new development to be sited so as to minimize visual impacts on the landscape and to minimize public service costs.

The plan proposes measures to protect the small-town, rural character of the village and the scenic qualities of the major road corridors. Using naturally occurring vegetation for landscaping, minimizing signs, burying utilities, placing parking at the side or behind commercial buildings are all measures proposed to retain the existing character of the Village. More specifically, the plan proposes an environmental protection strategy that also:

- Identifies and avoids development near important natural environments
- Protects water quality of surface water and ground water
- Links open spaces
- restricts keyhole development.

The plan proposes widespread acceptance by citizens of a stewardship ethic that views land not as an asset to be exploited, but rather as a resource held in trust for future generations for use by the present generation.

The Village of Beulah Master Plan is neither a slow growth nor an anti-growth plan. It calls for ***balanced growth*** that is carefully guided to protect and enhance the quality of life in the Village. It accepts the principle that environmental protection and economic development are not incompatible objectives. It recognizes that a healthy economy depends on a healthy environment. To these ends the following general strategy is proposed:

- curtail sprawl
- protect and enhance the existing economic base
- create new year-round jobs
- guide new development where public services are adequate or efficiently added
- phase future growth
- improve educational opportunities

Additional tools to be used to better manage growth include:

- concurrency requirements so new development occurs after necessary public facilities are in place (not before)
- village and rural service districts to define what services will be available where and when
- capital improvement programs to better guide development of new public facilities



- development of a map to identify the location of all new future public facilities
- development of impact assessment procedures and checklists

The plan also recognizes special needs for affordable housing and jobs among a growing segment of the year- round residents.

## Citizen Benefits of the Plan

If implemented as presented, this plan will benefit the average citizen in the following ways:

- taxes will be lower than they would be if the plan were not implemented because future infrastructure and public services supported by property taxes will be incrementally provided in areas as needed, rather than spread widely across much of the immediate area.
- children of current residents will have opportunities to continue to live and work within the Village in affordable homes and at jobs that provide an income sufficient to support a family.
- there will be many different types of housing opportunities to meet the needs of young and older families, "empty nesters," retirees, and persons with special needs.
- the unique beauty of the Village will continue to be largely maintained.
- new jobs will be encouraged in areas where public services are available and adequate to meet the needs.
- local government agencies will more closely coordinate planning and the provision of other public services to eliminate unnecessary overlap, gaps and inefficiency.
- public services will be adequate to meet the needs of a diverse population.
- development of coordinated planning objectives and ordinances between and among all the local jurisdictions in the immediate vicinity will greatly benefit all because conflicts and variations will be reduced. Such a concept would in no way affect the autonomy of local governments with respect to implementing their ordinances. Compatibility throughout the area, however, will enhance the character, future growth, development, and economic well-being of constituencies of the Village. Such consistency will add legal strength by minimizing challenges and interpretations.

For a more detailed description of life in the Village when this plan is implemented, see Chapter Three.

## Organization of the Plan

The Village of Beulah Master Plan is organized into five major parts. Chapter One reviews the history of the Village from the first stages of settlement to the present. Chapter Two looks at current conditions affecting Village life. Chapter Three discusses two alternative future development scenarios - one being the current trend future, the other being the preferred future as described by participants in this planning process. Chapter Four, called the operative plan, presents goals and objectives designed to encourage fulfillment of the preferred future. Subsequently, many topical issues are identified, followed by specific recommended policy and action statements. Chapter Five presents the structure for and major efforts to be initiated to implement the **Village of Beulah Master Plan**. It includes a proposed improved institutional structure for planning decisions and identifies the priority actions that should first be taken to implement the **Master Plan**.

## Principal Goal

The major purpose of the **Village of Beulah Master Plan** is to record a consensus-based growth strategy. It is intended for joint use by the Village and neighboring communities and governments in making coordinated and mutually supportive future land use, infrastructure and public service decisions. It includes policy guidelines and a brief description of key planning tools to achieve the following goal:

*It is the principal goal of the Village of Beulah Master Plan to establish a strategy for guiding growth that protects, and where possible, enhances the unique character of and quality of life on the Village. To that end, the **Master Plan** focuses on balancing environmental protection, resource management and economic development so as to provide a foundation for a sustainable economy that permits long term prosperity for all present and future Beulah residents. The balance so achieved should not sacrifice environmental quality when reasonable and prudent development alternatives exist. This plan recognizes that a healthy economy depends on a healthy environment. Achievement of this goal means protecting the integrity of the land base for use by present generations without unnecessarily compromising the options of future generations.*

***The major purpose of the Village of Beulah Master Plan is to record a consensus-based growth strategy.***

## Five Policies to Guide Growth

### **Policy Guideline: Intergovernmental Cooperation**

A partnership founded on mutual respect and mutual support in achievement of the common

goals of this Master Plan should guide the development and implementation of new relationships between the Village and the adjacent units of government.

**Policy Guideline: Preservation of Village Character**

The existing natural and people-made features in the Village that make up its rural character are interdependent with the activities that comprise its economic base. It is important, therefore, that future land use change in the Village enhance, not undermine the character of the area around it, and in so doing contribute to protection of the unique rural character of the entire Village.

**Policy Guideline: Working with Nature**

Extensive and diverse sensitive natural features found throughout the Village provide the foundation for the present and the future quality of life. They should be protected where pristine, restored where damaged, and have access and use managed for long term sustainability.

**Policy Guideline: Balanced Growth**

New residential, commercial, and industrial development in the Village is encouraged provided it is: 1) in locations with public services adequate to meet its needs; 2) environmentally friendly; 3) consistent with the character of development in the area; 4) consistent with local plans and regulations; and 5) compatible with the guidelines of this Master Plan. In the implementation of this policy guideline, all levels of government in the Beulah area should seek to ensure over time, that all the health, safety, and general welfare needs of the citizens that can be reasonably met are accommodated with a variety of land uses in the pattern proposed and in a manner which does not unnecessarily compromise options for future generations.

**Policy Guideline: Managed Growth**

Other plans and development regulations (including for example, zoning and subdivision regulations) should be updated and thereafter maintained, to include goals, objectives, policies and strategies for managing future growth compatible with the Village of Beulah Master Plan. Subsequent regulations should focus on design and other issues of local significance. Public facilities should all be constructed according to a capital improvements program that is coordinated at all governmental levels.

# CHAPTER ONE: VILLAGE HISTORY

## Introduction

The history of how the Village of Beulah came about is, in the words of the *Crystal City Crier*, "lengthy and labored." The narrative that follows is not intended to be a history lesson, but to provide a cursory understanding of how Beulah came to be. Much of the narrative was extracted from the special souvenir issue of the *Crystal City Crier* printed in May, 1990. Those interested in a more detailed history of the Village should consult this and the numerous other publications which discuss Beulah, Benzonia and Benzie County.

## The Birth of Beulah

The history of Beulah is closely tied to that of the Village of Benzonia to the south. The two communities were part of what was originally known as the Benzonia settlement which was established in the late 1850s. Rev. Charles E. Bailey is credited with the founding of both Benzonia and Beulah. In his book titled *Michigan Place Names*, author Walter Romig, L.H.D. reports that Beulah was founded about 1880 by Rev. Bailey and named by him for Isaiah 62:4:

"You shall no more be termed Forsaken and your land shall no more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called My Delight is in Her, and your land Beulah, that is Married."

Rev. Bailey's influence on the Village continued well into the 1900s. Bailey's brother, Charles, held the original plat to the Village in 1884. When the property now occupied by the Beulah Drug store was sold in 1910, it included the following deed restriction:

"...no tobacco shall ever be sold, and no intoxicating liquors be sold, manufactured or given except for mechanical or medicinal purposes..."

A similar restriction was included in deed throughout the plat.

Prior to 1873 the area now known as Beulah was known by another name - it was part of a water body known as Crystal Lake! Indeed, but for a rather notable engineering debacle, the Village as it is known today may never have been. In 1873, the Betsie River Improvement Company embarked on what seemed like a good idea at the time. A canal linking Crystal Lake to the Betsie River would facilitate transportation of lumber, the main economic activity of that era. Transportation of goods between Benzonia and Frankfort would also be possible. One surveyor estimated that the water level between Crystal Lake and the Betsie River would drop 4½ feet, but would level off to a point that would permit navigation. By late September, 1873 preparation were complete. The following description of what happened next is excerpted from the *Crystal City Crier*:

"An opening was made through a narrow sand bank separating Crystal Lake from a ledge below, leading directly into the canal channel.... Within three hours, the final shovelful of sand was taken out and with it the fetters that had held (back) the beautiful lake in her natural stronghold for many centuries were removed and she proceeded to make the most of her freedom. A very small stream...at first, but the gentle incoming waves added volume to its force until the little stream became a strong current and within an hour the soft sand in the...channel rapidly washed away and the water soon became an uncontrollable torrent."

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The sound of the torrent could be heard five miles away in Benzonia. The lake continued to shrink for nearly three weeks to its current level. When the water finally leveled, the surface of Crystal Lake was fifteen feet lower. Two thousand acres of surface water disappeared and 26 miles of sandy beach emerged, including the area now known as Beulah. Mr. Archibald Jones, the individual widely considered to be responsible for the act, soon retired in despair. But, in the words of W.L. Case in his publication ***The Tragedy of Crystal Lake***, "...we think now that old Archibald Jones did a pretty good turn."

Beulah, then known as "Crystal City," was officially detached from Benzonia in 1891 when the state legislature passed a resolution granting Benzonia status as an incorporated village. The area of the newly incorporated Village did not include land which now makes up Beulah, even though some commercial activity was evident. On February 8, 1892, Beulah was given a post office and Charles S. Merritt was named its first post master. At about the same time, railroads began to provide downstate tourists with easy access to northwest lower Michigan. A depot was established in Beulah, moved from "East Hill Crossing," and passenger trains began to make daily stops. For three decades the Ann Arbor Railroad provided the quickest, easiest and most reliable way to Beulah. With easy rail access, many people began to realize Crystal City as a "pleasant place" to be. Many new commercial buildings and homes were built in the decade of the 1890s, apparently to the chagrin of those living in the neighboring village.

***For three decades the Ann Arbor Railroad provided the quickest, easiest and most reliable way to Beulah.***

With all of the development activity in their town, citizens of Crystal City began searching for ways to have their community recognized as a separate and distinct village. Their efforts were dealt a setback in 1899 when Benzonia sought to re-incorporate - a move that would make this bustling town part of Benzonia. Crystal City was still unincorporated, but the thought of a simple annexation was quickly dismissed as impractical. The state legislature approved Benzonia's request and, with the stroke of a pen, Crystal City was no more.

As one might imagine, the thought of being conquered by their neighbor to the south did not settle well with the good citizens of Crystal City. Yet, the legal wrangling we have grown accustomed to 100 years later did not take place. The communities remained at political loggerheads, each selecting three representatives to the six-member Village Council. To the surprise of no one, the political separation led to impasse after impasse. Local public improvement needs went unmet as consensus on the Council was difficult, at best.

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Despite all of the political maneuvering, the "new" Benzonia was seriously considered as the new seat of Benzie County government. The County had decided to move the county seat from Honor, but a new location would have to be settled by County voters. Referendums of this type must include specific location(s) for the new county seat, a fact that did not escape the attention of the Crystal City faithful. As Judge Leonard Case described it, "the people of Beulah were very careful to have it specified on the referendum ballot that the proposed move would be to the Crystal Lake and Beulah View Resort portion of the Village and **not** to any other place within the corporate limits of the Village." The referendum was approved, and the county seat was moved to what is now Beulah.

Exactly what happened in the 1920s and 30s is not clear, but one thing is certain - the people of Benzonia wanted Crystal City to be a part of their Village about as badly as Crystal City wanted to be a part of Benzonia. A group of predominately Benzonia residents circulated a petition in 1931 calling on the County Board of Supervisors to strike the area known as Crystal City from the corporate limits of Benzonia. Independent of this, and at about the same time, Crystal City residents were being mobilized for the same purpose. In its final act of 1931, the County Board acted to do just that, releasing Crystal City from the grasp of its neighbor after nearly 33 years. In 1932, Beulah was formally incorporated as a village.

# CHAPTER TWO: CURRENT CONDITIONS

## Introduction

The landscape of Beulah has many unique visual characteristics. Visual character is the image one retains from looking at a landscape and the overall community. This image is made up of many visual parts. It is the style of the architecture of homes and businesses in an area. It is also the shape of hills, valleys and shorelines and how much the forests close in on the roads or how the fields are open. It also includes the species of trees in the forests. Roads are an important component: are they straight or curved, wide or narrow, and are there curbs on the residential streets?

The visual character of a community is important. It is more than just what buildings or landscapes look like. Visual character "sticks" in peoples' minds and becomes a part of who they are. It is a very important part of what attracts people to an area to live or vacation. The visual character of familiar landscapes are important image guideposts people use to find their way in daily activities. Change in the landscape can become a big issue because it affects a person's daily life by changing one's surroundings. Surroundings that were once familiar can suddenly become unfamiliar.

***Visual character "sticks" in peoples' minds and becomes a part of who they are.***

People create well-ordered mental images of the landscape. While each resident and visitor of Beulah will have a slightly different mental image, each person will store some pattern of the following aspects of the landscape in their mind:

- Visually similar landscapes (also called districts) are areas of the landscape where there is a uniform land use pattern over a large area. An example is a series of wooded hills on which a few small homes have been built.
- Nodes are places that stand out because there is more human activity. An example is a small commerce center at a main crossroads.
- **Paths** are routes that people commonly take in their normal activities, or that are memorable even when traveled less often. A road along a shoreline may be memorable for its water views.
- Landmarks are landscape features that are used as reference points as people travel about. A unique building or a stately old tree can be effective landmarks. Any place with flowing water will serve as a landmark.

By mapping the important visual areas, nodes, paths and landmarks one can identify what it is

about a particular landscape that is important to people. This is done by on- site landscape inventory and map analysis.

## Current Land Use Pattern

This section describes the character of Beulah. It covers the physical aspects of the landscape, including land forms and open space, scenic vistas, and entry points. The visual areas, nodes, paths and landmarks are identified. It also discusses the characteristics of buildings and infrastructure that make the community of Beulah unique.

Glacial ridges form the major land feature of Beulah. The primary ridge generally runs east to west at the south end of the Village. The bulk of the Village lies on an outwash plain surrounded by ridges. High points on the ridges are landmarks because of the striking views they provide to Crystal Lake. For example, as one enters the Village on US-31 from the north, the view is a panoramic scene of Crystal Lake which serves as both a beautiful view and as an orientation landmark. Because the ridges are highly visible, they need to be considered as important visual environments, where development can easily change them.

At first glance, most of the Village appears to consist of neatly ordered residential neighborhoods and retail commercial activity. While it is true that much of the Village land area is developed, there are few locations where forested lands are the dominant feature. In fact, of all undeveloped lands, there are more wooded landscapes than open fields.

Water is an important feature of Beulah. The location of the Village on the shores of Crystal Lake is a common visual characterization. In addition, there are places where roads are adjacent to or terminate at the water form nodes, or focus points. Crystal Lake is round and tightly enclosed. Beyond the Village it is surrounded by steep to gently sloping, wooded hills. Cold Creek empties into Crystal Lake near the central business district of the Village.

Beulah is characterized by a quiet exquisite beauty created by adjacent rolling hills of forests. Nearby views of Lake Michigan and the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore make this beauty even more spectacular. Two scenic vistas of the Village are available from high vantage points. One distant view can be seen as one enters Beulah from the north. Another view of the town can be seen from US-31 as it passes over an old railroad grade near the central business district.

***Beulah is characterized by a quiet exquisite beauty created by adjacent rolling hills of forests.***

There are two primary entry points to Beulah. These are at the northeast and southeast corners of the Village. Because nearly all traffic funnels through these points, they influence the initial impressions of the Village. From either point one may form the visual conclusion that Beulah is much different than the rest of Benzie County. People entering from the south first encounter the Village of Benzonia and its highway commercial district. The landscape image at this point is



a mixture of woods, commercial buildings, and tourist signs. This differs significantly from the northern entry which offers the spectacular panoramic view of Crystal Lake and the Village itself. At first glance, some are reminded of the small coastal villages along the Atlantic seaboard.

Villages, small cities and crossroads typically get their character from the style of architecture, the nature of businesses, and the layout of streets. The Village of Beulah has a small grid street pattern which makes the location of businesses and homes easy to find, and orderly. Buildings are generally of the small-scale variety. There are few buildings of large mass or over three stories in height. A "resort-type" architectural style dominates the residential areas of the Village. These are generally painted one or two-story clapboard Cape Cod, Victorian, salt box, vertical or horizontal log, or mixed small lakefront cottages.

There are historic structures and sites that have local and state significance. The most prominent of these is the old county courthouse at the center of the central business district.

Much of Beulah's residential core is located on Crystal Lake. The central business district has a major focus on the waterfront, where most businesses are located within sight of the waterfront parks and beaches. Adding to the inviting natural features downtown is Cold Creek. The attraction of the creek relates to park-like activities, such as picnicking and strolling. Where public facilities such as parks and road-ends are close to the water, the impact of the water is strong.

Within a community, special open spaces such as village parks, plazas and other pedestrian spaces provide recreational opportunities, places for neighborhood socializing and to attract customers for commercial establishments such as restaurants and tourist shops. These spaces may be public, such as waterfront parks and town squares. They may also be private, such as a pedestrian mall or courtyard that serves a series of shops.

The sense of history and culture is strong in Beulah. There are many historic resort homes, fishing centers and farmsteads. Artists, crafts persons and galleries to represent them are located here.

## Land Use and Cover

Land use changes over the geographic expanse of an entire village seem incrementally small until their cumulative impact is assessed. Whether formally (land use study) or informally (local perceptions) evaluated, changes made in the landscape of the Village affect citizens and visitors alike. Loss of rural character, increased congestion; degradation of the environment; and, strained public services are among the most common concerns voiced. The root of such issues is directly or indirectly linked to land use.

In the last several decades, significant shifts have occurred in the area's economy and land base which continue to influence Village character. Early in this century northwest Michigan (and Beulah) was relatively isolated, with the majority of its population engaged in agriculture. After World War II, however, the area began to "catch on" as a resort/cottage area because of its

striking natural features. Later, it was to become a retirement mecca, attracting retirees from Chicago, southern Michigan and beyond. The largest gains in population in the Village may well have occurred since 1990, where the population increase has been estimated to exceed 16%.

***In the last several decades, significant shifts have occurred in the area's economy and land base which continue to influence Village character.***

In addition to the estimated increase in the base population, seasonal populations have continued to climb in the area. The appreciation of the area's beauty has been the primary cause for population increases. Ironically, drastic changes in land use and the environment which have occurred to accommodate new demands tend to undermine the very amenities that attracted people to the area in the first place.

Due to its geographic limitations, land use/cover in the Village has gone relatively unchanged for several years. The Village consists of approximately 34% residential land, 14% commercial / institutional land, and 50% undeveloped or wooded land. It is critical to note the land use/cover data does not provide detailed information on the use of land in one important respect. For example, if a large parcel is essentially wooded, with one single- family dwelling on it, it is likely classified as wooded since much of the land cover analysis work is done via air photos. This parcel is actually a single-family use, and is not likely to be managed for its natural resource potential due to the small parcel *size*. The land is effectively urbanized, but not reflected in the land use cover data as an "urban use." Even with its limitations, however, this type of data is very useful in assessing certain Village features.

#### FIGURE 2.1 – PIE CHART OF LAND USE

Generally speaking, urbanized areas (residential, commercial and industrial development) are concentrated in the Villages of Benzie County, and Beulah is no exception. Small-scale tourist services, cottage developments and residential areas dominate the character of the "urbanized" areas. As available land in these areas becomes scarcer and more expensive, however, development is migrating away from the Village.

Beulah has developed in what has become a rather common pattern. The community began with a core central business district surrounded by residential development. The added attraction of Crystal Lake assured a linear development pattern as homes were built along the shoreline. The Village has evolved into a community with two business districts - the central business district and the US-31 highway commercial corridor. The US-31 commercial corridor tends to be the location of motorist service type businesses such as restaurants, hotels, and convenience stores. The central business district remains the preferred location for many retail businesses and professional offices.

Unfortunately, this type of development pattern is uneconomical for utility expansion and

extension of other public services. It also tends to diminish the rural character and small-town atmosphere many residents revere. The efficiency level of primary roads, like US-31, is diminished by the strip commercial development. This land-consumptive development pattern also results in a high ratio of road surface to development served. Such uncoordinated changes in the land base over time may go unnoticed immediately, but their cumulative impact can have great influence on community character, environmental quality, public health, real and perceived quality of life.

***.. uncoordinated changes in the land base over time may go unnoticed immediately, but their cumulative impact can have great influence on community character, environmental quality, public health, real and perceived quality of life.***

Land uses such as public access sites and parks have impacts beyond the immediate property boundaries. Whether they generate additional traffic or attract other types of uses (like stores or other "support" services) they need to be recognized as having regional impact. Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore is Benzie County's largest example of such a use representing thousands of acres of land and attracting well over a million visits per year. Surely many people visiting the park have visited the many small towns along the way, including Beulah.

Those areas classified as urban represent a wide spectrum of uses from single-family residential, to resort/condominium developments, to industrial processing. When considering impact of urbanized development, those with regional impacts need to be given particular consideration. Facilities like the county government center and jail are examples of such "urban" uses.

## Development and Redevelopment

When a parcel of land is developed (filled, graded, built upon and/or paved) it is irreversibly altered. An undeveloped, wooded piece of land may become a single-family subdivision. In turn, a single-family home may be replaced by apartments or a business. Development and redevelopment trends tend to move toward more intensive uses, but the reverse is not true—a subdivision will never likely become a woodlot or field again.

Urbanized lands in the Village are already developed, permanently converted from the "raw land" pool. This does not mean, however, that their character cannot change significantly in the future. Although it may seem that the obvious is being stated here, redevelopment issues are often overlooked in land use analysis. For example, currently the character of development on most of the shorelines is small, seasonal cottages. In many resort/retirement areas these homes are; 1) becoming year-round homes; or 2) being bought, torn down, and replaced with much larger homes or condominiums. Typically, lot sizes, the sewage disposal system, access roads and water sources are not designed to accommodate more intensive development. A host of public service, public health and environmental quality issues are associated with these sorts of land use transitions.

***When a parcel of land is developed (filled, graded, built upon and/or paved) it is irreversibly altered.***

## Demographic Characteristics

Decennial census information is gathered by the United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, at the start of each decade. Since 1810 this has been the most reliable source of demographic information in our nation. The census gathers information such as age characteristics, race, family and household income, occupations, travel time to work, and housing types in addition to the actual population count. Both current and past census information is critical to a planning program. Planners are able to study current population characteristics and, perhaps more importantly, analyze past trends in an attempt to understand why communities grow the way they do. Armed with this information, future projections can be developed to help citizens and officials understand what the future holds if current trends were maintained. In addition to the Decennial Census, last conducted in 2020, the U.S. Bureau of the Census also conducts annual American Community Surveys that cover a broader set of survey questions, with the most recent data coming from 2021. Unlike the Decennial Census, American Community Surveys frequently have a higher margin of error with smaller population locations such as the Village of Beulah. However, they are also frequently the only source of certain demographic information.

The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of the principal characteristics of the population of the Village of Beulah. Many of the trends affecting the Village are directly or indirectly influenced by characteristics of the population, such as land use, market demand, human service needs, and public service demand. If the linkages between population and such trends are clear in the minds of decision makers, they are better positioned to make well-informed decisions. **Appendix A includes detailed demographic data for the Village and the surrounding area.**

## Population

Beulah was incorporated as a village in 1932. For this reason, population statistics prior to the decennial census of 1940 for the area we now know as the Village do not exist. However, the information gathered since that time offers a wealth of information that is applicable to this Plan.

Year	Beulah	Benzonia Twp.	Benzie County	Michigan
1940	378	1,567	7,800	5,256,106
1950	458	1,848	8,306	6,371,766
1960	436	1,874	7,834	7,823,194
1970	461	2,071	8,593	8,875,083
1980	454	2,461	11,205	9,262,078

1990	421	2,405	12,200	9,295,287
2000	363	2,839	15,998	9,938,480
2010	342	2,727	17,525	9,883,640
2020	313	1,870	17,970	10,077,325

Table 2-1: Population Totals 1940-2020, US Census

The population of the Village saw a substantial increase in the decades between 1940 and 1970, but this trend then reversed, and the population has shown a steady decline between 1970 and 2020. The population in 2020 now stands at 313, lower than the initial Census figure of 378 in 1940 and substantially lower than the peak population of 461 in 1970. Of course, character and size of the Village has significant influence on the population’s ability to expand.

The trends in the population of Benzonia Township have roughly followed those of the Village of Beulah, with populations increasing from 1940 to 2000, and then decreasing to pre-1960 levels by 2020. This trend is not shown in the population numbers of Benzie County or the State of Michigan as a whole, both of which show steadily increasing numbers in recent decades. Table 2-1 documents the population trends of the Village and surrounding area.

The age structure of a population influences the nature of services needed in a community. Large numbers of school-aged children might suggest a special need for after school or summer programs. High percentages of low-income seniors may suggest the need for a home meals program. The median age of persons in the Village of Beulah is 59.7 years, almost a decade higher than the Benzie County median of 50.6, and almost two decades higher than the State of Michigan median of 40.1, according to the 2020 US Census.

**Table 2-2  
Age Distribution  
Village of Beulah, Benzie  
County, State of Michigan –  
2000 and 2020**

Age Group	Village of Beulah				Benzie County		State	
	2000 Census		2020 Census		2000	2020	2000	2020
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
0-4 years	13	3.6%	7	2.2%	5.8%	4.2%	6.8%	5.4%
5-19 years	47	12.9%	40	12.8%	20.9%	15.1%	26.1%	18.7%
20-24 years	16	4.4%	17	5.4%	3.2%	4.2%	2.6%	6.7%
25-44 years	87	24.0%	46	14.7%	27.0%	20.2%	29.8%	24.7%
45-64 years	102	28.1%	93	29.7%	25.7%	29.0%	22.4%	26.5%
65 + years	98	27.0%	110	35.1%	17.4%	27.2%	12.3%	18.0%
Total	<b>363</b>		<b>313</b>					

Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not add to 100 percent.  
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, 2020

*Figure 2-2: Population Age Distribution*

Population distribution by sex is relatively even for the Village, the neighboring Village of Benzonia, Benzonia Township and Benzie County. The Village of Beulah has a slightly higher percentage of males than the neighboring communities.

The Village of Beulah is relatively homogeneous in terms of race, with 92.3% of its population being white. The remainder of the residents are Black/African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, and other races. The majority of village residents are of German, Irish, English, and Polish ancestry.

## Households and Housing

In terms of public service provision, a household is analogous to a service unit. Types of households (single-person, single-parent) may indicate need for specific services. The decreasing and aging resident population of Beulah will require different services than a community with a different residential makeup.

According to the 2021 American Community Survey, the average household size in the Village of Beulah was 2.51 persons, lower than the state average of 3.05 persons. Married-couple families made up 42.2% of the households, while another 43.3% of households were made up of single heads of house with no partner present. Over half of those single heads of house

(almost 53%) were over the age of 65.

The number, type, age and value of housing units in an area are indicators of wealth, growth trends and lifestyles. According to the 2020 Census, the Village of Beulah had 378 total housing units in 2020, up from 316 total housing units in 1990. Of those 378 housing units, 166, or 44%, were considered occupied. The remainder were considered vacant, which are houses where no one is living full time and are frequently houses used for seasonal, recreational or occasional use. The use of over half of the housing stock in the Village for non-full time use is something that must be closely considered in planning and policy making.

Data from Equalization/Building Department regarding type of residential structures, age and condition.

FIGURE 2-5: AGE OF HOUSING STOCK VILLAGE PIE CHART

Data from Equalization/Building Department regarding recently issued permits – residential, commercial, accessory, etc. – and permit trends.

FIGURE 2-6: RECENTLY ISSUED PERMITS

## Education and Income

The amount of education an individual has greatly influences their job opportunities and income. According to the 2021 American Community Survey, 95.3% of Village residents 25 years or older have at least a high school degree or equivalent. Of the residents, 31.8% have attained a Bachelor's Degree or higher education, just slightly higher than the 31.7% of the population of Michigan who have attained the same. Table 2-2 provides a detailed breakdown of the population's educational attainment.

<b>Educational Attainment</b>	<b>Percentage of population 25 years and older</b>
High School or equivalent degree	30.6%
Some college, no degree	30.0%
Associate's degree	2.9%
Bachelor's degree	25.3%
Graduate or professional degree	6.5%

Table 2-2: Educational Attainment

Median household income involves all households; unrelated individuals, single-person households and family households. Median household income for the Village of Beulah is \$65,179, according to the 2021 American Community Survey. This is slightly lower than the median household income for Benzie County of \$68,875, but slightly higher than the median household income for the state as a whole of \$63,498.

According to the 2021 American Community Survey, 18.6% of people in the Village of Beulah were living under the poverty limit. This is higher than both the percentage in Benzie County of 10.0% and the percentage in the state at 13.1%. The survey also considered 27.6% of the village residents 65 years and over to be living under the poverty limit.

## Occupations and Industry

Employment data, as tallied by the Census, is based on samples. When aggregated for the County it is much more reliable overall than if taken to the local unit of government level. The discussion that follows is based on samples taken for the Village of Beulah.

As of the 2021 American Community Survey there were 58 active civilian workers age 16 and over in the Village labor force. There were another 119 village members 16 and over who were not in the labor force, likely due mainly to being retired.

Beulah's labor force is generally a commuting labor force with high numbers of workers leaving the Village for employment. Median travel time to work is just over 15 minutes. The vast majority of these workers (77%) drove alone to work, while just under 19% worked from home. The remainder car pooled or arrived at work via other means. There were no unemployed residents of the Village found by the Survey.

Occupation refers to the type of work an individual performs (e.g., professional, clerical) regardless of the type of business that employs them (e.g., manufacturing, services). According to 2021 American Community Survey data, those employed in management, business, science and arts occupations stood out over all other in Beulah with 48.3% of the entire work force. Sales and office occupations made up 22.4% of the workforce, followed by production, transportation, and material moving at 13.8%, service occupations at 10.3%, and natural resources, construction and maintenance at 5.2%.

Industry refers to the type of business that employs the workforce. The sector which provided the highest percentage of jobs to laborers was educational services, healthcare and social assistance with 22.4% of the workforce, followed by the retail trade at 15.5%. The full table of employment by industry is given in Table 2-3.

<b>Industry</b>	<b>Percentage Employed</b>
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	0.0%
Construction	13.8%
Manufacturing	8.6%
Wholesale trade	0.0%
Retail trade	15.5%



Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	5.2%
Information	0.0%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	0.0%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	13.8%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	22.4%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	13.8%
Other services, except public administration	0.0%
Public administration	6.9%

Table 2-3: Employment by Industry

## Public Facilities and Services

Within the context of this Village Master Plan, public facilities and services are generally limited to the areas of recreation, libraries, sanitary sewer, potable water, storm sewer, administrative offices, and fire and police protection. These services differ in character from the many other so called "human" services also provided by other governmental agencies. Public facilities and services are generally very tangible services based upon land resources, capital, and/or infrastructure, such as a playground, fire truck, or stormwater retention pond. Human services have a different service delivery system and generally address personal and/or family assistance, such as employment and senior citizen programs.

According to the Benzie County Joint Recreation and Culture Plan 2020-2024, the Village of Beulah operates five parks within the Village. These include the Municipal Park and Beach, covering 2.25 acres with approximately 1000 ft of Crystal Lake frontage; Trapp Park, covering 1 acre; and three other "miniature" parks covering less than one acre, including Fair Park which encompasses another 100 feet of Crystal Lake frontage. These parks are most commonly used for picnicking, playground facilities, and swimming. A portion of the Betsie Valley Trail is within the Village, and there are also seven points along the Crystal Lake shoreline where public road right-of-ways terminate at the water's edge. The public often uses these public lands as lake access points.

Notable properties within the Village include the Benzie County Government Center, the Beulah Village Hall, the Darcy Library of Beulah, the Benzie Conservation District offices, and the privately-owned Historic Benzie County Courthouse (a National Register of Historic Places property). There is also a historic marker erected in 1978 commemorating the 1915 plan for the

lowering of Crystal Lake. The Darcy Library of Beulah maintains a collection of books, audiobooks, movies, TV shows, board games, yard games, STEM kits, eBooks and eAudiobooks, as well as providing student homework help, copy/print services, computer assistance, free WiFi and laptops for public use, and a community meeting room.

A 1996 engineering study reported on the Village- operated wastewater collection and treatment system that serves the Village of Beulah and portions of the Village of Benzonia and determined that the wastewater system was operating at or near capacity, thus limiting growth in the Village. Wastewater is treated in stabilization lagoons and discharged through spray irrigation. The collection system, mostly constructed in the 1950s, consists of 8, 10, and 12-inch diameter gravity sewer main. Wastewater is collected throughout the Village and flows to a main pump station on Crystal Avenue (an intermediate pump station is located at Center and Fourth Streets). The pump station lifts wastewater uphill to North Street in a force main, and then to wastewater lagoons in a low-pressure gravity sewer. Since much of the collection system was collected at or below the water table, it is suspected that some groundwater infiltration may be occurring. Previous work on the sewer system identified some groundwater leakage resulting in repairs in 1978, 1980 and 1984.

Since at least 2005, the Village has been working with the State Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) to resolve permit and discharge issues related to the sewer system. EGLE staff observed deficiencies in the system in 2015 and 2022, as well as three sanitary sewage overflows of raw sewage in 2017, 2018 and 2020. In late 2022 and early 2023, the Village of Beulah began the process of conducting minor upgrades to the sewer system to comply with EGLE regulations and planning a larger renovation of the system. As of mid-2023, the Village of Beulah was initiating planning and fact-finding for a multi-million dollar renovation of the sewer system. The location of future public sewer lines will have much to do with the nature and type of future growth that occurs. It thus becomes vital that the planning and implementation of sewer system improvements be done in conjunction with the goals and objectives of this Master Plan (see Chapter 4).

Fire protection services are provided through the volunteer fire department located in the neighboring Village of Benzonia. As a result of the all-volunteer nature of the fire department and the distance from other fire stations in the county, the vast majority of the Village has an Insurance Service Organization rating of 9 (with 10 considered the lowest rating). All law enforcement (police) services are provided by the Benzie County Sheriff's Department. The Sheriff's Department provides a wide scope of services including jail administration, court officers, services of process for the courts, marine patrol, animal control, snowmobile patrol, and fire and rescue dispatch. Emergency medical services are also provided by the County. Ambulances stationed in Honor (5 miles) and in Frankfort (7 miles) respond to emergency calls in the Village. These units are staffed by state- licensed emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and paramedics and are available 24-hours per day.

## Transportation

We live in a society of movement. People often live in one community, work in another

community, send children to school in a third community, and do shopping in still a fourth community. The travel patterns of Village residents reflect this phenomenon as well and highlight the need for an adequate transportation network, both in regard to the efficient movement of traffic, safety, and provision of emergency services. As the intensity of land development increases, so does a community's need for a road network able to accommodate the increased traffic demand. Commercial land uses attract retail and service trade and new residential developments house more individuals and families with daily needs, all of which results in increased demand for better road services.

***As the intensity of land development increases, so does a community's need for a road network able to accommodate the increased traffic demand.***

The foundation of the Village road network is US-31 which travels along the eastern edge of the Village. M-115 skirts the southwestern corner of the Village and provides a linkage to the City of Frankfort. The road network within the Village does not totally reflect the grid-like pattern typically associated with Michigan cities and villages. This is due in part to the presence of Crystal Lake and the many steep hills in the southern part of the Village. The vast majority of road miles in the Village are paved. All weather roads in the Village are limited to sections of US-31, M-115, and Benzie Boulevard. **Figure 4-2** identifies the Village road network according to a classification system established for local planning purposes. The classification scheme documents the importance of US-31 and M-115.

The adequacy of the levels of service provided by the road network are the result of several factors including road construction characteristics and associated deterioration characteristics, design capacities, and traffic counts. Road base conditions are of paramount importance to the maintenance of roadway surface conditions. An inadequate road base can lead to regular and persistent road surface deterioration and increase both traffic hazards and maintenance costs. **Only a small portion of the roads in the Village can be characterized as having "poor" or "very poor" base conditions. The vast majority of the road network is considered to have fair or good base conditions.**

**Most road segments in the Village experience average daily traffic counts of less than 1,000.**

As might be expected those road segments experiencing higher counts are limited to the US-31, M-115, and Benzie Boulevard corridors. Traffic along US-31 in the Village was calculated as averaging 6,971 cars per day in 2016 and 7,215 vehicles per day in 2017, according to the 2018 US-31 Benzie County Corridor Transportation Management Tool prepared by the Michigan Department of Transportation – North Region (MDOT-NR). Between 2013 and 2017 there were 19 traffic crashes on the Village of Beulah segment of US-31, 9 of which were a result of failure to yield and 10 of which were rear-endings. As of 2018, MDOT-NR recommended ongoing road reconstruction and rehabilitation of US-31, but no major changes to the highway. As of 2022, the State of Michigan's traffic monitoring system calculated an increase to 8,333 vehicles per day

along the stretch of US-31 in the Village of Beulah, while 5,569 vehicles per day were averaged along the stretch of M-115 in the Village. Increasing traffic in the Village must be considered as part of the Master Planning process.

Traffic volumes remain consistent on US-31 north of Beulah to east of Honor; past that point volumes begin to rise, more than doubling once east of Interlochen and rising even more before reaching the US-31/M-37 intersection at Chums Corners. Average daily traffic volumes south of the Village of Benzonia on US-31 decrease substantially, while the traffic volumes on M-115 west of the Village of Beulah remain consistent through the intersection with M-22.

## Environment

The Village of Beulah has within its boundaries a few environmentally sensitive areas, particularly the Crystal Lake shoreline and areas of wetlands. The Crystal Lake shoreline is an attractive place for residential development. Wetland areas are generally located on the east side of the Village and extend well to the east of the Village limit. Development in these sensitive areas has the potential of causing damage to other components of the natural environment, including lakes and streams, farmlands, and forests beyond the boundaries of the Village. Proper management of environmentally sensitive areas is critical to maintaining the natural environment of the immediate area and protecting the public health, safety, and welfare.

Areas adjacent to inland lakes, creeks, streams, and rivers are susceptible to periodic flooding that can cause extensive damage to buildings and can pose a substantial threat to public health and safety. The flooding may occur frequently or only after major storms. The 100-year floodplain is the area that would be inundated, or covered with water, during an intermediate regional flood; one which occurs approximately once every 100 years. The 100 year flood zone along the shorelines of most inland lakes extends from 250 to 300 feet inland in most places. Creeks and streams typically have flood zones of approximately 250 to 300 feet on each side.

It should be noted that flood-prone areas of the Village are small because the community is not traversed by any major rivers. More important, the Village land area is situated "upstream" of areas that feature hilly terrain to the south and west which facilitates runoff drainage into Lake Michigan. Crystal Lake can hold enormous amounts of water without flooding, and the presence of a thick layer of highly permeable soils helps to keep flooding potential to a minimum. In short, topography and physical geography in and around Beulah make the potential of a major flood extremely remote.

***Crystal Lake can hold enormous amounts of water without flooding, and the presence of a thick layer of highly permeable soils helps to keep flooding potential to a minimum.***

Wetland areas include marshes, swamps, and the areas between dry land and open water. These

areas are typified by poor drainage, standing water, and distinct types of vegetation. They are important community resources for several reasons. Wetlands provide a filter to keep inorganic materials out of the water supply, filter sediments from entering lakes and streams, act as a sponge to retain water during dry periods, and hold water during floods. One acre of marsh is capable of absorbing 300,000 gallons of water. Wetlands provide this holding capacity inexpensively. If destroyed they can be replaced only with expensive structural public improvements.

Some wetlands, such as fens or meadows, do not look very wet and may not be wet a large part of the year. Most of these areas are seasonally flooded - usually in the spring and fall, and in the summer, they are often without standing water, although the organic soil usually stays near saturation. A small portion of land on the northeast side of the Village may be characterized as wetland. However, according to data provided through the Michigan Resource Information System (MIRIS), the bulk of known wetland areas lie outside the Village boundary. This wetland area is primarily associated with Cold Creek. Another small area of wetland has been identified on the southeast corner of the Village near the County Government Center.

Because wetlands are a valuable natural resource, they are protected by Act 203, P.A. 1979, the Wetland Protection Act (MCL 281.701 *et seq.*). Act 203 requires that permits be acquired from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) prior to altering or filling a regulated wetland. The Wetland Protection Act defines wetlands as:

*"land characterized by the presence of water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support and that under normal circumstances does support wetland vegetation or aquatic life and is commonly referred to as a bog, swamp, or marsh and is contiguous to the Great Lakes, an inland lake or pond, or a river or stream. "*

Regulated wetlands include all wetland areas greater than five acres or those contiguous to waterways. Wetlands which are hydrologically connected (i.e. via groundwater) to waterways are also regulated. Activities exempted from the provisions of the Act include farming, grazing of animals, farm or stock ponds, lumbering, maintenance of existing nonconforming structures, maintenance or improvement of existing roads and streets within existing rights-of-way, maintenance or operation of pipelines less than six inches in diameter, and maintenance or operation of electric transmission and distribution power lines. Permits will not be issued if a feasible or prudent alternative to developing a wetland exists.

## Air and Water Quality

According to the 2021 Air Quality Annual Report released by EGLE, monitored pollutant levels have continually decreased since state-wide monitoring began in the early 1970s. The entirety of northern Michigan is in "attainment" status for carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, sulfur dioxide and particulate matter. A handful of counties in southern Michigan remain in "nonattainment" status for ozone and sulfur dioxide, and State Implementations Plans are in place to further reduce pollutants in those areas.

Industrial and vehicular emissions are the principal local causes of air pollution. Though the future extent of industrial development in or near the County is unknown, vehicle emissions can be expected to increase with population growth, tourism, and expansion of retail and commercial services (increasing the number of vehicle trips, vehicle miles, and congestion). Reductions in the permitted level of vehicular emissions which may be brought about by new federal standards currently under development may be offset by an increasing number of vehicles in the County.

The contributing factors which could negatively affect future air quality in Benzie County thus come from three possible sources:

1. Any new large heavy industrial complex or incinerator in or near the County
2. Increasing numbers of vehicular traffic
3. Air pollution migrating from regional urban centers

Lakes are generally classified by their physical, chemical and biological characteristics into one of three trophic categories (oligotrophic, mesotrophic, eutrophic). The trophic state is a measure of a lake's biological productivity and includes such factors as nutrient levels, organic matter content, and water transparency (see Table 2-4). Although there are several methods used to classify lakes, EGLE utilizes the Trophic State Index (TSI) developed by Carlson (1977). The TSI numbers are derived from calculations based on a number of environmental factors, and can range from zero to 100. The higher the number, the higher the lake productivity. As of 2022, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) considers lakes to be oligotrophic if they have a TSI value of less than 36, oligo/meso at 36-40, mesotrophic at 41-45, meso/eutro at 46-50, eutrophic at 51-61 and hypereutrophic at greater than 61.

EGLE maintains a Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program (CLMP) in cooperation with numerous state and local organizations, which monitors inland lake quality across the state. Crystal Lake is rated as having high water quality (oligotrophic). As of the 2022 CLMP Report, Crystal Lake had a TSI of 32, well within the range of oligotrophic. Crystal Lake maintained an average TSI of 29 from 2017 to 2021, and an average of 30 from 1976 to 2016. According to the Crystal Lake & Watershed Association (CLWA), human activity is currently the largest threat to the quality of Crystal Lake. The increase of nutrients in the lake can drastically change the ecosystem, allowing the growth of algae and lowering oxygen levels. Common sources of nutrients include deficient septic systems, fertilizer and pesticide runoff, plant and animal debris. The CWLA states that “the best strategy is to vigilantly protect the lake from pollution, since it is almost impossible to restore a lake once it has been degraded.”

# CHAPTER THREE: ALTERNATIVE FUTURES

## Introduction

There are many ways in which a community can grow and change. These are often influenced by physical features such as lakes, steep slopes, and soil limitations. They are also greatly affected by existing development and public investment in existing infrastructure (streets, sanitary sewers, water, parks, etc.). The most important variable affecting land development is the choice a community makes in selecting the pattern for future development embodied in its future land use plan and implementation strategy (zoning, condominium regulations, capital improvements program, etc.). A carefully established land use pattern that is widely accepted by the citizenry can lead to successful development of that pattern over time.

***The most important variable affecting land development is the choice a community makes in selecting the pattern for future development embodied in its future land use plan and implementation strategy.***

A land use pattern is a general description of the way in which the surface of land is used. Are homes and businesses lined along major roads (a strip development pattern)? Are residences scattered over large lots (a residential sprawl pattern)? Are businesses clustered contiguous to other businesses (a town center pattern)? Each of these are different land use patterns.

Once a community has selected a desired land use pattern, it still faces the challenge of characterizing what life will be like if the chosen pattern is developed. By constructing an alternative future that is consistent with the selected land use pattern and established goals and objectives, a "common vision" of the future is created. Development of policy and action statements to implement the preferred pattern and alternative future gives concrete direction to what the master plan is trying to achieve.

The selection of a preferred land use pattern and preferred alternative future for the Village of Beulah was a straight forward, citizen-driven process. [Description of process] Several goals and objectives were prepared as a result of these events (see Chapter 4).

## Alternative Land Use Patterns

There are distinct trends shown in the population and land use data in the Village of Beulah over the last 30 years. [Summary analysis of differences between trends and community desires]

## Current Trends

The purpose of projecting population, households, and employment, with respect to land use, is to serve as the basis for estimating the amount of land necessary to accommodate new people, dwelling units and jobs. It can also serve as a basis for identifying new public service needs. They can help decision-makers evaluate alternative development scenarios by helping them "play- out" current trends. An understanding of the current situation, coupled with a glimpse of what may come, can provide a basis for action.

The Village of Beulah has shown a steady decline in full-time population since 1970, with a decrease of over 100 full-time residents between 1990 and 2020. The population also trends older than the general population of both Benzie County and the State of Michigan. This downward trend of full-time population comes despite a continuing increase in housing units – over 60 units of housing were added to the Village between 1990 and 2020. [Trends regarding non-PRE properties?] [Trends regarding residential and commercial land use?]

## Desired Future Trends

[Insert discussion of results of survey/visioning sessions/public input here]



# CHAPTER FOUR: THE FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

## Policy Guidelines

The Village Master Plan recognizes that it is the existing natural and people-made features of the Village that make up its rural character. It is important that future land use change in the Village enhance, not undermine, the character of the area around it, and in so doing contribute to protection of the unique rural character of the entire Village.

New residential and commercial development in the Village is encouraged provided it is: 1) in locations with public services adequate to meet its needs, 2) environmentally-friendly, 3) consistent with the character of development in the area, 4) consistent with local plans and regulations, and 5) compatible with the guidelines of this Plan. In the implementation of this policy guideline, the Village seeks to ensure over time that the health, safety, and general welfare needs of its citizens that can be reasonably met are accommodated with a variety of land uses in the pattern proposed and in a manner which does not unnecessarily compromise options for future generations.

Future plans and development regulations (e.g. zoning and subdivision regulations) should be updated and thereafter maintained to include goals, objectives, policies and strategies for managing growth in a manner compatible with this Plan. Regulations should focus on design and other issues of local significance. Public facilities should all be constructed according to a capital improvements program that is coordinated with all appropriate levels of government.

## Goals and Objectives

Goals and objectives are the foundation of a plan. Goals are broad-based statements of intent and establish the focus of the plan. Objectives are the stated means by which goals can be achieved. The goals and objectives presented here were prepared through an extensive process consisting of a public opinion survey, meetings with local officials and citizens, and village meetings. These goals and objectives are intended to be consistent with the policy guidelines discussed above.

The major purpose of this Plan is to record a consensus-based growth strategy for the Village of Beulah. It is intended for joint use by Village residents and officials, the neighboring communities of Benzonia and Benzonia Township, and Benzie County in making coordinated and mutually supportive land use, infrastructure and public service decisions. It is the principal goal of this Plan to establish a strategy for guiding growth that protects and, where possible, enhances the quality of life and environment in which the people of Beulah live.

The goals and objectives that follow are categorized as follows: growth management, land use planning, community character, environmental quality, transportation, commercial activities, housing, public facilities and services, non-municipal public services, and intergovernmental coordination.

## Land Use

The Village of Beulah is likely to face measurable land use changes in the future. The issue is where, when, and what type of land use change will occur. Also, certain public services will be required to meet the needs of new development. These basic growth management issues are fundamental to achieving the desired balance between economic development and environmental protection proposed by this plan.

The new businesses and other land use changes that will occur will have a dramatic impact on the character of the community for decades to come. It will be up to coordinated action by appropriate levels of government to guide this new development so as to minimize detrimental resource, safety, and visual impacts.

## Issues

Land use patterns dramatically shape the character of the Village and the quality of life it offers. Land use affects the character of the Village visually, financially, and environmentally. As land is developed, the appearance of the parcel, the surrounding vista, and the transportation corridor within which it is located, are altered. This alteration is most commonly one from a more natural state to a more urban or suburban appearance. As land is developed, natural resources associated with the development area are often lost or reduced in quality and/or quantity. As land is developed, the new use increases demands upon existing public services and infrastructure. The cumulative effect is often a rise in taxes to provide the necessary additional services and/or infrastructure. Once land is developed, it rarely reverts to a less intensive use and, where natural renewable resources are at stake, the conversion is forever.

The dramatic effects of land use on the character of the Village underscores the fundamental necessity that future land use and development patterns be purposely planned and guided rather than left to evolve by chance.

Commercial development has occurred in locations previously dominated by open spaces and a strong pastoral setting, especially along the US-31 corridor. Though the principal commercial development is located within the more traditional central business district, the US-31 commercial district has begun to encroach into the more rural settings. This disrupts the resource value of surrounding lands and serves as a magnet drawing other nonresidential uses. This encroachment has the effect of reducing the sense of rural character, increasing the fragmentation of valuable natural resources, increasing traffic demands and hazards along roadways, and generally disrupting the traditional land use pattern. This is also true of land area adjoining the corridor, but in the municipal jurisdiction of Benzonia Township.

The above conditions and trends have largely resulted from the lack of a formally adopted comprehensive or master plan for the Village. Accordingly, the present land use policy has evolved in a manner which accommodated development while doing little in the way of managing growth in the Village. While the zoning ordinance provides some direction in the type and location of future land uses, it does not address the appropriate rate and timing of new development, adequacy of public services at the time new development becomes operational, or the total amount of appropriate new development.

The current zoning scheme provides little in the way of special development techniques which are specifically provided for in the state zoning enabling acts (see Table 4-1). These techniques include: 1) approval of special land uses within a particular district provided they undergo a special review procedure and meet special and more stringent standards than otherwise applied to "uses by right"; 2) the submittal of project site plans for review and approval prior to the establishment of the development in question; and 3) "planned unit development" regulations which encourage more flexible land use and site development alternatives than are normally permitted by traditional district standards.

#### TABLE 4-1 – SCHEDULE OF ZONING REGULATIONS

The lack of a subdivision ordinance further documents limited effectiveness in managing land divisions and development. This situation provides opportunities for inappropriately shaped lots, unbuildable lots, lots with inadequate drainage and other public services, lots without adequate access, lots which unnecessarily fragment important resource areas, and other undesirable conditions. This problem is not as critical as it could be if the Village chooses to add to its current land area.

## Framework for Future Policy

The Village of Beulah Master Plan calls for a major shift in the "mode of operation" regarding planning and zoning. The plan calls for a far more aggressive initiative in providing both the capability for effectively guiding the future land use pattern and achieving the future vision desired in this plan.

This Plan includes suggested policies regarding the future land use pattern and public services delivery program. However, it is not the intent of the Plan to fundamentally diverge from what is considered most appropriate for Benzonia Township and the County as a whole. This plan also includes substantive policies addressing the issues of growth according to type, location, rate and timing, total amount, and the provision of public services to meet project needs prior to new development becoming operational.

***It is not the intent of the Plan to fundamentally diverge from what is considered most appropriate for Benzonia Township and the County as a whole.***

Subdivision and lot split regulations should be employed to discourage premature conversion and to assure that adequate access is provided. This is also suggested in recognition of the possibility of future annexations.

Residential development would be based upon efficient and economical use of land and the protection of renewable resources. Development patterns should reflect opportunities for varied housing types and lot sizes. To this end, the zoning ordinance should be updated to reflect the average development densities proposed by this plan while still recognizing and responding to particular local conditions. Local average development densities should reflect the county-wide planned future land use pattern regarding existing village areas, new settlement areas, and resource protection areas.

Future residential development would include the special housing needs of special populations, such as young families, the elderly, and those with low incomes. The extent of these and other special populations in the Village should be identified and alternative techniques established for local programs to address these needs. Special consideration would be given to providing affordable housing opportunities in close proximity and/or in association with full service commercial centers including cultural, child care, and employment opportunities.

In no case should commercial development be allowed to occur where adequate public facilities are not in place to meet the immediate needs of such development. Potentials for such developments can be identified early through project review procedures. The **Grand Traverse Bay Region Development Guidebook** is a useful guide to more appropriate site designs. The same considerations equally apply to strip commercial development.

Public service districts are proposed as a key element of the plan implementation strategy. They are intended to identify the future limits of public services, and associated urban development, within a specified time period. Thus, a "*village*" services district should identify the bounds within which the Village intends to introduce new or expanded public services. On the other extreme, the "*rural*" services district could identify the bounds within which no substantial introduction or expansion of public services would occur and within which the continuation of the existing rural character is planned. A "*partial*" or "*limited*" services district could provide for a level of public services somewhere between the village and rural services districts. The determination of the service district boundaries is critically linked to the planned future land use pattern for the Village.

The implementation of service districts better ensures that the Village will have a managed growth rate. The implementation of the service districts also enables the Village to more effectively plan and prioritize capital improvements, as well as to minimize unnecessary public service cost.

**FIGURE 4.1 – FUTURE LAND USE MAP**

## Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives that follow are intended to establish the blueprint for the Master Plan's vision for future land use in the Village.

**Goal:** *Guide future growth and development in a manner which is consistent with the natural characteristics of the land and the planned provision or expansion of necessary public facilities and services; strives to preserve scenic beauty; fosters the wise use of natural resources; protects environmentally sensitive areas; and enhances the special character of the Village.*

**Objective:** Ensure that existing and future development is sustainable in regard to the natural carrying capacity of the Village and the amount of development anticipated in the Master Plan.

**Objective:** Limit development in areas not served by public sewer and water facilities, where public roads are inadequate to handle traffic associated with growth, and where provision of public facilities is not cost-effective.

**Objective:** Review village plans which propose expansion and improvement of public services and facilities for their impacts on Village-wide growth patterns and for consistency with the policies, goals and objectives of this plan.

**Objective:** Enact a capital improvements plan which specifies the timing, cost, and means of financing the provision and/or expansion of public facilities in the Village.

**Objective:** Recognize the seasonal nature of the local tourism industry and develop growth management strategies which respond to both year-round and seasonal activity patterns.

**Goal:** *Promote the balanced, efficient, and economical use of land in a manner which minimizes land use conflicts within and across municipal borders while also preserving the unique character of the community, and the rural character of the Village as a whole.*

**Objective:** Village Planners should solicit input from adjacent municipalities on the most effective mechanisms to continuously ensure compatible land use planning and zoning across municipal borders and to minimize future land use conflicts with those communities.

**Objective:** Encourage approaches to land use and site design which take into account natural features such as soils, topography, hydrology, and natural vegetation.

**Objective:** Establish a periodic monitoring and review process for this Plan which incorporates continuous and meaningful public participation.

**Objective:** Update the village zoning ordinance to reflect the average development densities and to take advantage of other growth management techniques proposed by

this plan.

**Objective:** Develop and implement a program of information distribution on Village planning initiatives to citizens, developers, real estate agents, new home owners, and any other interested parties.

**Goal:** *Promote the use of Crystal Lake for all Village residents and for visitors while preserving its character for the use of future generations.*

**Objective:** Encourage the maintenance of public access sites for the recreational use of the public.

**Objective:** Encourage the preservation of natural shoreline by promotion of greenbelts, significant shoreline setback requirements for new buildings, and regulation of shoreline occupant density.

**Objective:** Encourage adequate Village-wide planning for sewage disposal which will protect all public waters from damage, with care that added sanitary sewer capacity does not lead to development considered to be too intense.

**Goal:** *Retain and enhance the scenic and rural character of the Village.*

**Objective:** Identify and preserve significant historic and scenic features of the Village.

**Objective:** Preserve scenic vistas as viewed from both the shoreline (views to ridges, etc.) and inland (views from the ridges, etc.).

**Objective:** Preserve the natural character of shoreline areas.

**Objective:** Encourage land uses and densities/intensities of development which are consistent with and complement the character and image of the Village.

**Objective:** Establish and encourage enactment of uniform sign control standards to protect the scenic and rural character of the Village.

**Goal:** *Allow for a broad range of housing opportunities which respond to the varying economic, family, and lifestyle needs of Village residents in a manner which reflects the current residential development densities.*

**Objective:** Develop measures to assure affordable housing throughout the Village through special local zoning or incentive programs.

**Objective:** Develop and implement measures to meet the unique housing needs of senior-citizens as alternatives to institutional care.

**Objective:** Ensure future residential development is located where adequate public services (including sewage disposal, potable water and adequate public access) are available.

**Objective:** Support programs to protect existing homes from premature structural and environmental decay, eliminate unsound housing, and rehabilitate older homes as necessary.

## Environmental Quality

Few locations within the State of Michigan, nor the United States as a whole, are so rich in the quality and variety of their natural environment as the area in and around the Village of Beulah. These resources range from the most common, including summer air breezes and abundant high quality water resources, to more unique and sensitive resources, such as wetlands, rolling hillsides, woodlands, special flora and fauna, and more. These natural resources are vitally important in providing a strong and healthy environment. The quality of the natural environment is critically important to the economy as the tourist industry thrives upon the natural landscape.

Future growth and development will place increasing pressures upon the integrity of the natural environment. If the natural environment is to be protected for future generations, and yet still be "utilized" for economic benefit, purposeful actions must be taken to assure a healthy balance between growth, development, and the area's natural environment. The Village of Beulah Master Plan recognizes that a healthy sustainable economy depends upon a healthy environment. The plan further recognizes that maintaining environmental quality and improving the local economy need not be conflicting objectives, and are in fact, mutually reinforcing.

### Issues

The principal issues related to natural resources and the environment include:

- Air quality
- Water quality
- Groundwater quality
- Woodland and hillside development
- Protection of sensitive natural features

### Air Quality

Overall air quality is quite high, but it is lower than it used to be. This is largely due to ozone pollution. Ozone is a gas formed when certain vehicular and industrial pollutants react in the presence of heat and sunlight. The ozone gas is an irritant and causes respiratory problems in humans. Evidence suggests that it is industrial activities from outside of Michigan which pose the greatest ozone threats. Major concentrations of smog (which heighten ozone levels) cross Lake Michigan from the Greater Chicago Area (see Figure 2-8). The regional impact of air pollutants is further accentuated by the fact that data gathered on Beaver Island shows a nine-

year average rain pH of 4.2; anything less than 5.6 is considered "acid rain." Long term exposure to acid rain has the potential to damage trees and aquatic life.

Trends and conditions suggest the need for an expanded monitoring system and a regional approach to air quality management. If this is started while air quality is still good, greater options will be available to prevent future degradation. The new federal Clean Air Act already requires metropolitan areas to base future land use decisions, in part, upon the regional implications of such decisions and upon an appreciation of the sensitive dynamics between land use, air quality, and impacts felt both locally and many miles away.

### Water Quality

Though the water quality of Crystal Lake is generally high, current conditions pose serious challenges to the maintenance of this quality level. Development along the shoreline largely relies on private septic systems for sewage disposal, although the Village does provide a sanitary sewer system for development within the Village boundaries. Dysfunctional private septic systems, as a result of improper location, construction, operation, or maintenance, increases septic effluent leeching directly into the water body and decreases water quality. The use of fertilizers and pesticides further challenges the long-term quality of the lake. Improperly managed construction activities and inappropriate land development locations encourage erosion and sedimentation of the lakes.

Cold Creek and other drains assist in collecting stormwater runoff and carry it to Crystal Lake and, ultimately, to Lake Michigan. These watercourses reflect a far wider water quality range than does Crystal Lakes, though it can be said that the water quality is still relatively high. Sedimentation and agricultural chemicals are principal threats facing streams today. Best management practices to minimize the negative impacts of stormwater runoff are needed.

### Groundwater Quality

Groundwater is the unseen water resource and one which the entire Village is dependent upon for potable water. This reliance for basic human health rests on a fragile resource at best. The underground water resources are overlain by highly permeable soils and thus easily susceptible to contaminants leeching down from the land surface (septic system leachate, petroleum spills, other hazardous spills, etc.). Even those aquifers which are somewhat better protected by being situated below clay soils or rock with lower permeability are vulnerable to contamination if adjacent aquifers become contaminated as underground water often flows freely between aquifers. While attention is usually focused on uncovering and cleaning up contaminated sites, it is at least equally important that steps be taken to prevent the creation of new contamination sites.

Under current trends, future growth and development in the Village could further jeopardize groundwater and surface water resources. The lack of uniform stormwater management techniques to control erosion and sedimentation leads to further degradation of lakes and streams as does the practice of inappropriate application of fertilizers and pesticides. The lack of a well-established monitoring program to provide baseline data and benchmarks of current water quality conditions makes future water quality data more difficult to decipher. The collection and compilation of well records and other water quality data by the County Health Department will be a major step forward.



***Under current trends, future growth and development in the Village could further jeopardize groundwater and surface water resources.***

#### Woodlands and Hillsides

Shaping and framing the rural character of the Village, woodland stands are found covering the rolling terrain in and around Beulah. The hillsides, at times in combination with the woodlands, are the focus of many dramatic vistas and define many of the visual corridors throughout the area. The woodlands provide habitats for animal and plant life. These resources will also become increasingly threatened as growth and development continue. Market conditions and consumer preferences often make woodlands and hillsides attractive home sites. As increased residential development occurs, incremental encroachment upon the hillsides and woodlands can be anticipated. At present only a very limited zoning program effectively preserves the functional and aesthetic value of this important natural feature.

#### Other Sensitive Natural Features

The abundance of more common resources, including clean air, water, woodlands, and hillsides, is nearly matched by abundant sensitive environmental resources. Floodplain areas in the Village are few due to the limited number of major waterways and the sandy soils. However, wetlands areas (which include marshes, swamps, and other usually low areas between dry land and open water) are more abundant just east of the Village corporation limit. Wetlands provide a multitude of vital benefits. They serve as filters which minimize the amount of organic materials and sediments discharged into streams and lakes while at the same time they retain stormwater runoff and limit flood impacts. Wetlands also provide ideal habitat for wildlife and are vital links in the overall ecosystem. The sensitivity of this resource is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that even minor changes in the water levels of marshes, swamps, and other wetland environments can dramatically impact the quality of the wetland resources and their long-term viability.

The shoreline of Crystal Lake is also an important natural resource. The calm waters and areas of interface between the land and water are particularly important habitats for wildlife and plant life. Understandably, these areas are also actively sought out for development and recreational use. The resulting threat to these environments through soil erosion and sedimentation, disturbance of the natural shoreline and vegetation, and leachate from faulty septic systems is a concern today and will become more significant as the area's population grows.

Reliance upon state and federal regulatory programs may not be adequate to assure the integrity of sensitive natural environments. The lack of resource base-line data, monitoring, and evaluation of the effectiveness of protection programs prevents wise future decisions regarding natural resource management initiatives and policies.

### Framework for Future Policy

Trends and current conditions which negatively affect the area's natural resources have resulted from the lack of a focused uniform resource protection program among all units of government.

The Village of Beulah Master Plan recognizes the critical link between economic, social, and healthful well-being and protection of its natural resources. The plan recognizes that long term protection must originate from a purposeful, strategic, and comprehensive conservation program.

At the heart of this program is the adoption of a land and water stewardship ethic by all populations including local government officials, residents, real estate brokers, farmers, students, and land developers. The future is dependent upon how we manage the abundant natural resources. The widespread adoption of a land and water stewardship ethic requires broad public understanding of the dynamics of ecosystems, the relationship and impacts between natural resources and land use, and the economy as it relates to the natural environment. This understanding must be strengthened by continued research and evaluation of the dynamic relationships between environmental costs and economic gains.

This Master Plan recognizes and respects the practical opportunities and constraints associated with resources of varying values. To meet this challenge, the plan calls for the identification of those resource areas which are characterized by particularly high productivity and provide the basis for long term economic viability and protection. The stewardship ethic should be implemented through a number of strategic initiatives which include, at a minimum: 1) flexible site design standards within the zoning ordinance to permit increased preservation of natural features while still meeting the intent of the ordinance; 2) development of incentive programs for landowners to protect sensitive and important natural features. The development guidelines in the **Grand Traverse Bay Region Development Guidebook** should be widely followed.

The stewardship ethic should extend to the protection of air and water resources. The Village should participate in continuous air, groundwater and surface water quality monitoring, and establishment of base line data and benchmarks. This would be done in conjunction with existing county, state and federal programs.

The Master Plan recognizes that these and other related natural resource protection initiatives would necessarily occur within a framework of interjurisdictional coordination and cooperation. This is imperative in order to assure that the initiatives are area-wide, that they achieve a heightened level of consistency across the entire county, and that permitting processes are streamlined among the various levels of government.

## Goals and Objectives

The following goals and objectives are intended to establish the blueprint of the Master Plan's vision for sustaining the natural resources of the area. It should be noted here, as throughout, that the positions taken in the following statements were supplied directly by the citizens of the Village and not drawn up by a single board, agency or individual.

***Issue: Protection of air and water quality.***

**Goal:** *Ensure that land use activities in the Village promote and preserve clean air and water.*

**Objective:** Protect groundwater and surface water from the harmful effects of intensive and incompatible development.

**Objective:** Identify vulnerable aquifers and other sensitive areas in the Village.

**Objective:** Establish and encourage the enactment of review processes for all development in locations identified as sensitive aquifer and/or watershed areas. Limit development densities and land uses in and around them.

**Objective:** Require as a condition of development approval that all state and federal air pollution regulations be met.

**Issue:** *Balancing of long-term economic gain and environmental protection concern in Village government policies and programs.*

**Goal:** *Draft Village policies in a manner that ensures environmental protection while encouraging appropriate local economic development.*

**Objective:** Educate municipal policy-makers on the economics of public policies that promote environmental protection.

**Objective:** Support efforts of federal, state, county, and private agencies to monitor current air and water quality.

**Objective:** Assist and participate in the development of watershed management plans as a first step to prioritizing efforts to protect water quality of inland lakes and streams.

**Objective:** Educate the public and local officials on ground and surface water sensitivity and ways to prevent contamination.

**Issue:** *Protection of important environmental areas, including wetlands, steep slopes, and shore lands.*

**Goal:** *Initiate proactive measures to protect and enhance important environmental areas.*

**Objective:** Work together with the County, Benzonia Township, and the Village of Benzonia to establish overlay zoning districts for environmentally sensitive areas.

**Objective:** Develop incentive programs to protect environmentally sensitive areas, as well as areas with significant open space and/or scenic vistas, including acquisition of fee simple or conservation easements by non-profit organizations.

**Objective:** Support efforts to establish common protective measures for environmentally sensitive areas that fall within multiple jurisdictions.

**Objective:** Enact flexible site development standards to minimize topographic changes, reduce the extent of paved areas, and avoid environmentally sensitive areas wherever possible.

## Transportation

Personal mobility has become a necessity. The daily pattern of nearly everyone's life demands the ability to get from one location to another, preferably in the shortest time possible. Whether it be for employment, recreation, schooling, or shopping, a comprehensive transportation network for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists has become a fundamental necessity. The need for personal mobility is made especially notable by the fact that many employed residents commute outside of the Village to their place of employment. Of equal significance is the role of the tourism industry and the additional demands for efficiency and safety it places upon the transportation network.

This network has, and at least for the next few decades will likely continue to have, a direct impact upon the quality of life experienced by those who use it. The network directly impacts the efficiency of emergency services, available personal leisure time, the appropriateness of proposed future land use patterns, and the safety of motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists. It also affects the rate of Village growth and development, and much more. The Village of Beulah Master Plan recognizes the critical role transportation plays, and recognizes that improvements to the network must be strategically planned in coordination with the achievement of other key components of Village life and its future.

## Issues

### Road Network

The Village of Beulah faces a number of crucial challenges in the provision of an efficient and safe transportation network. As population increases, the result is typically an increase in travel times, automobile emissions, automobile and truck operation costs, and congestion in some places. The most fundamental challenge is maintaining the road network that is already in place and where necessary, expand the network to improve traffic flow, safety and efficiency.

The existing road network is further challenged by the fact that it operates within a relatively limited hierarchy of road types. Fortunately, selected route locations allow traffic to move safely and efficiently at normal highway speeds.

### Level of Service

Adding to the complexity of the transportation challenge is the fact that Village transportation is staggeringly automobile dominant. Only limited opportunities currently exist for alternative

modes of transportation which might otherwise reduce the demand upon the roadway network. The ability of the Village to maintain or improve the level of service along the network, either through general maintenance, incremental improvements, or major construction projects, is becoming increasingly difficult as available revenues continue to shrink. It is apparent that without a significant infusion of new revenue, such as increased local property taxes, new gasoline taxes, new federal infrastructure monies, or cost sharing with local governments, some necessary improvement needs will remain unmet.

Increasing demands on the road network associated with growth and development (both inside and outside of the Village) will further challenge the network's level of service. Significant decreases in service may be unavoidable in some places. Safety hazards along the roadways will not be a result of increased traffic levels alone, but could also be a result of the rise in the number of new access points along major corridors (like US-31) resulting in hazardous turning patterns, stop and go traffic, and congestion.

Despite these problems, the Village road network serves to get people from one place to another without the frequent delays common in other more urban areas. However, without improvement, some problems may indeed worsen in the next decade.

## Framework for Future Policy

The transportation issues facing the Village today and projected for the future if current trends continue, dictate a far more proactive stance to assure transportation needs are met. It is the intent of the Village of Beulah Master Plan to provide the guidance for a proactive approach to comprehensive transportation planning. This proactive approach is founded upon a number of key initiatives.

At the heart of the Village transportation planning and improvement effort should be creation of a long-term road development transportation plan. It should address the review, evaluation, and development of alternative funding mechanisms upon which capital and service improvements can be implemented. Without a long-term plan with clear improvement priorities, existing financial resources cannot be wisely utilized. Likewise, the identification of transportation needs and necessary capital improvements is of little value if feasible and practical funding mechanisms are not in place, or able to be implemented.

Implementation of a hierarchically based roadway network is critical to success. Each road segment must have a specific function within the entire network, whether it be to provide higher speed access to other communities and long-distance destinations, access to neighborhood and shopping areas, or access to individual residences and lots (see Figure 4-2). These roads must be coordinated according to their function and tie-in to one another to provide safe and efficient movement of traffic. It is very desirable that all road improvement projects recognize the scenic character of Village roadway corridors and attempt to preserve the natural character elements.

This Master Plan proposes far more substantive efforts directed at establishing a stronger multi-modal transportation network in the Village than has previously been invested. This effort will minimize demands upon the roadway network and improve safety. Programs to be established could include comprehensive bicycle systems and improved pedestrian systems in the Village. These systems should be planned and designed to provide safe and functional linkages between shopping areas, recreational facilities and employment centers. New residential and commercial land uses should be designed to provide continuity to existing and future pedestrian/bicycle systems.

#### FIGURE 4.2 – ROADS MAP

The Village of Beulah Master Plan recognizes that all of the transportation planning efforts must occur under an umbrella of strong interjurisdictional coordination. The effort must include regular communication and joint planning with MDOT to assure adequate transportation and safety in association with activities along US-31.

## Goals and Objectives

The following policies and action statements are intended to establish a blueprint for the Master Plan's recommendations for the Village transportation system. All statements are intended as proposals. However strongly desired, they are not meant as directives.

***Issue: Long term road development and multi modal transportation plan.***

***Goal: Develop a long-term road development and multi-modal transportation plan compatible with the Village of Beulah Master Plan.***

**Objective:** The Village should prepare a long-term road development and multi-modal transportation plan and financing method that is annually updated and integrated with the capital improvement program.

**Objective:** MDOT and the Village should commit to construction specifications including road shoulders of adequate width along US-31 to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian traffic.

**Objective:** Whenever possible, the Village should coordinate road improvement projects with neighboring communities.

**Issue: Protect the scenic quality of key roads.**

**Goal: A special effort should be made to protect the scenic character of key roads when necessary road improvements are made.**

**Objective:** An inventory of the scenic character of Village streets should be performed and segments with special scenic qualities identified.

**Objective:** Once designated as a scenic road, future road improvements should respect and/or enhance the scenic character of the road and immediate environs.

## Jobs & Economic Development

The economy of a village is the driving force behind its evolution. However, while a strong economy does not necessarily relate to a heightened quality of life, a struggling economy almost always assures a decline in the quality of life. A fundamental element of the Village of Beulah Master Plan is the establishment of policies to provide for a strong economy within the context of sustainable growth and development. Economic development does not have to occur at the expense of the natural or visual environment. Conversely, Village residents do not have to settle for a lower standard of living in the name of environmental protection. A basic premise of the Master Plan is that a sustainable, healthy economy is dependent upon a healthy environment.

### Issues

#### Economic Trends

The population of the Village is increasing at a rate of about 1 % per year and is expected to gain 85 additional persons by the year 2010 (see Table 3-1). This growth is expected to result in nearly 39 additional and seasonal dwelling units by the year 2010 (see Table 3-2). If past trends are an indication of what the future will bring, seasonal homes will continue to increase at a faster rate than year-round residences.

#### Tourism Importance

While the tourism industry is most active in the warmer months, it impacts the economics of the Village all year. Many of the area jobs are seasonal and do not provide year-round income for workers. Still, there is no clear understanding of the impact of the tourism industry upon the overall Village economy nor of how it influences other employment sectors.

Though the construction and service sectors are the primary export activities of the Village, it is clear that the tourism industry plays a dominant economic role. To provide for a more balanced economy is particularly difficult in the Village as there are limited places where a higher level of public services is available.

#### Geographic Location

The Village, although a destination location for many, is witness to much "*pass through*" traffic due to the routing of US-31. As a result, a potential pool of consumer dollars is available by way of those persons who are traveling through the Village. The comparatively limited (or non-existent) air, water, and rail service present a major challenge for economic development.

#### Fiscal Implications

National studies are beginning to suggest that new development, contrary to traditional thinking, does not "pay for itself" across the board, and that, in fact, the additional public services to meet the demands of new development often cost more than the additional taxes collected. If true in Beulah, the current trend in land use could seriously undermine balanced economic development efforts by presenting public service financial challenges that cannot be met by new development. This would mean higher taxes by all residents to meet new public service needs created by new residents.

## Framework for Future Policy

It is a goal of the Village of Beulah Master Plan to encourage a balanced Village economy. This balance hinges upon the ability to realize the large economic potential of Village resources while, at the same time, recognizing the fragile nature of these resources and taking strong protective actions to ensure their perpetuity. Sustainable growth and development, with environmental protection, and a more diversified economic base are the linchpins for a balanced Village economy. The absence or failure of any one of these three elements makes the others of little value or, in the worst case, a destructive force.

To achieve a balanced economy, it is critical that a clear understanding of the impacts of the tourism industry on the Village be documented. This research and data collection should include the establishment of a monitoring system to identify tourism trends and conditions on the Village and its local and regional impacts. To the extent that tourism continues principally as a summer activity, efforts should be directed at attracting new opportunities which are generally of low intensity and require limited landscape alterations. Opportunities to be pursued in this regard could include marina development, historical tours, continued support and protection of special natural tourist attractions, bike tours, and snowmobile tours.

The economic base should be diversified. The economics of tourism do not support much of the year-round population. Opportunities for additional economic development must be provided which can operate within, and be compatible with, the sensitive resource base which characterizes the Village. At the same time, these resources must be recognized for their long term non-economic benefits and should be approached with a responsible manner with a strong sense of stewardship.

In striving for this economic future, a major effort should be made to create more year-round jobs in businesses which have demonstrated a commitment to environmental protection or which by their nature do not pose threats to environmental integrity. Location criteria should include proximity to public services, utilities, transportation, work force, and associated logistical elements. Due to the limits of geography, no area of the Village is designated for industrial development. The Village will direct such development to designated areas in neighboring communities to satisfy any demand for industrial land uses.

It is of particular importance that economic development in the Village is not encumbered by the duplication of services among the many agencies involved. A data base should be developed which identifies the agencies and offices offering economic development



assistance in the Village and these agencies should be regularly contacted to uncover new programs and other support information. A linkage with the Traverse Bay Economic Development Corporation should be established with the purpose of coordinating economic development activities from within and out of the Village, distributing marketing materials, and providing specialized training programs.

The increased economic development activity anticipated from these initiatives should be guided to those areas of the Village planned for such development and supported by the necessary public facilities. All capital improvements should be well planned, phased, and coordinated with adjoining municipalities and county projects. Zoning language should be prepared which provides for planned and compatible mixed uses, small scale developments, and signage, which is sensitive to the surrounding rural environment. All businesses operating with heightened risks of environmental contamination should be monitored through the development of a regular and ongoing monitoring system. Commercial areas should be pedestrian friendly and landscape amenities should enhance the village setting. Site development associated with new economic development projects should be guided by the recommendations of the *Grand Traverse Bay Region Development Guidebook*.

## Goals and Objectives

The following policies and action statements are intended to establish the blueprint for the Master Plan's vision for future economic development:

**Goal:** *Provide an environment that encourages the creation of new job and economic development opportunities that fulfill local needs while maintaining the rural and "small town" character of the Village.*

**Objective:** Encourage job opportunities offering year-round employment.

**Objective:** Focus economic initiatives in a manner to preserve and enhance existing activity centers.

**Objective:** Retain and enhance the local tourism industry to the extent that it does not conflict with overall Village-wide goals and objectives.

**Objective:** Explore alternative economic development programs which provide non-tourism based economic development strategies.

**Objective:** Protect the rural character of the Village in new commercial developments through uniform site design and zoning standards.

**Goal:** *Provide practical and functional locations, patterns, and regulations for the expansion of commercial activities which serve the current and future needs of residents and tourists. are consistent with the unique character of the Village, and are adequately served by public services.*

**Objective:** Encourage new commercial development to locate adjacent to existing commercial land uses.

**Objective:** Ensure that elements of preservation of the Village's rural character are incorporated into new commercial developments through requirements established in uniform site design and zoning standards.

**Objective:** Emphasize the improvement and redevelopment of deteriorating commercial facilities.

**Objective:** Encourage more diversified and locally generated commercial development which will increase the range of employment opportunities.

## Public Facilities and Services

Within the context of the Village of Beulah Master Plan, public facilities and services are generally limited to the areas of recreation, libraries, sanitary sewer, potable water, storm sewer, administrative offices, and fire and police protection. These services differ in character from the many other so called "*human*" services also provided by other governmental agencies. Public facilities and services are generally very tangible services based upon land resources, capital, and/or infrastructure, such as a playground, fire truck, or stormwater retention pond. Human services have a different service delivery system and generally address personal and/or family assistance, such as employment and senior citizen programs.

The provision of public facilities and services to people and property directly impacts public health, safety, and welfare and, as a result, the quality of life within the Village. Provision of public facilities and services by the Village is not extensive. Yet, the desire to possibly expand such services must be given careful consideration. Improperly planned, the expansion of public facilities and services can contribute to sprawl and uncontrolled growth - conditions which are already present in neighboring communities and which have been identified as destructive to the future of the Village. The Village of Beulah Master Plan addresses the future scope of Village facilities and services within this context.

## Issues

### Sewage Disposal

Nearly the entire Village relies on the public sanitary sewer system for sewage disposal. The system was installed to provide a safe level of sewage disposal that was not otherwise available through on-site septic systems. The system permits higher development densities than a network of on-site septic systems could provide. To the extent additional capacity exists these systems today, there is potential to permit the expansion of the service area. Public sewers can contribute to a more compact development pattern or, if poorly planned, to greater sprawl. Thus, how future growth is managed where public sewer service is present is a critical quality of life consideration. The resolution of these issues may have Village-wide implications due to impacts on traffic levels, tourism, and other growth-stimulating activities.

### Water Supply

As with the on-site sewage disposal system, nearly the entire Village relies on the public water system potable water. Like the public sewer system, the public water system has permitted higher development densities and a more compact development form. Also, the same growth management issues apply. The available excess capacity of the water system should be managed in view of the resulting implications upon the local growth rates and development patterns. The master plan can provide guidance in the way of how, under what conditions, and at what rate water system expansions should take place.

### Stormwater Management

Stormwater management was traditionally geared toward minimizing flood conditions and the resultant damage to and/or loss of life and property. It has, in more recent years, been expanded to place equal emphasis on control of the quality of stormwater runoff before it is discharged into watercourses in order to protect them from sedimentation and water-borne pollutants. As important as stormwater management is, the Village does not provide for stormwater management beyond storm pipes and drains along sections of main roads.

Stormwater runoff quantities increase as vegetative cover is removed and buildings, roads and parking lots are created. Sedimentation and water pollutants also increase with stormwater, further highlighting the need for adequate runoff quality control. The impervious surfaces associated with future development will place increased demands upon existing stormwater infrastructure and may create flood conditions in those areas where such infrastructure does not exist. Despite the porous (well drained) soils that cover much of the Village, stormwater management will become an issue of greater importance as growth continues.

### Emergency Services

While emergency services are taken for granted in more urbanized areas, there is often increased awareness of the presence or absence of emergency services in rural areas such as Beulah. Emergency services take on a special importance in the Village where there are few emergency medical facilities and considerable distances to travel. Fire protection services are comprised of a volunteer fire department located in the neighboring Village of Benzonia. New development will likely increase the demand for improved emergency services.

All law enforcement (police) services are provided by the Benzie County Sheriff's Department. The Sheriff's Department provides a wide scope of services including jail administration, court officers, services of process for the courts, marine patrol, animal control, snowmobile patrol, and fire and rescue dispatch. Increases in population, tourism and rising crime rates in northwest Michigan will result in increased pressure for additional police services and improved police techniques and methods.

Emergency medical services are also provided by the County. Ambulances stationed in Honor (5 miles) and in Frankfort (7 miles) respond to emergency calls in the Village. These units are

staffed by state- licensed emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and paramedics and are available 24-hours per day.

### Administrative Facilities

Administrative facilities in the Village are comparatively limited. Formal administrative offices for the Village are located in the Village Hall where limited business hours are offered. The only other administrative facility is the maintenance garage adjacent to the Village Hall. The county operates one principal administrative facility in Beulah, that being the government center. As the county seat for Benzie County, this facility is required to house the offices of the prosecuting attorney, treasurer, clerk, register of deeds, and the sheriff. The probate court, district court and County Board of Commissioners, and several other offices are also located at the government center. The county jail is also present at this location.

### Recreation Facilities

The present total recreational acreage, not including state and federal facilities, exceeds the normally accepted standard of 10 acres per 1,000 persons. Available recreational activities include biking, boating, picnicking, cross-country skiing, swimming, and many others. Discussion is under way about the possibility of a trail system (along the abandoned railroad property) that will facilitate park access.

### Library Facilities

The Village of Beulah operates a library adjacent to the Village Hall. Generally accepted "*volumes of books per capita*" standards are met, and access to the facility is convenient for those living within the village area.

### Solid Waste

Since 1983, all of the solid waste collected in Benzie County has been disposed of at Glen's Sanitary Landfill in southern Leelanau County or at Harland's Landfill in southern Manistee County. Glen's Sanitary Landfill, the primary disposal facility for Village waste, has an approximate life expectancy of at least 45 years. Waste collection in the Village is presently addressed through a contractual arrangement with United Waste of Traverse City. The county will need to continue a strong solid waste management program to ensure licensed facilities are available to meet its needs. Also at issue in the Village will be the growing need to expand recycling, composting, and household waste collection programs as community support grows. The Village should continue to support these successful county efforts.

## Framework for Future Policy

Public facilities and services will play a major role in shaping the future character of the Village and its overall quality of life. The Village of Beulah Master Plan recognizes the intrinsic relationship between the Village's future and the programs within which public facilities and services are to be provided and/or delivered. To this end, the plan proposes a public facilities and services program to squarely address these issues. This may be accomplished in part

through specific public services districts.

Use of service districts underscores the necessity for interjurisdictional coordination and the plan calls for such cooperation as part of this public facilities and services program. Critical considerations in this regard include the identification of service district boundaries, the coordination of capital improvements among municipalities, and the phasing of capital improvements to the benefit of all municipalities.

Closely linked to the interjurisdictional treatment of future Village public facilities and services is the establishment of uniform minimum service level standards for all future new developments. "*Level of service*" refers to the level at which a public service is operating, or the "adequacy" of the service. By incorporating minimum level of service standards into local regulations and plans, the Village will be able to both monitor the quality of services delivered as well as assure new development does not occur unless the necessary public services to support the proposed development are in place (or in place by the time the development becomes operational). Minimum service level standards in a village should address, at a minimum: 1) adequate sewer and water service, including pipe widths, flow rates and capacities, construction, and related considerations; 2) adequate stormwater management controls including retention ponds, sedimentation ponds, erosion control, and related considerations; and 3) availability of emergency services.

The future provision of public facilities and services should also include a comprehensive investigation of current and future anticipated recreation needs in the Village according to local perceptions and attitudes, standards, and service areas. To the extent that needs are identified, a comprehensive recreation plan should be prepared according to DNR/DEQ standards to identify effective Village-wide strategies for addressing these needs. Similar activities should be pursued for the library system as well.

Future public facilities and services must address the solid waste management situation and should be founded upon the County's periodically updated solid waste management program. Strategies should be developed to effectively examine alternatives to reduce the waste stream and ensure backup space in other landfill facilities. In particular, the feasibility of curbside recycling and ongoing recycling drop-off capabilities should be reviewed.

Funding alternatives to property taxes, such as revenue bonds and special assessments, should be evaluated for all future public facilities and physical service improvements and expansions. Funding mechanisms should take into consideration the beneficiary of the improvement, the availability of state and federal grant dollars, user fees, and other available mechanisms.

In addition to the need for an interjurisdictional approach to the provision of public facilities and services, this plan advocates a more active role by the general public regarding decisions on improvements and/or expansions of public facilities and services. In addition to improving public awareness of the issues through education so more informed decisions can be made, specific steps could be taken to actively solicit public input.

## Goals and Objectives

The following goals and objectives are intended to establish the blueprint for implementing the Master Plan's recommendations for the future of public facilities and services.

### **Issue: *Capital improvements programming.***

**Goal:** *Have the village government adopt and annually update a capital improvements program for the purpose of assuring and coordinating necessary improvements and expansions to public facilities and services compatible with the Village of Beulah Master Plan.*

**Objective:** The Village should prepare and regularly update a comprehensive list of all proposed, under construction, and completed capital improvement projects including, but not limited to, information on project type, location, cost, funding source, timing and implementation agency.

**Objective:** The Village Council should initially adopt and annually update a comprehensive capital improvements program consistent with the Village of Beulah Master Plan.

**Objective:** No new public facilities or major expansions or replacements of existing public facilities should be initiated that are not included in the adopted capital improvements program.

**Objective:** The Village should prepare and annually update an official map of all proposed capital facility improvements/ replacements each year.

### **Issue: *Expansion of public sewer and water.***

**Goal:** *Expansion of public sewer and water facilities and services should be coordinated in a planned, phased manner with the Village of Beulah Master Plan.*

**Objective:** The Village should prepare comprehensive studies regarding the current and projected conditions and capacities of existing infrastructure.

**Objective:** The Village should adopt comprehensive land use plan policies which identify the maximum annual number of permitted new sewer and/or water hook-ups based upon current and projected capacity, planned future land use pattern, the adopted capital improvements program, and growth management strategies.

### **Issue: *Stormwater management.***

**Goal:** *The Village should adopt and coordinate regulations and programs to assure the adequate management of stormwater as a result of new construction activities.*

**Objective:** The Village should adopt subdivision and related development regulations, and coordinate such provisions with any relevant county regulations. These should include provisions to protect against floods, soil erosion, and sedimentation.

**Issue: Government administration.**

**Goal:** *Establish and maintain efficient, effective, and convenient processes for intergovernmental cooperation to address multi-jurisdictional and land use issues in a manner which recognizes the autonomy and mutual interests of each and which is consistent with the goals and objectives of this Plan.*

**Objective:** Enhance the effectiveness of providing necessary public facilities and services through cooperation and sharing of costs between benefiting local governments.

**Objective:** Coordinate capital improvement programs with adjoining municipal jurisdictions.

**Objective:** Continually monitor growth trends and patterns to determine the relationships of such growth and development to adopted plans, programs, and resources of the Village.

**Goal:** *The Village should address adequate and accessible government administrative centers.*

**Objective:** The Village should evaluate its current and projected space and technological needs, establish a program for renovation, technological additions, and/or relocation of offices as necessary.

**Objective:** The Village should continue to publish and maintain regular business hours.

**Issue: Police and fire services.**

**Goal:** *The Village should develop programs and standards to ensure adequate levels of police and fire services. This should be done in a coordinated manner with neighboring municipalities and the County.*

**Objective:** All involved local governments should adopt uniform level of service standards for emergency services and identify the minimally acceptable level for specific conditions.

**Objective:** All involved local governments should develop, when/if the need becomes apparent) a funding mechanism to provide for "paid on call" fire protection personnel, in coordination with or in place of the current volunteer fire protection personnel.

**Objective:** All involved local governments should adopt a uniform set of fire protection

infrastructure standards such as the provision of interconnecting roads, expandable water systems, line sizes and fittings, and other construction- based standards.

***Issue: Expansion of recreational facilities.***

**Goal:** *The Village should be encouraged to acquire additional recreational acreage, and expand the scope of recreation opportunities and services, to meet the active recreation needs of the public.*

**Objective:** The Village should prepare and maintain a five-year recreation plan which: 1) identifies the current and projected recreation needs of the Village; 2) establishes strategies to address the needs in a prioritized manner; and 3) meets all the requirements of the DNR/DEQ to become eligible to receive recreation grant dollars.

**Objective:** The Village should prepare an inventory of high recreational value acreage based upon established criteria and to take action to acquire this acreage where such acquisition is consistent with the 5-year recreation plan.

**Objective:** The Village should consider, in the development of park and recreation facilities, economic development opportunities which are consistent with the character with the Village.

***Issue: Variety and safety of water recreation opportunities.***

**Goal:** *The Village should- encourage the continuation of a variety of water recreational activities while ensuring an adequate level of public safety between activities.*

**Objective:** The Village should review current ownership interests in public shoreline parcels and where desirable, take the necessary steps to strengthen ownership ties through fee simple ownership.

**Objective:** The Village should prepare an inventory of potential shoreline recreational acreage and take action to acquire acreage of recreation value where such acquisitions are consistent with the 5- year recreation plan.

**Objective:** The Village should prepare coordinated regulatory provisions intended to identify permitted water surface activities within specific water surface use areas.

***Issue: Library services.***

**Goal:** *The Village should encourage the expansion of the roles and services of the library to meet the library needs of the Village populace.*

**Objective:** The Village should formally evaluate the adequacy of existing spatial and technological facilities in regard to current and projected needs and establish capital improvement and funding programs to address the needs, possibly with some alternative



funding sources.

***Issue: Solid waste management.***

**Goal:** *The village should participate in any update of the County-wide solid waste management program.*

**Objective:** The Village should coordinate with the County to maintain a convenient system of recycling centers including, if feasible, curbside recycling.

**Objective:** The Village should participate in programs wherein household hazardous wastes can be periodically collected and properly disposed of.

**Objective:** The Village -should participate in any county-sponsored solid waste management education programs intended to educate the public regarding solid waste management issues in the county and the steps the local citizens can take to constructively contribute to minimize waste and environmental degradation.

## Non-municipal Public Services

The Village government does not provide all of the important public services in Beulah. Residents and visitors also rely on natural gas, telephone, cable TV and electric services provided by private sector businesses. The availability of these services impacts the quality of life in the Village. The availability of utilities can greatly affect economic development potentials, communications, and available day to day conveniences.

Because of the importance of these non-municipal services, the continuation and expansion of them must be incorporated into the planning process for the Village. These services operate hand-in-hand with many municipally provided services and with other services provided by the private sector.

## Issues

### Services Provided

Electrical service is provided to the entire Village through Consumers Power Company. Michigan Consolidated Gas Company is the sole supplier of gas in the Village. Telephone service is provided throughout the entire village by Michigan Bell Telephone Company. Cellular One Phone Company and Century Cellnet, Inc. provide cellular phone service.

## Framework for the Future

The Village of Beulah Master Plan recognizes the critical link between non-municipal public services and the future welfare of the Village and its residents. In this regard, it becomes vital that the planning of future utility expansion occurs in a coordinated manner with the future

growth and development programs of the Village.

## Goals and Objectives

The following goals and objectives are intended to establish the blueprint for implementing the Master Plan recommendations for the future non-municipal public services and facilities offered in the Village.

### ***Issue: Telephone, electric, gas, and related utilities.***

**Goal:** *The Village government should work cooperatively and constructively with public and private utility companies.*

**Objective:** The Village should coordinate, to the greatest degree practical, all planning of and construction of capital improvement projects with the planning and construction activities of public and private utilities.

**Objective:** The Village should develop policies regarding planned future land use patterns and the timing of development in coordination with existing and projected utility service areas.

**Objective:** The Village should communicate with public and private utility offices regarding the expansion of service areas to support the planned future land use pattern and timing of development.

**Objective:** The Village should adopt zoning and subdivision regulations which require the placement of utilities below ground in all cases where practically feasible.

# CHAPTER FIVE: PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

## Introduction

The current legal structure for land use decisions in Michigan places authority for most land use decisions with the local unit of government (if the local unit wishes to exercise this authority). This is usually exercised through local master plans and zoning regulations as authorized by several enabling statutes. Other land use decisions are made at the county or state level. Examples include decisions on prisons, landfills, and hazardous waste facilities. In some cases, authority can be shared or transferred between state and county or local governments, as with the administration of dune, high risk erosion, wetlands, or natural river zoning provisions. In each of these examples, a separate state statute defines the respective procedures and responsibilities of the decision-making entities.

As a general principle, land use decisions should be made at the level of government closest to the people. This is in part because of the increased opportunity for input in the democratic processes associated with land use decisions and in part because of the far greater familiarity that local officials are likely to have with particular properties and land uses than government officials farther away. However, there are at least three obvious instances in which this principle is not valid.

***As a general principle, land use decisions should be made at the level of government closest to the people.***

The first, and most obvious, is evident where exclusively local decisions prevent consideration of broader public concerns. This is most apparent in a situation where a community is attempting to be exclusionary, as in prohibiting the establishment of low-cost housing (like a mobile home park) or is attempting to prevent the creation of a needed public facility like a prison or recycling station. Obviously, if every local government took the same position, affordable housing, prisons, or recycling stations would never be established anywhere.

Second, this principle also fails where a local government does not have the fiscal, administrative, human, legal, and/or other necessary resources to adequately administer local regulations. Without trained personnel, and the fiscal resources to pay them, and to defend attacks on local regulations, then unequal treatment and inconsistent application of regulations will occur. This undermines the legal validity of local regulations and may ultimately result in their being set aside by the courts. This will prevent achievement of the public policy objectives the regulations are intended to implement.

A third problem is evident when seemingly innocuous individual land use decisions cumulatively add up to a very serious and negative result. For example, if a couple of new businesses are established on a major thoroughfare, the individual businesses may not present a problem. But the combined effect may result in a loss of road efficiency due to added turning motions and

stop and go traffic.

Thus, while most land use decisions are made, and should remain being made at the level of government closest to the people affected (city, village, or township), if efforts are not made to improve, enhance, and coordinate local land use decisions, the result will be continued loss of quality of life.

## Roles and Responsibilities of Village Officials

Fundamental to successfully working together in the implementation of the Master Plan is a clear understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of various government agencies. Some of the planning and zoning responsibilities of the Village Council include:

- Creating, adopting and maintaining a local plan to guide future land use change and to serve as the legal basis for the zoning ordinance.
- Maintaining and administering responsibilities under the zoning ordinance adopted pursuant to the City Village Zoning Act, PA 207 of 1921.
- Coordinating activities with the DDA and other Village agencies in order to try to achieve good development (or redevelopment), and to eliminate costly duplications of effort.
- Educating citizens on the values and benefits of planning.
- Welcoming citizens and citizen comments on local planning and zoning issues and acting upon or referring those comments as appropriate.
- Working with property owners in order to try to achieve good development (or redevelopment).
- Learning about and staying up to date on their responsibilities as elected officials and on various tools available in implementing local plans.
- Adoption of ordinances for implementation of the master plan, including but not limited to zoning ordinance revisions and subdivision regulations
- Providing an adequate budget to carry out land use responsibilities, including keeping the plan "and zoning ordinance current, and receiving proper training on their roles, responsibilities and new tools and techniques for improving the community.
- Providing adequate staff and financial resources (including setting fee levels) for enforcement of adopted regulations.

### Mutual Respect and Mutual Support

The recommended institutional structure grows out of the responsibilities imposed on the village by existing state law and historical traditions. But to be successful, it will need mutual respect where their responsibilities overlap, and mutual support where they are separate.

Village government will continue to be responsible for land use planning, the administration of zoning regulations, and final decisions on local zoning requests. Administration responsibilities

could be shared with other local units of government (like the Village of Benzonia), or contracted to a private consultant. The zoning ordinance must be made consistent with the Master Plan and should be updated at least once each 5 years.

When making land use decisions it is imperative that Village officials fairly and consistently apply all adopted standards and regulations. Those entrusted with making land use decisions are challenged to *look out for the best interest of the entire Village*, not just the people at the public hearing, an applicant or an opponent. In other words, decisions should not be made based on the applause meter. Additionally, in recognition of complexities of growth and development issues, this plan advocates participation of Village officials in land use training workshops. Officials should be encouraged to attend training workshops each year, as Village resources allow.

***When making land use decisions it is imperative that Village officials fairly and consistently apply all adopted standards and regulations.***

#### Relationship with Citizens and the General Public

Ultimately all public services are established and maintained for the benefit of the present and future citizens and visitors of the Village. As the proposed institutional structure is refined and implemented, it is important that opportunities for public input and assistance not be reduced, and that as feasible, they be expanded. Opportunities will include not only those required by law at public hearing, but also other less formal opportunities as resources become available or the need becomes more apparent.

The role of the citizen has been instrumental in providing guidance in the development of this Master Plan. It is intended that citizens continue to have ready access to the planning process and information and policies developed as a result of it.

## Plan Implementation

As important a benchmark as this plan represents, the initiatives proposed in this Master Plan will not implement themselves. It will take the concerted efforts of citizens, elected officials, local planners, and other administrative officials to bring the plan from concept into reality. It will take continued support and commitment for many years.

The central ingredients to successful implementation will be commitment by citizens, by the Village Council, and by support from other local interest groups. Benefits to all groups will be most visible in terms of lower infrastructure and maintenance costs for public facilities and retention of the rural character of the landscape (so cherished by residents and visitors). Many indirect benefits will also occur. The Village will be able to justifiably provide for a focused range

of land uses in its zoning regulations. This could eliminate the potential of scattered commercial uses in inappropriate locations while improving the success of businesses established in appropriate locations. These and many other benefits previously identified will result from implementation of this Master Plan.

***The Village will be able to justifiably provide for a focused range of land uses in its zoning regulations.***

#### Process Leading to Plan Implementation

There are three basic steps that need to be addressed in implementing this Master Plan. They are:

- Plan adoption process.
- Establishment of priorities for strategic initiatives.
- Establishment of a process for updating the plan.

#### Plan Adoption Process

The plan proposes adoption by the Village Council. Announcement of the availability of the draft plan for review by citizens and various organizations will also be initiated. Citizen forums could be offered for public comment. Refinement of plan contents is expected as a result of this review. Additional refinements may occur as a result of this process prior to adoption.

Establishment of Priorities for Strategic Initiatives Following plan adoption, the next major process will be to establish the key strategic initiatives to be immediately undertaken, and others to be included in the next round of annual work programs and budgets. This process needs to include all Village departments and budgetary units.

#### Key Priorities

The most important priorities identified in this Plan should be included, wherever feasible, in work programs and budgets by the appropriate organization(s). This list should be annually updated and supplemented. A host of worthy project and program initiatives to help implement this plan are included in Chapter Four. It is suggested that the goals and objectives in Chapter Four be considered and prioritized based on the following criteria:

- Those action statements having an assigned responsibility to a particular group are of the highest priority.
- A lower priority level exists when the responsibility is implied, as when the phrase "the economic development leadership shall..." is used, or when an indefinite assignment is made such as "the village will "
- No immediate priority is implied when no organization or individual is listed as responsible for the action. That leaves these objectives as targets until an organization steps forward to take responsibility for implementation, and/or

adequate resources become available.

***The most important priorities identified in this Plan should be included, wherever feasible, in work programs and budgets by the appropriate organizations).***

Concluding Thought

This Master Plan represents many hours of input by citizens concerned about the future of the Village of Beulah. The circumstances it is intended to address did not occur overnight and they will not be resolved overnight. Yet it sets forth an alternative option to the future that will be created if existing trends continue. Existing trends are fueled to a very great extent by existing regulations and institutional relationships. To create a future different from existing trends, current plans, policies, regulations and institutional relationships must also be changed. This Master Plan proposes an alternative structure based on considerable input and thoughtful consideration by Village citizens. It offers an opportunity for citizens to choose a different future with a mechanism to put that choice into place.

# APPENDIX A: SURVEY RESULTS