



VILLAGE OF ELBERTA

Master Plan

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Let Our Resources Work For You.

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Village of Elberta

Master Plan

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Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Planning Process	2
Organization of the Plan	2
Chapter 2: Existing Conditions and Context	5
History	6
Elberta in the Region	7
Population and Economic Indicators	9
Issues and Opportunities	16
Chapter 3: Natural Resources	19
Natural Features	20
Issues and Opportunities	22
Chapter 4: Quality of Life & Sense of Place	25
Elberta's Quality of Life Assets	26
Issues and Opportunities	28
Chapter 5: Land Use	33
Residential	35
Commercial	37
Waterfront	39
Community Facilities and Services	43
Chapter 6: Vision, Goals, & Objectives	49
Master Plan Vision	49
Goals and Objectives	50
Chapter 7: Future Land Use Map and Zoning Plan	55
Residential 1	56
Residential 2	57
Residential 3	58
Residential 3	59
Business	60
Waterfront Development	61
Conservation	63

Chapter 8: Implementation.....	65
Zoning Plan.....	65
Rezoning and Conditional Rezoning.....	66
Capital Improvements, Grants, and Spending	66
Leadership and Public Input.....	66
Partnerships and Citizen Engagement	67
Plan Updates	68
Provision of Municipal Services	68
Preservation of Appearance	68

Chapter 1: Introduction

Since it was founded in 1867, the Village of Elberta has changed from an industrial town with a working waterfront to a recreation-oriented residential community. It has seen railroads, ferries, and industry come and go as its businesses have transformed to meet shifts in population.

Change will continue to occur. To ensure that those changes preserve and enhance Elberta's most cherished qualities, the community must plan and prepare for change.

The purpose of the Elberta Village Master Plan is to set forth a strategy for the Village to guide

future development and change according to the community's priorities. The plan is intended to provide for:

- **Informed decisions:** The Master Plan provides a stable, long-term basis for informed decision-making. Analysis of existing conditions, combined with the goals and policies that are outlined in the Plan, help guide the Planning Commission and Village Council as they consider zoning, new development, capital improvements, and other matters relating to land use and development.

- **Optimizing Investments:** The Plan provides

Statutory Authority

The Elberta Village Master Plan was created by the Elberta Village Planning Commission, with assistance from the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments. The Plan was prepared in accordance with provisions of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Public Act 33 of 2008) to enhance and protect the health, safety, and welfare of its citizens.





M-22/Frankfort Highway

for coordination of public improvements and private development, and also helps the Village prioritize improvements to community facilities.

- **Predictability:** The Master Plan informs citizens, property owners, and neighboring communities of the Village's priorities and goals, as well as where and how the community is expected to grow—allowing them to plan for the use of property in a way that is consistent with the community's vision.
- **Zoning:** The Master Plan provides the legal foundation for zoning. The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act requires the zoning ordinance be based on a plan designed to meet residents' needs for natural resources, housing, recreation, industry, business, service, and other uses.

Planning Process

The Elberta Village Master Plan was developed by the Elberta Village Planning Commission and a master plan subcommittee, with assistance from the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments. The Planning Commission had previously adopted a Village Master Plan in 1996. The 2011 Master Plan provides updated background information and public input, with strategies designed to address changing population, economic, and land use trends.

Public input was obtained at a public forum and visioning session held on February 21, 2011. Plan goals, objectives, strategies, and future land use recommendations were developed based on public input obtained throughout the process, analysis of existing conditions, and previous or related plans and studies.

Organization of the Plan

The Elberta Village Master Plan provides overviews of existing conditions, discussion of public input, identification of issues and opportunities surrounding different elements of the community, and goals, objectives, and action statements/implementation strategies. Descriptions of best practices, relevant programs, and examples from other communities are highlighted throughout the plan. The plan is divided into sections and chapters as follows:

1. Introduction provides an overview of the plan and process.

Other Plans and Resources

Many previous studies and plans have informed the development of the Elberta Village Master Plan. Relevant elements of the following plans and studies are highlighted/identified throughout the Master Plan:

- **The Grand Vision (2008)**, a six-county vision for land use and transportation, was created with input from thousands of residents of the region. The goal of the Grand Vision is to create prosperity by making this region an even better place to live, work, and play, by improving transportation systems, land use patterns, housing choices, food and farming systems, natural resources, and energy efficiency create a regional community with the quality of life that attracts high-paying jobs and economic sustainability.
- **New Designs for Growth** is a best-practice resource guide for local governments and developers in Northwest Lower Michigan. New Designs for Growth builds on the ten tenets of smart growth to provide design guidelines that preserve the region's unique character, scenic beauty, and natural resources.
- **Benzie County Master Plan (2000)** includes policy based on the natural capabilities of the land to sustain development; future needs for various types of development; the relationship of agricultural and undeveloped land on the community's character and economy the desires and needs of residents and officials.
- **The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (2010)** assesses the economic conditions of the region and provides a strategy for building on strengths and overcoming challenges.
- **Regional Economic Forecast (2010)** identifies current economic conditions in the five-county Grand Traverse region and forecasts future economic trends.
- **Regional Non-Motorized Comprehensive Strategy (2008)** is a facilities strategy for 13 counties in northwest lower Michigan that identifies priority non-motorized transportation projects to help guide MDOT's investment in the region's non-motorized transportation system.
- **Benchmarks Northwest (2004)** evaluate quality of life indicators in Northwest Michigan by offering secondary data and public perception (survey) information that provides a snapshot of community strengths and challenges. The reports integrate environmental, economic, and social factors in a way that demonstrates the interconnectivity of issues impacting regional quality of life.
- **Benzie County Housing Needs Assessment (2009)** provides a snapshot of housing conditions from a demographic, economic, and housing supply standpoint, and includes a series of recommendations for the improvement of the County's housing stock over a 5-10 year period.
- **Six Pillars of Prosperity** are economic sectors that the People and Land/Land Policy Institute have identified as priority areas for Michigan's success in the New Economy: Attractive Cities and Neighborhoods, Highly Competitive Schools and Lifelong Learning Opportunities, Knowledge Based Technologies, Thriving Agriculture, Natural Resources for Recreation and Job Creation, Inclusive and Entrepreneurial Culture.

Elberta Village Master Plan

2. **Existing Conditions and Context** discusses Elberta's history, its place in Benzie County and the region, and issues that are relevant across the spectrum of the community, including demographics and economic issues.
3. **Natural Resources** provides an overview of the natural features found within the Village.
4. **Quality of Life and Sense of Place** discusses the community's place-based and quality of life assets.
5. **Land Use.** This chapter summarizes the character, types, and location of the various land uses found in the village, including residential, commercial, and community facilities and services.
6. **Goals and Objectives** provide recommendations for actions and policies that will address the issues and opportunities identified in previous plan chapters.
7. **Future Land Use** will include the future land use map and district descriptions, which will provide the basis for the Zoning Plan. The future land use map and zoning plan formalize plan goals and objectives into future land use policy. These policies will be used in making decisions on zoning changes and new development. As the Village Council and Planning Commission experience turnover and changes in leadership over time, the Future Land Use Map and Zoning Plan will provide a stable, continuous basis for land use decision making through changes in the makeup of elected and appointed boards, and therefore encourages the implementation of the long-term goals and objectives of the Master Plan.
8. **Plan Implementation** will provide an overview of the Village's decision making structure, leadership, and other considerations that will ultimately drive the implementation of the plan. Public participation, civic engagement, leadership, and partnership opportunities will be discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 2: Existing Conditions and Context

The natural beauty, historic character, small town lifestyle, and tremendous recreation opportunities available in Elberta are, even taken singly, uncommon in many communities of a much larger size. For a village the size of Elberta, the presence of these many assets represents a wealth of opportunity in terms of creating and maintaining a high quality of life for its residents and visitors.

Elberta is not without challenges. Lack of developable land has limited growth, and the Village has lost much of its employment base over the years, leading to a steady decline in population. Michigan's economic problems have left their mark on the region, Benzie County, and the Village: poverty and unemployment rates for the County and the region are high, and like the state as a whole, many of the region's young

people move elsewhere to seek jobs. But despite these challenges—and in some cases, because of them—there are many opportunities to enhance Elberta's quality of life and move towards new economic opportunities.

Increasingly, the health of a community and its potential for new investment is the product of many factors. First among them is a high quality of life: recreation opportunities, cultural activities, quality natural resources, and a welcoming social environment. These elements work to attract new residents that bring with them skills, knowledge, buying power, and other assets that provide the necessary foundations for new economic investment.

As the Village works to maintain and improve the community's quality of life through plan-



The natural beauty, historic character, small town lifestyle, and tremendous recreation opportunities available in Elberta are uncommon in many communities of a much larger size

Elberta Village Master Plan



All of the initial development in the Village took place along the water to provide for transportation of wood and iron products.

ning and preparing for change, it must consider the Village's existing context. This chapter will discuss Elberta's history, geographic context, community character, population characteristics, and economic assets.

History

The first inhabitants of Elberta—the Ottawa and Chippewa Indians—traveled in and farmed the area for many years. They called Lake Betsie Un-Zig-A-Zee-Bee, which meant, “The River of the Saw Mill or Merganser Duck.” Periodic logging activities were conducted here, probably giving rise to the translation of the Indian term for locations of a saw mill on the river. French settlers later renamed the Lake “Au Bec Scies,” which was modified to “Lake Betsie” by English-speaking settlers.

In 1855 Joseph Robar and Frank Martin moved to the Elberta area to take advantage of the access to water and the channel for commercial shipping and transportation. By 1859 they had developed the first saw mill; in 1867, with the aid of George Cartwright, they founded the Village. The community was called South Frankfort until 1911, when it was renamed after the Elberta Peach, which was common in the area at the time.

All of the initial development in the Village took place along the water to provide for transportation of wood and iron products. The lake and the harbor channel, built in 1866 as part of the federal system for commercial navigation, were the economic center of the Village. The Coast Guard Lifesaving Station was built in 1887 and moved in 1934-35 upon sale to the railroad and construction of a new facility in the City of Frankfort. After 1936, the Lifesaving Station was used as the marine office of the railroad.

Frankfort Iron Works was a major contributor to the development of the Village. Built in 1867, the foundry contained a blast furnace for iron smelting and had 10 kilns for the preparation of charcoal. The need to move wood for the foundry's blast furnace led to the development of a rail line to Elberta in 1870.

The Frankfort Iron Foundry ceased operations in 1883. The Toledo, Ann Arbor, and Northern

Michigan Railway—later known as the Ann Arbor Railroad Company—took ownership of the foundry property in 1892 and converted the buildings and grounds for railroad use, including a roundhouse, tracks and switches, and a depot. Over the years a variety of uses and structures were developed on the property, including coal storage, coaling plant, and the first cross-lake car ferry service. The rail road and car ferry system continued to serve the community until 1982, when the Michigan Department of Transportation—the owners and operators of the Ann Arbor Railroad—terminated all operations in the Village of Elberta.

Elberta in the Region

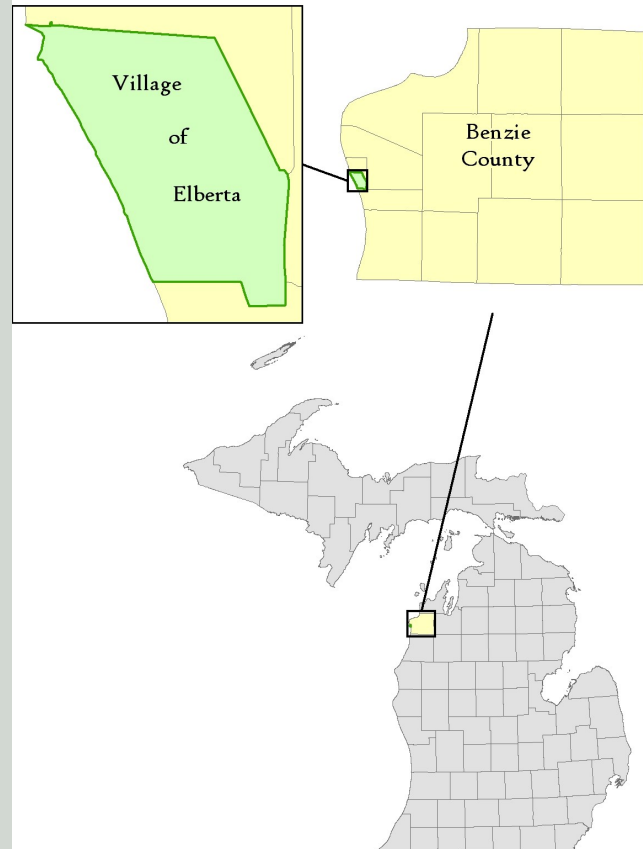
The rural, scenic setting that surrounds Elberta is inseparable from its image and lifestyle, and neighboring cities and villages provide critical employment, education, recreation, shopping, and health services. Elberta's regional context forms the foundations of the community's population trends, employment opportunities, and lifestyle.

The northwestern region of Michigan's lower peninsula is a place of incredible natural beauty, tremendous natural resource assets, thriving agricultural economies, seasonal recreation

Benzie County

With an area of 316 square miles, Benzie County is the smallest county in the state in land area. It is located along the shore of Lake Michigan and is bordered on the north by Leelanau County, to the south by Manistee County, and Grand Traverse County is to the east.

The nineteen communities within Benzie County include the City of Frankfort, the Villages of Elberta, Beulah, Benzonia, Honor, Lake Ann and Thompsonville, and the townships of Almira, Benzonia, Blaine, Colfax, Crystal Lake, Gilmore, Homestead, Inland, Joyfield, Lake, Platte and Weldon.





The Grand Vision

The Grand Vision is a vision of regional growth built on input from over 15,000 residents. The study and public input process included random-sample, scientifically-valid surveys, public workshops, questionnaires, traffic modeling, and data analysis. Initial public input was analyzed to develop four different scenarios that would reflect differ-

ent public preferences and development patterns. Each scenario included indicators relative to housing units, land consumed, annual driving hours and gas expenses, and cost of lane miles. These scenarios were presented in a questionnaire that provided information and graphics on how each scenario would impact the number of housing units, investments in road lane miles, and acres of land consumed by development. Questions asked participants to choose which scenario they felt did the best job of promoting the values that were identified in the survey and workshop processes, and additional questions were asked for input on transportation investments, housing types, and other land use patterns. The “preferred scenario,” as identified by the questionnaire and tested by a random-sample survey, was Scenario C, or the “village-based scenario:”

Future growth will occur primarily in the region’s cities and villages, with additional growth in the main cities of Traverse City and Cadillac. Large amounts of rural open space are preserved. This development pattern will require investments in regional bus service, sidewalks, and bike trails in villages and cities, with some investments in new or widened roadways.

Benzie County results showed strong support for Scenario C, both in the questionnaire and in the follow-up random-sample survey. Some highlights from the study process for Kalkaska County are as follows:

- Benzie County residents rated their quality of life higher than residents of the region as a whole, but were more pessimistic about the quality of life in the future when compared with the region.
- Benzie County residents were more likely to feel that the most important qualities were “having friends and family nearby,” “plenty of jobs or work available,” and “scenic beauty of the region and having access to nature.”
- The most popular growth strategies in Benzie County were: “new growth should be directed to existing cities, towns, and villages” (94%); and “it should be convenient to walk or bike in new developing areas” (91%). The least popular growth strategies were that growth should be located mainly in the Traverse City part of the region (47% disagree) and more regional freeways should be built (62% disagree).

Complete study results, and County-specific reports, are available online at www.thegrandvision.org.

and resorts, and year-round communities. The landscape of forests, lakes, rivers, orchards and farmland is dotted with villages and small cities that are considerable distances from larger metropolitan communities. These distances have helped these small communities shape their character and create individual identities that have become well-recognized as retirement and resort communities as well as desirable year-round homes.

This unique rural character and access to water, forest, and other natural resources has been the region's greatest economic driver. Many communities had their beginnings with the lumber industry, or served as major hubs for water-based or rail-based transportation. Once the land was cleared, agriculture became an economic foundation for some parts of the region.

Natural resources and rural character have played yet another role since the 1970's. Many new residents, including significant amounts of retirees and seasonal residents, have moved to the area to take advantage of the region's small town and rural lifestyles, outdoor recreation opportunities, and natural beauty. Since 1970, the region's population has nearly doubled—from 158,333 to 297,912 in 2010. Benzie County has been one of the fastest growing counties in the state.

However, much of that growth has occurred outside of the region's cities and villages. The

desire for rural lifestyles or homes on larger lots, combined with limited land supply and higher costs in city and village boundaries, has led to greater growth and development in rural areas.

Benzie County, in which Elberta is located, has been a classic example of this trend, as one of the fastest growing counties in the state in terms of percent population growth. Between 1990 and 2000, the County grew by over 31%; between 2000 and 2010, while many parts of the state lost population or remained stagnant, Benzie County grew by another 7%. Its continuing growth can be attributed in part to its widely recognized high quality of life, recreation opportunities, and natural beauty.

Population & Economic Indicators

Significant changes in its economy over the years, combined with changes in development patterns throughout the region, have had a dramatic impact on Elberta's population. While the County has more than doubled in population, Elberta's population has been losing population almost continuously for the last 70 years.

The Village's population in 1940 was 617. Since that time, the population has declined fairly steadily, with a large loss of population between 1980 and 1990, with the closure of the Ann Arbor Rail Road Ferry, the community's

Elberta Village Master Plan

largest employer. Another significant drop occurred again between 2000 and 2010 (see chart). The 2010 population was estimated at 372, a decline of nearly 19% since 2000, and a 40% drop from the 1940 population of 617—Elberta’s highest recorded population count (note: prior to 1930, Elberta’s population was included in totals for Gilmore Township).

In addition to population loss, Elberta’s demographics are also undergoing changes in household size, age, and income.

Household Size & Age

The age of a community’s residents has significant impacts on housing demand, service needs, and employment base; while household size can reflect changes in community demographics and signal a need for additional housing options.

Nearly all of the Village’s population loss between 2000-2010 was in age groups under the age of 44, while percentages of those age 45-84 grew substantially (see table). In 1990 and 2000, Elberta’s population was younger than the County’s; that trend has since reversed, with the Village’s population now older than the County as a whole. In 2010, the proportion of Elberta’s population over age 65 is now 21.5%, compared to the County percentage of 20.6%. And, in 2000, the median age in the Village of Elberta was 36.5 years, while the median age County-wide was 40.8 years. Now, Elberta’s median age (47.8) is above that of the

County (46.2).

As the baby boomers—the country’s largest population group—reach retirement age, the number of one- and two-person households increase. As such, the aging of the population is reflected in a declining average household size. Fewer school-aged children and family households represent growing numbers of “empty nesters” and contribute to the Village’s shrinking household size. At 2.15 people per household (PPH), Elberta’s average household size has dropped markedly since 2000 (2.41 PPH) and is well below that of the average household size of the state and County (2.53 and 2.37 PPH, respectively).

Education

Educational attainment provides an important context when considering the capabilities of the local workforce and economic vitality of the community. The educational attainment of the population plays a role in determining the types of industries or business that may choose to locate in the community.

According to American Community Survey data, 79.8% of Elberta residents have finished high school—a lower rate than the County and State levels, which are 88.6% and 87.4%, respectively. Attainment rates for bachelor’s degrees or higher—7.4%—are significantly lower than state or county levels. In Benzie County,

that percentage is 23.4%, while 24.5% of the statewide population has attained at least a bachelor's degree.

Housing and Income

Elberta's median household income in 2009 was \$37,500 in Elberta Village—significantly below the median income in the County (\$44,445) and the state (\$47,800).

While median household incomes have increased since 2000, they have not increased at the rate of housing values. Household income has increased by 20% since 2000. Median housing value, meanwhile, has risen by 38% since 2000 to \$100,800. The growing gap between income and housing value creates housing affordability issues for Village residents, which is reflected in the numbers of residents living in housing that's considered affordable—that is, those paying 30% or less of their household income for housing. When households pay over

Data Sources

Different geographies, data collection methodologies, and update timelines mean that comparable information isn't always available at the Village level. And, changes in the Census mean that comparisons between current and historic Census is not available. Following is some information to provide context on the data sources used throughout the Master Plan.

- The decennial **US Census** is conducted every 10 years to measure population, age, and other basic demographic information for all geographies in the country. Historically, the Census "long form" also recorded more detailed information on individual household characteristics, including income, employment, poverty, housing value, commute time, etc. Beginning in 2005, that information is instead collected every 5 years by the American Community Survey.
- The **American Community Survey (ACS)** is a large, continuous demographic survey conducted by the Census Bureau that will eventually provide accurate and up-to-date profiles of America's communities every year. Questionnaires are mailed to a sample of addresses to obtain information about households and housing units. The survey produces estimates of population and housing characteristics data for small areas, including tracts and population subgroups. Questions asked are similar to those on the decennial census long form. Estimates for small geographic areas are based on data collected over a 5-year time period, and represent the average characteristics over that time period.
- **Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)** is a unit of the US Department of Labor that collects, processes, analyses, and disseminates statistical data regarding current social and economic issues. Data is available for county geographies, metropolitan statistical areas, and micropolitan statistical areas. BLS data is used in developing the Economic Forecast, which is prepared by the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments on an annual basis.

Population Trends, 1930-2010

	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
NW Lower Michigan	116,900	129,031	135,488	139,017	158,333	208,286	230,962	281,468	296,459
Benzie	6,587	7,800	8,306	7,834	8,593	11,205	12,200	15,998	17,227
Elberta Village	609	617	597	552	542	556	478	457	372

Occupations in Elberta, 2009

from 2005-2009 American Community Survey

	Percent of Workforce Employed
Management, professional, & related occupations	2.1%
Service occupations	41.1%
Sales/office	16.4%
Farming, fishing, & forestry	0%
Construction, extraction, maintenance, & repair	17.1%
Production, transportation, & material moving operations	23.3%

Age in Elberta Village, 2010

from 2010 Census

Age	Number in age range	% in age range	% Change 2000-2010
Under 5 years	16	4.3	-57.9
5-9 years	18	4.8	-53.8
10-14 years	21	5.6	-40.0
15-19 years	24	6.5	-14.3
20-24 years	18	4.8	-28.0
25-34 years	33	8.9	-29.8
35-44 years	39	10.5	-53.6
45-54 years	68	18.3	25.9
55-59 years	28	7.5	16.7
60-64 years	27	7.3	92.9
65-74 years	49	13.2	25.6
75-84 years	26	7.0	13
85 years and	5	1.3	-28.6
Median age	47.8		

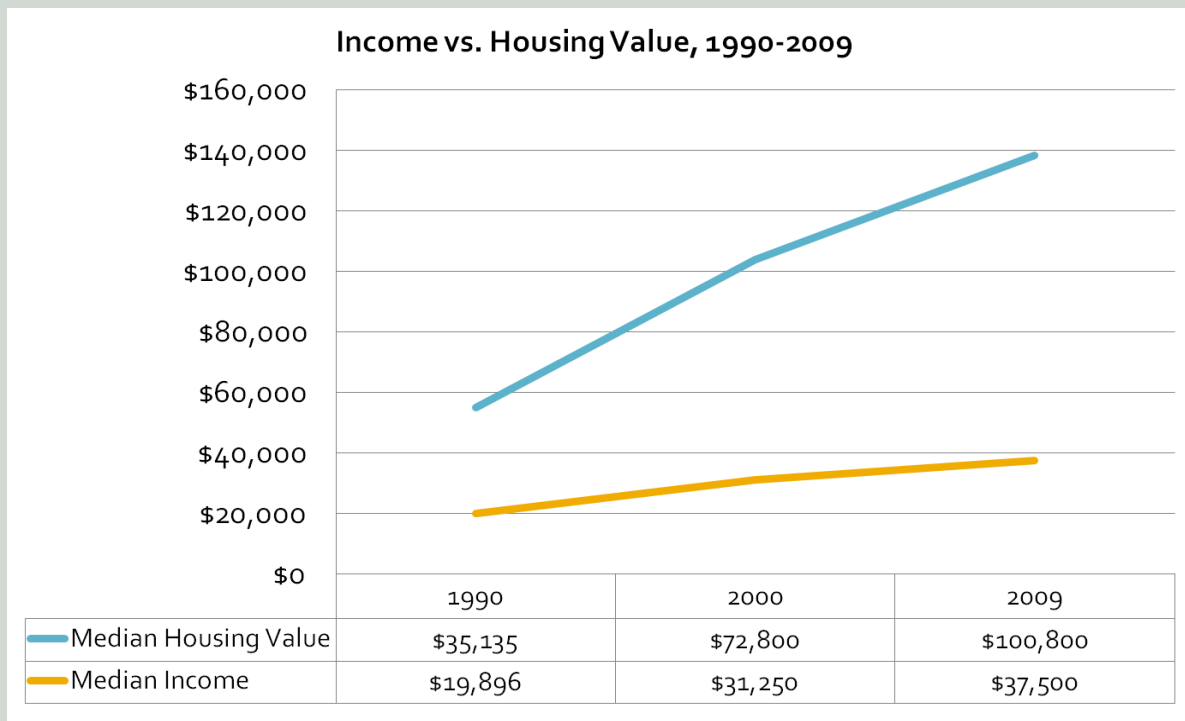
30% of their income for housing, they are considered cost overburdened, a situation that increases the risk of foreclosure or homelessness. In 2009, over 30% of Elberta homeowners with a mortgage paid 35% or more of their household income for housing, while 17% of homeowners paid 30-34.9% of their income for housing. Housing overburden, as reported by the American Community Survey, was not as severe for renters in the Village, with just over 11% reporting cost overburden.

Employment

The American Community Survey reports that Elberta has a workforce of about 164, most of whom commute outside of the Village for work, with a mean travel time to work of about 20 minutes. In 2009, most employed Village residents worked in service occupations, construction, and sales/office occupations (see table).

Michigan has lost hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs since 2000. Because of the state's traditional reliance on manufacturing

Elberta's Housing Affordability Gap



Elberta Village Master Plan

employment, these job losses have created a long-lasting recession with enormous repercussions, and have created unemployment rates that have persistently been the highest in the country for the last several years. Northwest Michigan's, and Benzie County's, unemployment rates have generally followed state trends. According to the 2011 Economic Forecast, it is expected over the short term that the state and the region's unemployment rates will remain higher than the nation's; however, in 2011, unemployment rates regionally and statewide have begun to decline somewhat. Additionally, the region's unemployment rate has been below state levels and it is will remain below those levels in the coming years.

In 2010, the average unemployment rate over the course of the year in Benzie County was 14.8%, slightly higher than the region's 2010 unemployment rate of 13.3% (Bureau of Labor Statistics). However, Benzie County has seen some gains in employment over the last several years, with growth in sectors such as mining, transportation, and wholesale trade canceling out losses in manufacturing and construction. Retail, construction, and accommodation and food service jobs have historically been important employment sectors, and are predicted to remain significant in the near term. Following are summaries from the 2011 Economic Forecast relative to the County's major employment sectors.

- **Construction**, one of the County's largest employment sectors, has declined in the number of jobs over the last several years, with a 10.8% loss in employment (124 jobs) in Benzie County between 2006-2010. However, construction is expected to remain an important employment base in the county: through 2014, the construction industry is projected to gain back the job losses and add some employment for a total of 18% growth.
- **Accommodation and food services** is a significant employment sector in the County, and while growth over the last 5 years was somewhat slow, employment in this sector is projected to increase through 2014.
- **Retail** jobs have declined slightly, but are expected to grow through 2014.
- **Manufacturing**, one of the county's larger employment sectors, lost 177 jobs between 2010-2014 (-26.2%).
- **Mining** employment more than doubled between 2006-2010, from 32 jobs in 2006 to 72 in 2010. Benzie County experienced higher percentage growth in mining employment than the other four counties in the Traverse Bay area. Another 20.8% growth is expected through 2014.
- **Transportation** employment in Benzie County grew by about 30% between 2006-2014, from 123 jobs in 2006 to 160 jobs in 2010. Additional 20.6% growth (33 jobs) is projected through 2014.

Benzie County Employment, 2006-2014

2011 Economic Forecast

Industry	2006	2010	2014	Change 2006-10	% Change 2006-10	Change 2010-14	% Change 2010-14
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	304	327	348	23	7.6%	21	6.4%
Mining (Extraction)	32	72	87	40	125.0%	15	20.8%
Utilities	36	35	39	(1)	-2.8%	4	11.4%
Construction	1,150	1,026	1,213	(124)	-10.8%	187	18.2%
Manufacturing	675	498	504	(177)	-26.2%	6	1.2%
Wholesale trade	88	106	122	18	20.5%	16	15.1%
Retail trade	1,059	1,024	1,123	(35)	-3.3%	99	9.7%
Transportation and warehousing	123	160	193	37	30.1%	33	20.6%
Information (Communication)	38	61	70	23	60.5%	9	14.8%
Finance and insur- ance	317	320	387	3	0.9%	67	20.9%
Real estate and rent- al and leasing	732	845	1,046	113	15.4%	201	23.8%
Professional and technical services	412	461	533	49	11.9%	72	15.6%
Administrative Services	425	431	503	6	1.4%	72	16.7%
Educational ser- vices*	64	76	85	12	18.8%	9	11.8%
Health care and so- cial assistance	598	673	746	75	12.5%	73	10.8%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	315	317	375	2	0.6%	58	18.3%
Accommodation and food services	1,141	1,158	1,232	17	1.5%	74	6.4%
Other services, ex- cept public admin- istration	450	444	444	(6)	-1.3%	0	0.0%
Government*	726	712	771	(14)	-1.9%	59	8.3%
TOTAL	8,685	8,746	9,821	61	0.7%	1,075	12.3%

Benzie County Employers

Key employers, as reported by the Traverse Bay Economic Development Corporation:

- BioTech Agronomics
- Crystal Mountain
- Continental industries
- Field Crafts, Inc
- Food for Thought
- Frankfort Manufacturing Company
- Graceland Fruit
- Paul Oliver Memorial Hospital
- Smeltzer Orchard
- The Maples

- **Real Estate and Rental/Leasing** had a base employment figure of 732 in 2006, and added 113 jobs between 2006-2010—a growth of 15.4%. Another 201 jobs are projected to be added through 2014 (23.8%).
- **Wholesale trade.** In the 5-county region, Benzie County experienced the largest percentage increase in wholesale trade employment over the last 5 years (20.5%).
- **Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting** related employment continues to experience slow but steady growth, with about 6% growth predicted through 2014, following 7.6% growth between 2006-2010.

Issues & Opportunities

Population Loss

The 2010 Census counts show a marked decline in population over the previous ten years—with much of that decline occurring in numbers of school-aged children and those aged 18-44. This continuation of the Village’s trend of population decline, as well as the aging of the population, have had and will continue to have significant impacts on the economy, housing demand and value, and tax revenues, with subsequent impacts to service delivery and quality.

Growing Food & Farming Sector

According to data from the Land Policy Institute at Michigan State University, food innovation is a growing specialization for Benzie County. Compared to the state, Benzie County has had significant revenues and growth in food innovation-related industries. According to the Traverse Bay Economic Development Corporation, several of the County’s biggest employers—BioTech Agronomics, Food for Thought, Graceland Fruit, and Smeltzer Orchard—are based in agriculture and food innovation. Growing local food movements may represent additional economic opportunities for Benzie County.

Housing Affordability

Housing affordability has serious impacts on quality of life, local businesses, school enrollment, and traffic patterns. When families or

households experience housing cost overburden, they are at increased risk of foreclosure or homelessness. To avoid cost overburden, households may choose to live in substandard or overcrowded housing, or they may move to less expensive areas—often rural areas without significant services or employment opportunities. These moves mean that businesses lose year round customers; school enrollment is destabilized, impacting school budgets; and traffic increases as residents commute into town for jobs, school, and shopping.

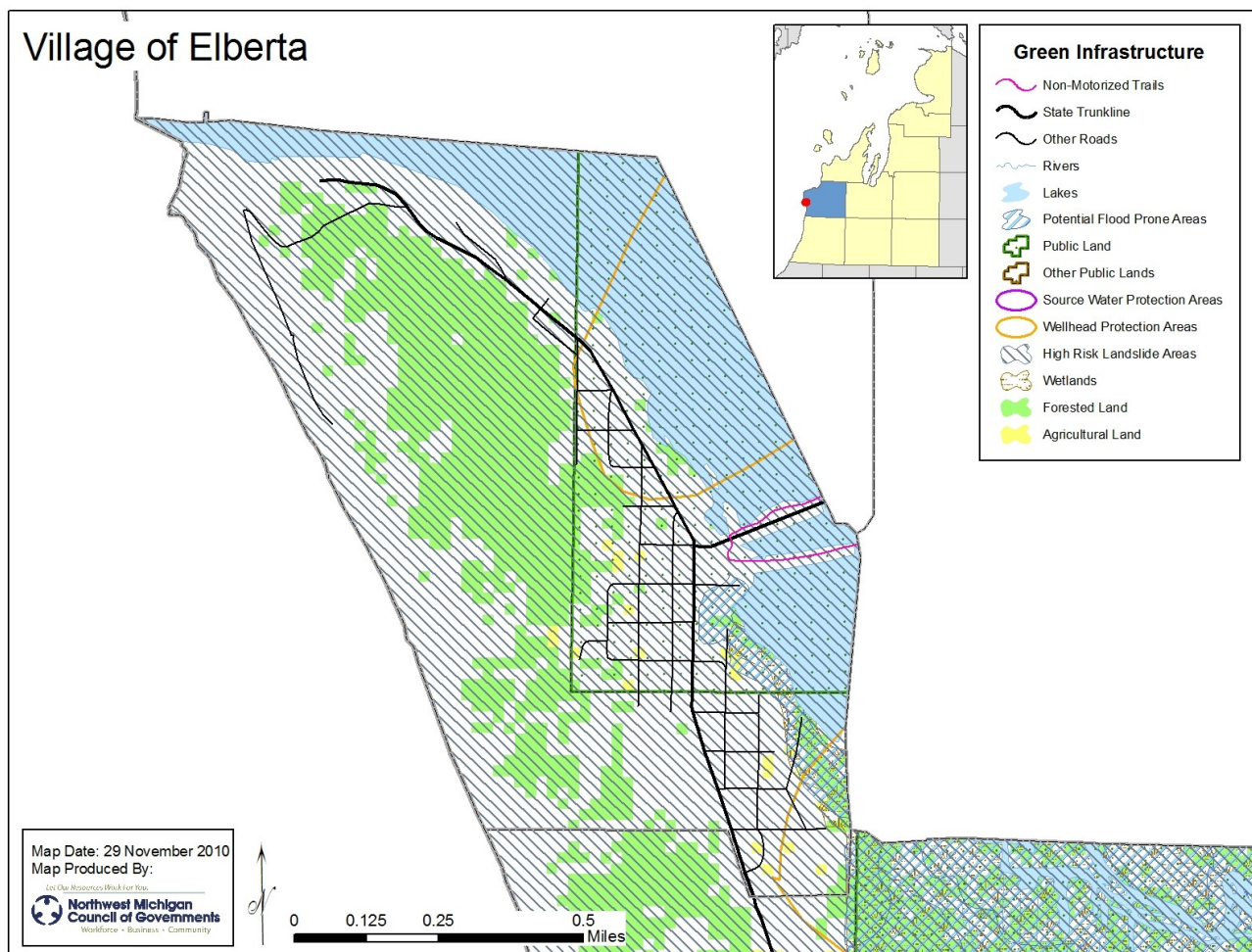
Chapter 3: Natural Resources

The natural resources in and surrounding the Village of Elberta are almost unmatched for a community of its size: towering dunes, over a mile of public water frontage, and a 58-acre natural area inside the Village limits set it apart from other communities, and act as the foundation to Elberta's quality of life. Both residents and visitors take advantage of the wide range of recreation opportunities available in the forests, lakes, and streams within and surrounding the Village.

To ensure the continued and enhanced quality of these resources, it will be important to balance community development needs with environmental considerations. The benefits of such

a balance are increasingly being quantified in economic, public safety, health, and social measures. Environmental quality and protection can enhance economic development efforts. Energy efficiency reduces the costs of products and services, while the preservation of quality natural features increases the value of developed properties and acts as a draw for new residents and visitors.

Planning efforts must consider the environment upon which they are based. This chapter provides an overview of Elberta's natural features, to provide context for planning and future development.



Natural Features

Topography

Elberta's topography is a product of glacial actions that created the unique terrain and land formations within the region and especially along the Lake Michigan shoreline.

The Village sits upon a glacial drift, which accounts for the sand, clay, and gravel deposit which comprise the subsurface conditions of community soils.

Within the Village boundaries the elevation of the area ranges from about 580 feet to approximately 865 feet. Elevation in the surrounding county ranges from 424 feet to 1159 feet.

Wetlands and Floodplains

Wetlands—often called marshes, swamps, or bogs—are areas where water is found, either on or near the surface, at any time during the year. These areas are invaluable natural resources for a variety of factors: they offer important wildlife habitat, along with opportunities for recreation such as fishing, hunting, boating, and birdwatching. They improve water quality by removing and sequestering excess nutrients and sediments found in rivers and streams; and reduce potential for floods by acting as natural “sponges,” slowing down flood and storm waters. 38.22 acres of wetlands are located along Betsie Lake and the Betsie River. These areas are designated as potential flood-prone areas.

Sand Dunes & High Risk Erosion Areas

Fragile sand dunes and high-risk erosion areas are regulated by state law controlling development in these areas. The State of Michigan regulates land within “critical sand dune areas” of the state.

According to the DNR, critical dune areas protected by Part 353 represent the highest and most spectacular dunes extending along much of Lake Michigan's shoreline and the shores of Lake Superior, totaling about 80,000 acres in size. The State of Michigan has found that critical dune areas of the state are a unique, irreplaceable, and fragile resource that provide significant recreational, economic, scientific, geological, scenic, botanical, educational, agricultural, and ecological benefits to the people of Michigan. As such, alteration or use of criti-

Figure 2: Elberta Topography



cal dune areas shall occur only when the protection of the environment and the ecology is assured.

The DNR defines high risk erosion areas as the shorelands of the Great Lakes and connecting waters where erosion has been occurring at a long-term average rate of one foot or more per year. The erosion can be caused from one or several factors. High water levels, storms, wind, ground water seepage, surface water runoff, and frost are important factors causing erosion. The high risk erosion area regulations establish required setback distances to protect new structures from erosion for a period of 30 to 60 years, depending on the size, number of living units and type of construction. Other setback requirements are applicable for home restorations and additions to existing structures. Any person or local government agency proposing to erect, install, move, or enlarge a permanent structure on a parcel must obtain a permit prior to the commencement of construction.

A large portion of the Village has been designated as critical dunes and/or high risk erosion areas, due to the presence of high sand dunes along Lake Michigan. The implication of this designation is that the development of land within this area will require special permission from the MDNR, with engineering studies showing changes to the slope of the dune and other information concerning the placement of buildings. Additional permits are required in these areas prior to undertaking any construc-

Michigan's Critical Dunes

"Michigan's sand dunes are a unique natural resource of global significance. Collectively, they represent the largest assemblage of fresh water dunes in the world and support numerous threatened and endangered species. Michigan's dunes are home to five federally listed threatened and endangered species. The combination of topographic relief, vegetation and climatic conditions are a phenomena unique to the State of Michigan. The dunes support a wide diversity of habitats - from cool forests of maple and hemlock, to the harsh environment of the open dunes, to quiet interdunal ponds teeming with life. "

- Michigan Department of Natural Resources

tion and are limited in terms of planning purposes.

Shoreline

The Village of Elberta is essentially a small peninsula, with water frontage creating its northern, eastern, and western boundaries. This water frontage accounts for 3 miles of shoreline: 1.42 miles of shoreline frontage along Lake Michigan, and 1.62 miles of Betsie Lake frontage. About a third of that frontage is owned by the Village, with public access available.



Critical dune areas are a unique, irreplaceable, and fragile resource

Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure provides a variety of community benefits. Because greenway spaces like trails and natural areas are often seen as more valued amenities by residents than even golf courses or swimming pools, green infrastructure can increase the value of nearby property, with corresponding increases in tax revenues.

Further, continuous systems of forests, wetlands, and other open areas reduce the risk of flooding by controlling stormwater runoff, and provide protection from storm damage and erosion in coastal areas. Green infrastructure systems also provide invaluable wildlife habitat and foster ecological diversity.

Natural features provide significantly more benefits if they are maintained in larger units, such as a complex system of woodlands, wet-

lands, rivers, and streams. Larger, connected systems—often referred to as green infrastructure systems—are more successful at maintaining ecological diversity and integrity.

Open space and forestland cover 78% of the Village's land area, and a significant portion of that area is publicly owned and preserved. The Village recently took ownership of the Elberta Dunes South Natural Area, a 58-acre parcel composed of glacial moraines, dunes, and forests that offers sweeping views of Lake Michigan and the Betsie Valley. The property has a quarter-mile of sandy Lake Michigan beach frontage, and is home to endangered species such as the Pitcher's Thistle, piping plover, and Lake Huron locust. The property was purchased by the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy in 2009 with the intention of creating a public natural area in partnership with the Village of Elberta. The Village took ownership in 2011 and will work towards development of a stewardship and management plan, in partnership with the GTRLC.

Issues & Opportunities

Stormwater Runoff and Impervious Surface Coverage

Sediment – including sand – is a major surface water pollutant that washes from roads, parking lots, and driveways. Sediment and sand smother the habitat that aquatic organisms need to survive and reproduce. Sediment and sand enter our surface waters through storm-

water carrying with it nutrients and many other forms of pollution such as salt, oil, and anti-freeze.

When rain and snowfall hit the ground, they naturally filtrate through the earth and recharge the groundwater. However, paved, or impervious, surfaces, prevent the filtration of rain or snow into the ground. This precipitation instead flows over the ground, picking up debris, chemicals, dirt, and other pollutants. Run-off then flows into a storm sewer system or directly into a lake, stream, river, or wetland, where it is discharged, untreated, into the water we use for swimming, fishing, and drinking.

Reducing impervious surfaces in a community provides significant benefits to water quality. Roads or parking lots make up the majority of a community's impervious surface coverage. In most communities, road design is significantly influenced by the county road commissions and local fire departments.

Lowering the required amount or size of parking spaces are two ways to reduce paved areas in parking lots. Allowing for flexibility in the number of parking spaces, or for shared parking between different uses, can also work to reduce the amount of impervious surface in the community.

Best-Practice: Low Impact Development

Low-impact development or design (LID) is a series of techniques that manage rainfall to infiltrate, filter, store, evaporate, and detain runoff closer to its source. With LID techniques in place, stormwater runoff becomes a resource rather than a waste product. Cisterns and rain barrels can use collected rain water for irrigation or as gray water for toilet flushing.

LID also promotes the idea that almost all elements of a site plan can be used for stormwater control. Parking lots can be made of pervious surfacing materials that allows stormwater to drain through the pavement and recharge groundwater sources; while rooftops can be used as planting areas, soaking up rainwater and reducing runoff.

These techniques often cost less to build than traditional closed designs, primarily by keeping stormwater on the ground rather than building infrastructure underground to handle it.

Shoreline

Setting aside buffers of naturally growing grasses, shrubs, and trees has been shown to protect the health of streams, wetlands, rivers, or lakes. These buffers must be large enough (50-100 feet) to capture surface runoff, and must be permanently conserved.

Brownfields

Brownfields are properties that are known, suspected, or perceived to be contaminated. Often, the presence or even perception of pollution or contamination on a site works to discourage investment or redevelopment of the site, leading to blight and subsequent decline in property values for the site and surrounding properties. Incentives available through the state's brownfield redevelopment program—such as tax credits, revolving loans, and grants—help developers remove contamination and put the property back into productive use.

Brownfield cleanup and redevelopment can have tremendous impacts for the community by addressing issues such as groundwater and soil contamination, and by allowing the redevelopment of the property. This redevelopment often works as a catalyst for new investment in the surrounding neighborhood, ultimately resulting in higher property values and tax revenues, along with new business opportunities.

The Grand Vision: Guiding Principles for Natural Resources

- Protect and preserve the water resources, forests, natural areas, and scenic beauty of the region
- Protect our water quality
- Preserve the scenic beauty of the region
- Create ways to allow and encourage access to nature
- Be a good steward of our forest resources

The Village of Elberta was one of the first communities in the state to establish a brownfield redevelopment authority, which has been successful in remediating property throughout the Village. Brownfield plans and grants have particularly had an impact along the shoreline, with remediation and demolition activities making way for the Village's Waterfront Park and for the future redevelopment of privately-held parcels.

Chapter 4: Quality of Life & Sense of Place

Job losses and subsequent unemployment rates have put economic concerns at the forefront in the region and the Village. Since the 1980's, Elberta has suffered challenges in terms of high unemployment rates, income levels below those in surrounding communities, and population loss.

However, the Village is endowed with an incredible quantity and quality of place-based assets that can be leveraged for economic development. Beautiful views and vistas, the Village's rich historical heritage, and its small size are characteristics that are cherished by both residents and visitors. These assets create Elberta's unique sense of place and form the foundation for new economic investment—particularly in the context of the state's shift away from a manufacturing-based economy

and movement towards a knowledge-based economy.

Enhancing sense of place, creating and promoting a positive identity, branding, and global visibility are key elements of placemaking, which uses strategic assets to create attractive and sustainable communities, improve the quality of life, and help communities succeed in the new economy. Placemaking involves working with what we have to create a destination point for new economic investment. In addition to making Elberta an even better place to live, work, and visit, enhancing Elberta's sense of place and quality of life can create opportunities for economic development through tourism and attraction of knowledge workers and companies.



Elberta's Waterfront Park is a popular venue for community events

Michigan's New Economy

The New Economy, sometimes called the Knowledge Economy, places a premium on talented, creative, and well-educated people as well as on high quality living environments. The New Economy refers to a global, entrepreneurial and knowledge-based economy where business success comes increasingly from the ability to incorporate knowledge, technology, creativity and innovation into products and services.

Key elements of the New Economy include:

- Being rich in talent and ideas
- Attracting educated people
- Physical and cultural amenities
- Ability to adapt
- Bold partnerships with business, government, and nonprofit sector
- Sector diversity and clustering of related sectors
- Communications dependent & energy efficient
- Talented, well-educated people choose location first, job second
- Quality places with high quality of life
- Clean, green environment and proximity to open space and quality recreation are critical
- Connection to emerging global opportunities

- *Planning & Zoning News, December 2010*

Elberta's Quality of Life

Assets

Elberta is located at a considerable distance from larger urban areas: the nearest city with a population over 50,000 is Green Bay, Wisconsin on the other side of Lake Michigan—a distance of nearly 90 miles that in actuality is inaccessible without crossing (via ferry) or driving around Lake Michigan. The closest major metropolitan area in Michigan is Grand Rapids, a distance of about 150 miles. The Village's distance from larger areas has contributed to the creation of the Village's distinct character with quality of life assets that are beloved by residents and visitors. At a forum held in February 2011, members of the public identified those assets that make up Elberta's unique identity:

Small town atmosphere and lifestyle

Elberta residents appreciate the friendly atmosphere and other characteristics of small town life.

Heritage and historic character

Elberta has a rich historical heritage that is still evident in its housing stock and community buildings. A large percentage of Elberta's housing stock was built before 1940 and retains its historic character. The Village's maritime heritage is also evident in the Lifesaving Station in Waterfront Park.

Elberta's water frontage is possibly its most recognized and renowned feature



Access to recreation

The Village has a great deal of high quality recreation opportunities and events. The historic Waterfront Park, sport fishing and pier access, marina, boating, Betsie Valley Trail, the Elberta Dunes Natural Area, and deep-water port draw many visitors from beyond the region and the state. Events such as the Solstice Festival, Winter Whine, and Art Fair are popular with both residents and visitors, while the Farmers Market has been nationally recognized as one of the best in the area. Nationally-significant recreation opportunities are available just outside the Village boundaries—the presence of the nearby Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, Manistee National Forest, and a variety of resorts such as Crystal Mountain attract hundreds of thousands of visitors to the area annually.

Proximity to Frankfort

The City of Frankfort, located on the northern

shore of Lake Betsie, offers many services to Elberta residents. Frankfort-Elberta Area Schools, the Paul Oliver Memorial Hospital, and the Maples provide valuable educational and health services, as well as employment opportunities. Residents also take advantage of Frankfort's shopping and recreation opportunities, while Elberta's businesses, beaches, and waterfront are likewise patronized by Frankfort residents and visitors.

Waterfront

Elberta's water frontage is possibly its most recognized and renowned feature. Over 3 miles of water frontage, much of it public, is available in the Village. Over 10 acres along Betsie Lake are owned and maintained for the public by Elberta Village, as well as nearly half a mile of Lake Michigan beach.

Natural Resources & scenic views

Elberta Village Master Plan

Scenic views, high rolling hills, forests and farmland, the vast expanse of Lake Michigan, Betsie Lake—beautiful views are to be had everywhere in Elberta. The scenic overlook over Lake Michigan offers especially prized views of sunsets, which are a big draw for Elberta residents and visitors, along with others from neighboring communities.

Issues and Opportunities

Community Image

Elberta has tremendous place-based and quality of life assets—the waterfront, downtown, small-town atmosphere, historic neighborhoods, and surrounding natural resources combine to create a unique environment that is desirable to many as a place to live and visit.

However, the Village struggles with some issues, such as disinvestment, income and poverty levels, and lack of employment opportunities. Public input indicates that the Village ap-

pearance, particularly downtown, is an issue in attracting new residents, visitors and subsequent investment. Many visitors come to Elberta for the waterfront or other recreation, but there are challenges in attracting these visitors to other parts of the community.

Comments and discussion from the public indicate a need for greater pride in the community and the need to strengthen the sense of place. Improving the quality of tourist, downtown, business and residential places will be critical in building community pride and engagement. Further, initiatives that will enhance the quality of life and make the community more attractive and vibrant, can aid in efforts to attract and retain skilled/talented workers and globally competitive businesses.

Streetscapes

Well-designed streetscapes create safe, appealing environments that encourage pedestrian activity, enhance walkability, and create vitality



The Village's maritime heritage is evident in the Lifesaving Station in Waterfront Park

in commercial areas. Public art, landscaping, crosswalks, and wayfinding efforts can enhance Elberta's commercial areas and attract visitors to local businesses while improving the community's image.

Location

Elberta's distance from major metropolitan areas represents some challenges in terms of educational and employment opportunities; however, it could also be leveraged to the community's advantage. According to the Land Policy Institute, distance from urban clusters creates the opportunity to market uniquely rural assets, such as recreation, local foods and scenic views. Areas with many amenities and large distances to urban clusters represent optimum rural placemaking possibilities.

Transportation Connections

The Village's extensive waterfront amenities, small size, proximity to Frankfort, availability of trails, and historic character make it a natural destination for tourists. Further, the presence and availability of the Benzie Bus, state highways, and trail systems create tremendous visibility and access to these assets. Better connections between these different transportation modes can help the Village attract and retain more visitors. Additionally, enhancing Elberta's image as a "walkable community" could be effective in bringing waterfront or beach users into the downtown and other parts of the community. As noted, there are challenges in attracting these visitors to parts of the commu-

Six Pillars of Prosperity

According to the People and Land Institute, Michigan needs to carefully plan how communities and regions grow so they will develop in ways that create outstanding quality of life and economic prosperity, and strategically position those communities and regions as contributors to the New Economy. Michigan must focus on six key sectors in order to become a successful participant in the New Economy:

- **Pillar 1: Attractive Cities & Neighborhoods**
From major cities to small towns, we need vibrant neighborhoods where people want to live and raise families
- **Pillar 2: Highly Competitive Schools and Lifelong Learning Opportunities**
Education creates the skilled workers we need to compete in a global marketplace
- **Pillar 3: Knowledge-Based Technologies and Michigan's Future**
Job growth in Michigan will come from new and creative businesses
- **Pillar 4: Thriving Agriculture to Grow Michigan's Economy**
Michigan's second-largest industry can provide food, fuel, and innovation while preserving beautiful rural landscapes
- **Pillar 5: Natural Resources for Recreation and Job Creation**
Michigan is blessed with natural resources that enrich our quality of life and enhance our economy
- **Pillar 6: Inclusive and Entrepreneurial Culture**
Innovation, new ideas, new people, new businesses: this is the currency of the new economy

- People and Land

Elberta Village Master Plan

nity beyond the waterfront. Creating enhanced walkability or bikability, combined with the use of distinctive, attractive wayfinding signage to help pedestrians and motorists navigate through downtown, could also represent an opportunity to build awareness of Elberta's attractions and serve as a valuable business tool.

Affordable housing

While Elberta's housing remains comparatively affordable in relation to surrounding communities in the region, values have increased substantially in proportion to incomes in the Vil-



Attractive wayfinding signage can help pedestrians and motorists navigate through town

lage. This gap in income and housing value creates significant affordability issues for working families and those with low or fixed incomes.

Downtown activity

Downtown events have great potential to stimulate economic activity. Free outdoor movies have been offered downtown in the past; downtown movies were popular with families and visitors and stimulated business activity in the downtown. Re-energizing this tradition or similar events could act as draws to the downtown and help in generating revenue for local businesses. Likewise, activities geared towards "sunset-watchers" such as additional commercial offerings (i.e. concessions) could be a way to "capture" some activity or revenue from sunset watchers.

Waterfront commercial activity

Elberta's historic ferry service created activity and economic opportunity along the waterfront. Public input indicated an interest regenerating some types of waterfront commercial activity. A marina, ferry, sightseeing boats, water taxis, or kayak/canoe rentals along the waterfront could drive tourism and economic investment, in addition to enhancing transportation connections.

High-Tech Infrastructure Investment

Elberta has the sewer and water infrastructure capacity to accommodate new growth and in-

vestment. However, high-tech infrastructure—broadband and wireless access—are not available in the Village. These elements are becoming increasingly important, and are vital to success in the new economy. Some communities in the region have begun to provide community-wide wireless access as a service to local businesses, visitors, and residents.

Arts and Culture

Arts and cultural opportunities are critical new economy assets. Skilled and talented workers are drawn to communities with a strong sense of place with a thriving arts-oriented culture. Benzie County and the Northwest Michigan region are home to a large number of artists and others with creative talent. In 2010, the Elberta Parks and Recreation Committee initiated the Elberta Arts Council to promote community art and cultural opportunities in the Village and surrounding area. The goal of the Arts Council is to support and promote the area's arts and culture to make Elberta the "Artistic Capital of Michigan." Raising awareness of and "branding" the community's arts and culture has great potential for attracting new investment and activity to the community

Farmer's Market

The Elberta Farmer's Market is considered one of the region's best farmer's markets and has received national recognition. The Farmer's Market represents the Village's strong connection with the region's agricultural heritage, an

The Grand Vision: Growth & Investment Areas Guiding Principles

- Create a group of unique villages that together form a region
- Develop communications pathways so that elected officials know the public's preferences
- Invest resources effectively to improve main streets and city center
- Create attractive and active village centers where people can gather and engage
- Encourage builders to locate new housing along and near main streets
- Design villages to offer safe and convenient pathways for walking and biking

important part of the community's identity, and acts as a draw for regional residents and visitors. Maintaining, supporting, and enhancing the Farmer's Market and other agricultural—or local-food related economic activities will support the region's economy, strengthen the Village's connection with the region, enhance its identity, and capitalize on a growing economic sector.

Chapter 5: Land Use

The Village's development patterns have been dictated in large part by its geography. Bounded by water features, steep slopes, wetlands, and dunes, much of Elberta's buildable area is already developed, although opportunities exist for redevelopment and infill in some parts of the community. Such development or redevelopment may be needed in the future to meet housing, economic, or service needs.

The Master Plan addresses land use through analysis and recommendations portrayed through several types of maps and descriptions :

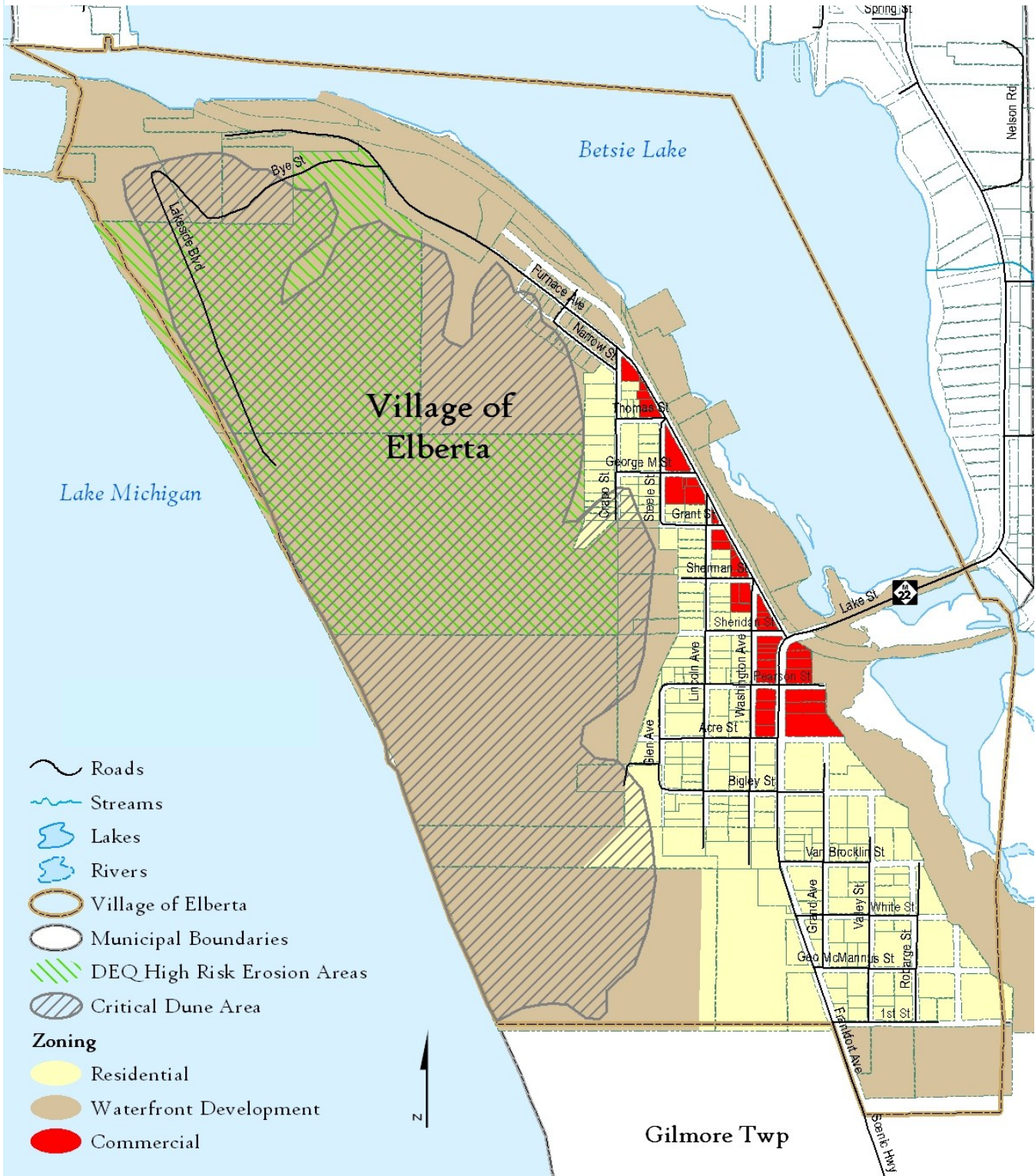
- The **existing land use map and descriptions** identify the current, "on the ground," uses of properties within the Village, regardless of what is permitted by zoning or recommended by the Master Plan. An understanding of existing land uses is needed to ensure that future development is compatible with the Village's existing character, environmental features, community needs, and vision and goals.
- **Zoning** identifies the permitted land uses for each geographic area in the Village. The zoning map shows what is allowed to occur legally on a parcel-by-parcel basis, *regardless* of the current existing use for that parcel.
- The **future land use map and descriptions** identify the preferred patterns of development and redevelopment, and are based on the goals and objectives identified in the planning process. The future land use map is not intended to be parcel specific; future land use recommendations are intended be used as a long-range (20+ years), general guide for development patterns. Desired results are not expected to occur in the near future. Future land use map and district descriptions are found in Chapter 6, Goals, Objectives, and Action Strategies.

To provide a context for future land use decisions, this chapter includes descriptions of existing land use and neighborhood types found in the Village, as well as issues and opportunities that have been identified for each use.

Elberta Zoning Ordinance & Relation to the Master Plan

The Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance are closely connected, and both have important impacts on land use and development. The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (PA 110 of 2006) requires zoning to be based on an adopted plan that is designed to promote the health, safety, and general welfare of all citizens. The master plan provides guidance for zoning decisions, including amendments to the text or the zoning map. As such, zoning is the method most commonly used to achieve master plan goals. However, it's important to recognize that the Master Plan is only a guide, and cannot enforce where or how something is built. The Zoning Ordinance, on the other hand, is a legally enforceable law that regulates land and buildings, and establishes standards for development.

Existing Land Use, Village of Elberta



Residential

About 12% of the Village's land area is categorized as residential, making it the second largest land use category behind undeveloped/vacant land. Elberta's neighborhoods are primarily composed of single family detached homes, most of which were built prior to 1940.

The Village's compact size and limited development area means that all residential areas are located within close proximity to Village amenities such as parks, playgrounds, shopping, churches, and other services. Most of the Village's housing stock is located in quiet residential neighborhoods on walkable streets with low traffic volumes. Neighborhoods are a short distance from forested areas or open space.

Zoning

There is one residential zoning district in the Village; uses permitted within the R-1 district include detached single family dwellings, home occupations, public parks and recreation areas. Special uses include churches, private recreation, and bed and breakfast establishments. Two-family dwellings, home occupations, mobile home parks, churches, nursing homes, and bed and breakfast establishments are allowed as special uses. Residential uses are also permitted in the Village's commercial and waterfront development districts.



Housing Stock

According to the 2010 US Census, there are about 229 housing units within the Village of Elberta. 173 housing units are occupied; of those, about 69% are owner-occupied, and about 31% are renter-occupied. About 25% of the Village's housing stock is vacant, most (63%) vacant housing is classified as seasonal residential uses.

Elberta's housing stock represents a variety of types, ages, designs, and lot sizes, reflective of the time periods in which it was built. Over half of the Village's housing stock (122 units) was built prior to 1940. Another 44 units (18%) were built between 1940-1959, and 48 units were built between 1960-1979. According to available Census data, no new units have been added since 2005.

Issues and Opportunities

Housing Age

The age of a community's housing stock is important in terms of value and quality. Older housing stock is often more affordable than newer homes; however, in some cases, rehabilitation and repair needs may impact that affordability. In Elberta, most (89%) of the housing stock is over 30 years old; some of this housing may need repairs or rehabilitation to extend its useful life. Further, public input indicated a concern over the quality of some housing stock and the need for rehabilitation or updates.

Density and Developable Area

The presence of critical dunes limit the availability of developable land. The 1994 Master Plan identifies the former railroad property as the last remaining property with significant development potential.

However, there is potential for infill development. Small platted lot sizes are nonconforming under existing zoning regulations, which require 6,000-12,000 square foot lots. Revising zoning language to allow for smaller lots or accessory dwelling units would create additional development opportunities. Further, smaller lot sizes could potentially address some affordability concerns and provide additional housing options.

Housing Options

National trends toward shrinking household sizes mean that more housing units will be needed simply to maintain existing population levels. Given the aging trends in Village population over the years, combined with decreasing household sizes, there is likely to be a continued demand for housing; and, as household size declines and population ages, demand may shift from larger single family homes to smaller homes or multi-family units.

As noted, the vast majority of Elberta's housing stock consists of single-family detached dwellings. For those that need less space, or have limited incomes, multi-family housing or other smaller homes may be an important option.

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing is defined as housing that costs 30% or less of a household's income. Families or individuals that pay more than 30% of their income for housing are considered cost overburdened. When households are cost overburdened, they are at a higher risk of foreclosure or homelessness; or are more likely to move into substandard or overcrowded housing, which can have serious impacts on quality of life, school performance, and well-being. In Elberta, ACS data shows that 25% of renters pay over 30% of their income for rent, while about 19% of owners with mortgages meet this definition. These percentages are significantly lower than the region or the state.

Commercial

Commercial/industrial land use makes up about 9.8% of Elberta's land area, putting it third in terms of land area coverage. A large majority of the Village's commercial uses are located on the M-22 and M-168 corridors, and as such are the focal point for travelers passing through the community, creating the first impression that most visitors get upon entering the Village.

Zoning

Zoning permits a variety of commercial uses, including personal service establishments, offices, and retail, by right. Other uses are allowed with a special use permit, including laundromats, drive-through banks, fast food establishments, funeral homes, veterinary hospitals

and kennels, garden supplies, and gas stations.

M-22 North—Downtown

The majority of businesses in Elberta are located along M-22, and primarily include restaurants and services. This area, which serves as Elberta's downtown, is comprised of a mix of one- and two-story buildings. Sidewalks provide for walkability and connect some residential streets to the downtown.

M-168—Waterfront Commercial includes restaurants, marina, and other water-based commercial activities. Some historically commercial or industrial buildings are located along the waterfront.

Sidewalks in Elberta's downtown area provide for walkability



Issues and Opportunities

Additional commercial opportunities

The current mix of uses in the Village's commercial areas does not include basic services such as gas stations or grocery stores. Residents have indicated a need and interest in seeing more businesses of this type in the downtown.

Façade improvements, streetscapes, and landscaping

Because of public concerns expressed regarding community image, minor improvements to facades and streetscapes have been identified as possible priorities for commercial areas within the Village.

Vacant or Underutilized Buildings/Lots

Vacant or underutilized lots or buildings are found throughout the community. Some are

not well maintained and are deteriorating. Vacant buildings, particularly those that are poorly maintained, can lower property values and contribute to disinvestment of neighboring properties. It is important to ensure that vacant buildings are redeveloped or reused when possible, and maintained in the meantime. When properties have deteriorated to the point that they may affect property values or surrounding economic investment potential, and when reuse or redevelopment is not feasible, the Village should consider enforcement of blight or nuisance ordinances.

Waterfront commercial

As noted, some historically commercial uses are located along the waterfront. Public input expressed an interest in providing for some water-based commercial uses in this area, such as kayak rental. There was also discussion about businesses that could serve sunset watchers and other visitors.

Best-Practice: Form-Based Zoning

Conventional zoning closely regulates the *use* of a site or building, with a focus on the separation of land uses. Form-based zoning, on the other hand, regulates the *physical design* of a building or site, to a greater extent than they regulate the use of a building. As such, form-based zoning codes allow for a mixture of land uses based on the context of the building design or form. Form-based codes are often used in communities that are working towards the preservation of an existing character or toward creating a distinctive neighborhood. Form-based regulations can be created for a single neighborhood (i.e. historic district) or community-wide. Some communities have also adopted "hybrid" codes that incorporate both form-based and use-based zoning elements.

Waterfront

In the fall of 1996, the Village of Elberta purchased 21.5 acres along Betsie Lake. This property is considered to be the last significant developable property in the Village. As such there has been a strong focus on efforts to redevelop this area in way that will enhance the Village's appearance and economic viability. Part of this vision has been to redevelop portions of the property for recreational uses and public access to the waterfront.

As part of the 1994 Master Plan, the Village held workshops and visioning charettes with the public, Village Council, Economic Development Corporation and others to develop a plan for the property. Elements of this plan identified the need to:

- Balance economic development needs of the Village with preservation of historic buildings.
- Retain the historic maritime theme of the property.
- Open the property for public use.
- Find a remedy for any remaining environmental clean up operations while the property is being developed.
- Have the property under Village control to direct future development of the property using assistance of appropriate state and federal grants.



A development strategy—the Ann Arbor Rail Road Terminal Yard Amended Acquisition and Development Strategy—was prepared in 1996 and adopted as an independent document by the Village EDC. Since adoption of the document, the Village has taken important steps toward realizing this vision. In the fall of 1996, the Village of Elberta purchased 21.5 acres of the deserted Ann Arbor Railroad Terminal yard.

Through a request for proposal process, the Village in 1998 selected a developer, which subsequently organized its efforts under the Elberta Land Holding Company, to partner with in their goal of redeveloping its waterfront. Development was to include:

- mixed use development that offered significant job creation
- site plans and architectural styles in line

Elberta Village Master Plan

with the goals of the Village

- the incorporation of public trails throughout the development site
- the inclusion of a \$500,000 waterfront park endowment.

Activities conducted to date include site planning and engineering studies, marina permitting, brownfield demolition and remediation, marina dredging operations, architectural studies, and additional property acquisition efforts deemed critical for the success of the redevelopment effort. In tandem with these redevelopment efforts the Village of Elberta, with the assistance of multiple agencies, philanthropic concerns, and the developer, has constructed multiple phases of the Waterfront Park, completed sewer upgrades and reserved additional waste water capacity at the Betsie Lake Utility Authority for an additional 400 plus residential units, updated the zoning ordinance to accommodate the waterfront mixed use re-

development, worked with MDOT on a road and streetscape improvement project connecting the waterfront redevelopment area with the Elberta downtown business district.

Waterfront Park

Waterfront Park is an eight acre park along Betsie Lake that contains two historic buildings, a playground, restrooms, parking, and a boardwalk along Betsie Bay. It provides a scenic view of the City of Frankfort's waterfront and serves as the trailhead for the Betsie Valley Trail. The park was developed as an element of the Village's waterfront redevelopment activities.

Issues and Opportunities

Zoning

Following development of the 1994 Master Plan, the Village created a Waterfront and

Best-Practice: Planned Unit Developments

A planned unit development (PUD) is a zoning technique that acts as a type of overlay or supplement to existing zoning. PUDs allow some flexibility in terms of use, density, and site layout, but also include a special review process, in which the site plan is reviewed in the context of adopted community goals or standards that are included in the PUD ordinance. This technique is often used in creating large-scale, mixed-use developments, as they provide a certain level of flexibility that is balanced with community involvement and accountability.

The term "PUD" is often used interchangeably to mean both the development itself, as well as the zoning regulation.

Lakebluffs Development District (DD) to allow for mixed use development. The intent was to propose a unified development that maximizes protection of the coastal environment and provides for public access to the water. Allowed uses include any permitted uses within the Village's commercial or residential districts. Special uses include special uses within the commercial or residential districts, as well as marinas, boat storage and repair, marine sales, hotels and motels, and outdoor recreation or public amusement facilities.

ment area with the Elberta downtown business district. Streetscape enhancements for M-168 and M-22—including the possibility of public art or wayfinding—has been identified by the public as a priority item for enhancing community image and providing branding opportunities. The use of distinctive, attractive signs to help pedestrians and motorists navigate from the waterfront to the downtown could represent an opportunity to build awareness of and promote Elberta's attractions and serve as a valuable business tool.

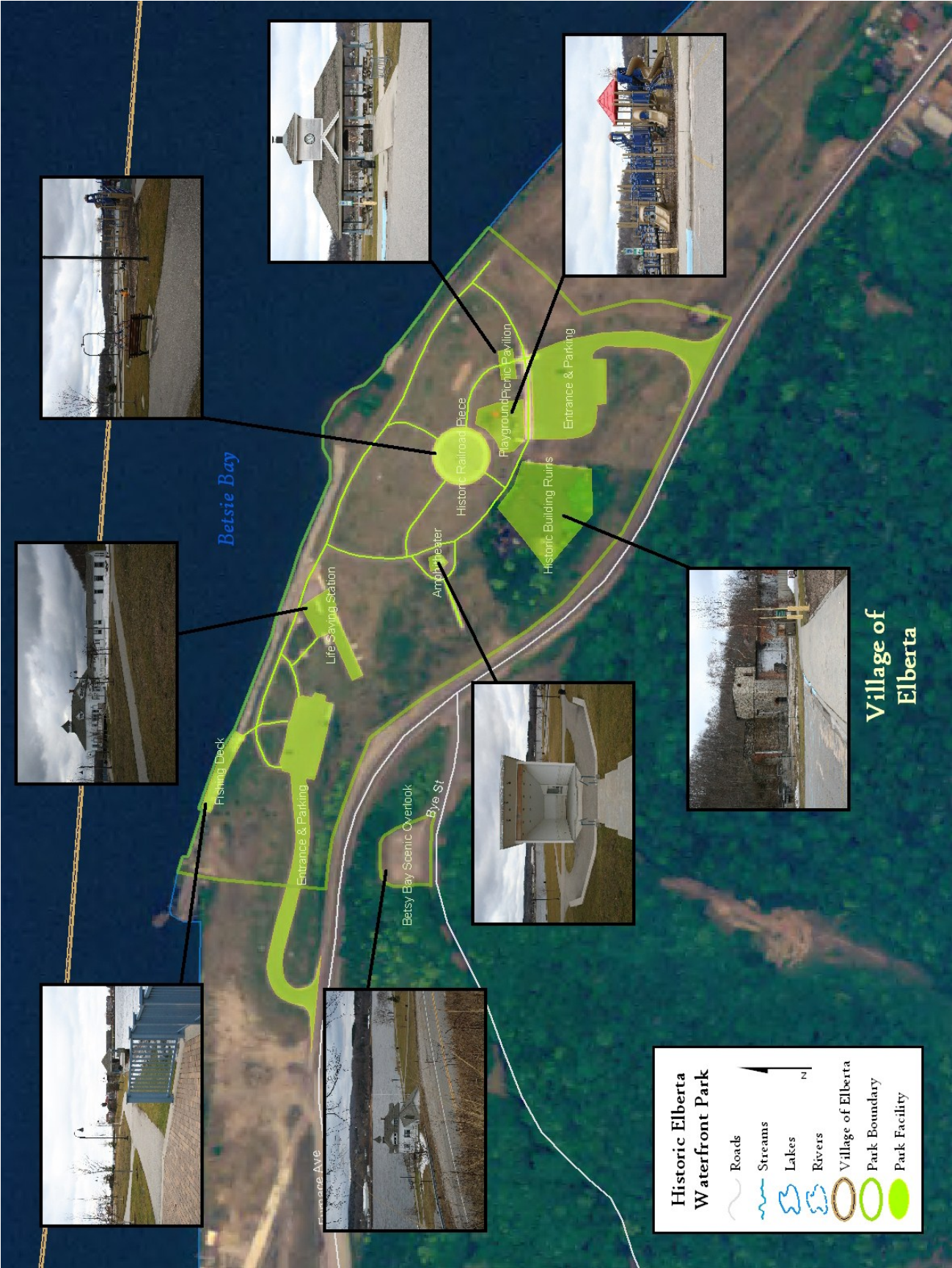
Future Development

Public input in the 2011 Public Forum indicated an interest in the following relative to waterfront and shoreline development:

- Maintain views of the water
- Encourage sensitive development
- Permitting water-based commercial development along M-168
- Preservation of historic assets, including Lifesaving Station area, ferry docks, etc.
- Smaller-scale shoreline development
- Mixed use development
- Sustainable features

Streetscapes and Wayfinding

As part of the Waterfront redevelopment project, there have been efforts toward development of a road and streetscape improvement project connecting the waterfront redevelopment



Community Facilities and Services

A high quality of life and place depend in part on the availability of adequate and efficient community services. Well-maintained roads, parks, and public buildings support existing residents and paves the way for future investment and development.

Village residents and business have access to a number of community facilities and services. For a Village of its size, the quality, scale, and number of these facilities is rare. This section provides a brief description of facilities and services.

Wastewater Treatment

Wastewater treatment is provided by facilities located in the City of Frankfort and owned by the Betsie Lake Utility Authority. The plant can accommodate a substantial amount of growth,

with the capacity to treat 750,000 gallons per day of Village wastewater. Currently the system treats about 250,000 gallons per day. Collection lines are located in the street right-of-ways, either 6" or 8" in diameter. An 8" line is routed down Furnace Ave toward the former railroad property.

Municipal Water Service

The Village operates a water treatment plant located on Frankfort Ave (M-168). The system will have capacity in excess of 200,000 gallons per day. Currently, the plant provides 80-90,000 gallons per day during the summer months and 60,000 per day during the winter months.

Village Buildings

The Village owns and maintains several buildings necessary for the provision of Village services. The Village library, located on Frankfort Ave (M-22), is a 1,200 square foot building that currently serves as the main meeting room for Village and Gilmore Township meetings. The Village administrative office and municipal garage is located behind the library, and includes 400 square feet in administrative office space for the Clerk and Treasurer. 2,000 square feet is used to house Village equipment and vehi-



Elberta Village Master Plan

cles. The remaining portion of the property is used for storage purposes.

Fire department

The Village is served by the Frankfort City Fire Department, a joint department that is funded by, and responds to, a 56-square mile area that includes the City of Frankfort, Village of Elberta, Gilmore Township, Crystal Lake Township, and Lake Township. The Fire Department operates with both paid staff and volunteers, with costs shared by participating jurisdictions. The breakout formula for cost distribution is based on population, state equalized value, and a three year run volume for each participating jurisdiction.

Transportation

The Village maintains about 3.6 miles of streets, most of which are paved with asphalt, except for the streets serving the Lake Michigan Beach. The Michigan Department of Transportation maintains M-22/Frankfort Ave. A former state highway, M-168, is expected to be transferred to the Village in 2011.

Non-motorized transportation needs are served by a network of sidewalks that extends throughout most of the Village's commercial and residential neighborhoods, as well as the Betsie Valley Trail, which provides connections to the City of Frankfort. An extension of the trail, called the Beach-to-Beach trail, is planned for the waterfront within the Village of Elberta.

Public Transit

Public transit service is provided by the Benzie Bus, which is operated by the Benzie Transportation Authority and provides County-wide fixed-route and dial-a-ride service. A fixed-route stop is located in the City of Frankfort, with service to Beulah, Benzonia, Thompsonville, Honor, and Lake Ann, with connections to Traverse City. The bus service is funded by a county millage.

About 70,00 riders used the Benzie Bus in 2010. 27% were elderly, and about 23% were disabled.

Recreation Facilities

- **Elberta Historic Waterfront Park.** This 10+ acre neighborhood park is located on the shores of Betsie Bay and includes over 1,200 feet of scenic water frontage. Amenities provide for activities such as fishing, picnicking, and group gatherings such as weddings, reunions, and outdoor theater. The park includes a covered picnic pavilion, children's playground, lighted and paved accessible trails, park benches, an outdoor amphitheater, a covered fishing deck, and both vehicle and bicycle parking facilities.
- The **Life Saving Station** is an historic building (ca 1930's) in Waterfront Park which is available for rent to group gatherings. The facility's carefully renovated historic character and presence along the waterfront makes it very popular for weddings and

other celebrations, and the building is heavily used in the summer.

- **Elberta Lake Michigan Beach** is located on Lake Michigan and includes just under half a mile of public beach access that's often used for both swimming and fishing. Facilities include primitive restrooms, handicapped accessible pier, scenic overlook, handicapped parking at beach access, and a boardwalk.
- **Elberta Dunes South Natural Area** is a 63-acre parcel composed of glacial moraines, dunes, and forests that offers sweeping views of Lake Michigan and the Betsie Valley. The property has a quarter-mile of sandy Lake Michigan beach frontage, and is home to endangered species such as the Pitcher's Thistle, piping plover, and Lake Huron locust. The property was purchased by the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy in 2010 with the intention of creating a public natural area in partnership with the Village of Elberta. The Village took ownership in 2011 and will work towards development of a stewardship and management plan, in partnership with the GTRLC.
- **Dudley Penfold Memorial Park (aliases: Mini-pond/Pavilion Park/Elberta Marina)** This 4-acre neighborhood park is located in the heart of Elberta on Betsie Bay and is directly accessible from M-22. Facilities include a covered picnic pavilion and picnic tables, grills, playground, boat launch suitable for shallow boats such as kayaks and canoes, pedestrian bridge, access to the Betsie Valley Trail, trail head parking, and 34 boat slips.
- **The Community Building.** This 7-acre neighborhood park is located at the south end of the Village, and was originally part of the local school property. The property

Elberta's relationship with Frankfort is of enormous importance in service provision



was split and the side with the school was sold. The remaining portion is used for a baseball field and bleachers, playground equipment, restrooms, and the Community Building, which includes a public meeting room.

- **Tot Park** is a ¼ acre Mini-park located within the residential area of the Village. It serves as a local playground for Village residents. Facilities include a sandbox, swings-et, and other play equipment.
- **Veterans Park** is a ½ acre Mini-park is maintained as open space within the residential area of the Village.
- **Anderson Park** is a ½ acre mini-park and playground located within the residential area of the Village.
- **Betsie Valley Trail** extends approximately 23.5 miles throughout Benzie County. It briefly extends into the Village of Elberta for a ½ mile. This trail is widely used for both hiking and biking. Its serves as a con-

nection between communities and parks throughout Benzie County.

Issues and Opportunities

Village buildings

Various improvements have been discussed for Village buildings, in particular for the Village library. The public has expressed interest in renovations to the library to allow wider use of the meeting room for elections, community events, or as the Village Hall.

Recreation Improvements

A 5-year recreation plan was developed in 2008 and subsequently approved by the DNR. Some improvements were identified in the recreation plan relative to improvements at Lake Michigan beach. Public input has stressed the need for improvements to the restrooms at the



The Benzie Bus provided service to over 70,000 riders in 2010

beach, along with needs to address the access issues there.

In order to be eligible for Natural Resources Trust Fund grant opportunities, maintenance and updates of the 5-year recreation plan are necessary.

ingly important in creating a competitive environment for new economic investment.

Relationship with Frankfort

Elberta's relationship with Frankfort is of enormous importance in service provision. The partnership of the two communities in the form of BLUA allows for wastewater treatment that would be unaffordable for Village residents to provide on their own.

Intergovernmental partnerships can help increase efficiency and cost-effectiveness, thereby aiding communities in their abilities to meet resident and business needs. With declining public revenues and a shrinking population base, it will be important to maintain a positive working relationship with the City of Frankfort, the County, and other units of government, and to explore other opportunities for partnership.

High-Tech Infrastructure Investment

In addition to providing affordable sewer and water infrastructure to accommodate new development, high-tech infrastructure such as wireless and broadband is becoming increas-

Chapter 6:

Vision, Goals & Objectives

One of the fundamental roles of a master plan is to provide a blueprint for the future, through the establishment of a vision, goals, and objectives. A vision is a long-term view of the community, while goals provide general direction and serve as a description of the desired future. They address issues and specific needs, but are broad in scope. Objectives are a tangible means of achieving goals.

The vision, goals and objectives in this chapter are intended to guide future development, policy initiatives, and other activities in a manner that reflects the community's values and priorities. These goals were developed using public input, previously adopted plans and studies, and analysis of current conditions, as discussed in previous plan chapters.

Master Plan Vision

Elberta is a vibrant village, home to a diverse population, year-round tourism, a mixed-use waterfront, bustling downtown, variety of housing choices, and unique small-town character. High-quality Village beaches, parks, restaurants, shops, and community events draw residents, tourists, and investment that provide economic well-being and a high-quality of life for Village residents.



Goals and Objectives

Land Use

Goal: Control residential density, as well as industrial and commercial land allocations in line with infrastructure and service facility development.

- Maintain balance among commercial, industrial, and open space land allocations.
- Encourage a variety of uses within these land allocations.
- Provide land for industrial uses that are not intrusive on residential, commercial, or waterfront development uses.
- Encourage strict adherence to state and local environmental performance standards.
- Encourage steady improvement of Village parks and recreation system.

Capital Improvements

Goal: Require new developments to pay for capital improvements necessary to serve the



new development.

- Require all new developments be serviced by Village utilities and that cost for utilities be paid by the development.

Public Lands, Places and Structures

Goal: Provide the Village with facilities that are safe, efficient, accessible, and well-located.

- Plan and purchase locations for future municipal facilities, as soon as possible, to provide for the long-term needs of the Village.
- All construction and development should proceed in accordance with all appropriate requirements of ADA and any other federal or state laws dealing with the disabled.
- Plan for the eventual expanded need for housing additional Village services including general office space, fire services, and public works operations.

Public Places and Utilities

Goal: Develop municipal facilities and services that will economically and adequately service existing and anticipated growth.

- Plan Village water, sewer and storm water drainage facilities to provide sufficient capacities needed to accommodate long-term needs.

Transportation

Goal: Provide a safe, efficient, and balanced transportation system.

- Improve the system of thoroughfares to move people quickly, economically, and

conveniently.

- Create separate bike/walking paths, where needed and feasible, and create safe, wide shoulders on street pavement for bicycles when a separate bike path cannot be built.
- Support the improvement of the public transportation system for the region, linking the Village of Elberta to adjacent communities.
- Provide for and support connections through trails and waterways between neighborhoods, parks, businesses, and neighboring communities.
- Work with MDOT and other transportation stakeholders to develop and implement traffic calming measures along M-22, including streetscape enhancements.
- Consider corridor planning initiatives for M-22 and M-168 to address traffic speeds, volumes, parking, streetscapes, and other corridor issues, in partnership with MDOT and other transportation stakeholders.
- Work with neighboring units of government, schools, and other partners to implement Safe Routes to School programs.
- Consider implementation of Complete Streets objectives in transportation improvements.
- Consider the development, and, if appropriate, adoption of, Complete Streets policies or ordinances.

Housing

Goal: Encourage a variety of residential de-

velopments to provide a diverse selection of residential types and price ranges.

- Maintain predominantly single family neighborhoods in the residentially zoned districts and encourage higher density residential development in the Waterfront zoning district.
- Attract quality senior citizen housing.
- Encourage increased investment in home repairs and rehabilitation.
- Attract quality rental housing to service all income levels.
- Encourage energy efficient housing.
- Consider zoning changes that allow for additional housing choices in existing neighborhoods, that are consistent with existing character and development patterns.

Appearance

Goal: Enhance the appearance of the access points to the Village, the major thoroughfares, and the central business district.

- Improve the architectural facades of buildings on the thoroughfares leading to, and in the central business district.
- Landscape the thoroughfares and the central business district.
- Develop and implement a uniform street furniture design for thoroughfares and central business district.

Economic Development

Goal: Promote diversified economic development in order to encourage business invest-

Planning Considerations

At a public forum on February 21, 2011, the public identified the following goals for the future of the Village:

- Provide for mixed use development and/or green uses.
- Allow for sustainable features including community gardens, small scale agriculture, and solar/renewable energy.
- Preserve historic assets including ferry docks and Life Saving Station area.
- Balance growth with protection of natural resources with smart growth priorities.
- Encourage Village-wide façade work and landscaping.
- Create additional commercial opportunities.
- Allow for small business along M-168 to lure sunset watchers.
- Provide connections with Crystal Mountain.
- Zoning for smaller scale Betsie Lake shoreline development
- Provide for complete streets
- Enhance access to public transit
- Consider potential fortrails along M-168.
- Stimulate local economy.
- Link the village to industrial development in the townships
- Provide options for childcare for working families
- Change the name from Elberta to Heaven.
- Share talent pool with Frankfort.
- Stimulate downtown activity with activities such as free movies downtown, sunset-focused activities, events, and small businesses along M-168.
- Encourage commercial development along the Betsie Bay waterfront including marina, ferry, sightseeing boats, or water taxis.
- Take advantage of sunset, trail, conservancy, other attractions.
- Turn the village into a walk/ride about
- Promote more activities for kids.
- Revive previous events, festivals, or activities such as the Shakespeare Festival, hang gliding competition, skating rink, and free outdoor movies downtown.
- Add more “niche” activities or events unique to Elberta.
- Create dog parks.
- Provide more recreation opportunities.
- Make use of sunset views to encourage weekend activities, stimulate downtown activities, and concessions at the beach.
- Improvements to Lake Michigan beach front property, including restrooms, park at the point for swimming, etc.
- Provide for enforcement of crime and driving issues on the beach, with possible collaboration with private property owners.
- Provide for quiet sports on the beach and year-round access.
- Remove docks and build boardwalk at marina.
- Provide “beach to beach” trail.
- Maintain small town charm with quality of life for current residents. We don’t need to be too big, exclusive, or unaffordable.
- Need attitude shift and more self-respect.
- Hire a police protection/peace officer to enforce access or address crime issues.
- Better zoning enforcement
- Encourage basic resident-based businesses/services (bank, grocery, etc) to fill empty buildings downtown.
- Revitalize “downtown.”
- Fill vacant buildings with basic businesses for residents such as a grocery/party store, drug store, clothing store.
- Beautify and add curb appeal to some businesses (and homes) through façade improvements, streetscape improvements (sidewalks, flowers, flags, etc), landscaping, and lighting.
- Consider ordinance enforcement for some buildings.
- Beautify M-168 w/sidewalks, landscape, lighting.
- Provide for public art (benches, etc) along M-168 and M-22.
- Volunteer work may be an option for minor improvements.

ment and increase employment opportunities.

- Encourage growth of small and light industries and offices to diversify and strengthen the tax base and provide employment.
- Encourage steady growth of business and commercial activities in balance with anticipated needs of population growth.
- Maintain and develop the Central Business District.
- Plan for the orderly development of Frankfort Avenue encouraging the use of existing buildings, whenever possible and compatible with adjacent land uses, for commercial purposes
- Develop a wayfinding/signage program that promotes Elberta's unique character and draws visitors to businesses and public spaces.

Recreation and Civic Space

Goal: Preserve and enhance the Village's

quality parks, recreation, and cultural opportunities.

- Continue to provide, maintain, and enhance a wide variety of parks and recreation opportunities for residents and visitors.
- Maintain and enhance park amenities such as playgrounds, restrooms, and picnic areas.
- Maintain an updated 5-year recreation plan.
- Encourage and promote public art displays or events in parks and civic spaces.
- Promote and encourage the use of parks and civic space for community events and festivals.

Quality of Life

Goal: Maintain and enhance the quality of life and small-town character of the Village of Elberta.



Elberta Village Master Plan

- Encourage downtown events and activities such as movies, festivals, and other community events.
- Encourage and support arts and cultural opportunities in civic spaces and downtown.
- Continue and enhance enforcement of existing nuisance and land use regulations.
- Engage in regular communications with neighboring communities and stakeholders on areas of mutual concern.
- Partner with nonprofits and community groups on fundraising and implementation activities.
- Coordinate with service groups, nonprofits, schools, and other community partners to encourage civic engagement and volunteerism in the implementation of community goals.

Partnerships, Cooperation, &

Civic Engagement

Goal: Work closely and collaboratively with neighboring communities, stakeholder groups, and the public to implement shared goals and objectives.

- Continue the Village's working relationship with the City of Frankfort and other communities to provide services and coordinate planning activities.



Chapter 7:

Future Land Use Map & Zoning Plan

The Future Land Use Map and district descriptions translate the Plan's goals, objectives, and action statements into future land use policy. Future land use district boundaries and recommendations are based on existing land use, environmental conditions, social and economic characteristics, and community goals and objectives.

The map and district descriptions identify desired future land use development patterns and approximate locations for each district. The map is not intended to be parcel-specific and as such does not reflect the precise boundaries or dimensions of future development. Rather, the Future Land Use Map is a long range guide that

describes the intended character of the Village's neighborhoods and districts, and portrays a general land use arrangement.

The map and descriptions included in this chapter are intended to ensure that existing land uses can continue while allowing for well-planned growth and investment that protects and enhances local assets. As such, the Future Land Use Map and district descriptions will serve as a guide for the Village, residents, property owners, developers, and other stakeholders when considering new policies, current issues, land use and zoning decisions, public improvements, and community investments.

Future Land Use and Zoning Maps

The Future Land Use Map and Zoning Ordinance are closely related, but not interchangeable, community land use policies. The Master Plan is a guide for land use 20 or more years into the future; the Zoning Ordinance regulates the use of land in the present. The Master Plan is not a binding, legal document; the Zoning Ordinance is a law.

It's important to note that some future land use classifications may be the same as the existing zoning for that area, while in some cases the recommended future land use is different from the existing zoning or use. This means that in some cases, to use a property for a use as identified in the Future Land Use Map, rezonings or zoning text amendments may be necessary. However, the Future Land Use Map does not, in and of itself, change the existing zoning in an area. A property owner must use the property as it is currently zoned. Changes to zoning are subject to an application and review process that provides for legal review, Planning Commission and Village Council action, and numerous opportunities for public comment.

Residential 1

The Residential 1 district includes the platted area along M-168, to the northwest of Crapo Street. The district represents the highest residential densities in the Village; most buildings are traditional nineteenth-century homes situated on lots that are 5,000 square feet or smaller in size. Front setbacks are shallow, with homes located close to the sidewalk and street right-of-way. The highest-density area of this district is located along M-168, Furnace and Narrow Streets. This area abuts the State-designated critical dunes region and the waterfront development district. Existing development includes single family homes, churches, and parks.

Future Land Use Recommendations

The intent of this district is to maintain the current historic character while providing new housing opportunities. Any infill and redevelopment should carefully consider and incorporate the specific dimensional and building characteristics of these neighborhoods.

Development Considerations

- Future development should consist primarily of single- and two-family residential uses and accessory uses including accessory dwelling units, gardens, accessory structures, and home occupations.
- Multi-family dwellings, including conversions of single-family homes to multi-family



homes, should be permitted when consistent with existing residential character.

- Non-residential uses such as churches, parks, and day cares are also appropriate when traffic, noise, signage, lighting, and other impacts to adjacent uses are limited.
- Lot size requirements and development patterns should be consistent with existing development patterns.

Residential 2

The Residential 2 district encompasses the central residential area of the Village. The western and southern portion of this district abut the critical dune areas; the eastern boundaries are defined by the Downtown District and M-22/Frankfort Ave.

Most homes are historic, mixed with cottages, ranch-style homes, and mobile homes. Non-residential uses within this district include churches, parks, and bed-and-breakfast inns. Lots range in size from about 4,000 square feet to over 15,000 square feet. Higher densities and shallower setbacks are concentrated in the northern part of this district; homes and lots become larger traveling south. Most streets are served by sidewalks.

Future Land Use Recommendations

The intent of this district is to preserve the historic residential character and development patterns. Infill and redevelopment should consider and incorporate the specific dimensional and building characteristics of this neighborhood. Uses that may be considered are those that maintain the current historic character while providing new housing opportunities.

Development Considerations

- Development should consist primarily of single- and two-family residential uses and accessory uses including accessory dwelling



units, gardens, accessory structures, and home occupations.

- Multi-family dwellings, including conversions of single-family homes to multi-family homes, should be permitted when consistent with existing residential character.
- Non-residential uses such as churches, parks, and day cares are also appropriate when traffic, noise, signage, lighting, and other impacts to adjacent uses are limited.
- Lot size requirements and development patterns should be consistent with existing development patterns.

Residential 3

The Residential 3 area is located in the south-east quadrant of the Village, beginning south of Acre Street and extending south to the Village limits. The district is bounded to the east by the Betsie River wetlands, and by M-22 (Frankfort Ave) to the west. Homes are a variety of sizes and designs, with a mix of traditional 19th-century homes, mid-20th century homes, and mobile homes. Many homes are located on lots over 10,000 square feet in size; density averages about one home per half acre. Some non-residential uses are present in the district, including the Village garage and athletic fields. There are significant areas of undeveloped land in this district.



sistent with existing residential character.

- Non-residential uses such as churches, parks, and day cares are also appropriate when traffic, noise, signage, lighting, and other impacts to adjacent uses are limited.

Future Land Use Recommendations

The intent of the Residential 3 District is to accommodate and encourage residential development consistent with existing development patterns, while providing opportunities for additional housing options.

Development Considerations

- Development should consist primarily of single- and two-family uses and accessory uses including accessory dwelling units, gardens, accessory structures, and home occupations.
- Multi-family dwellings, including conversions of single-family homes to multi-family homes, should be permitted when con-

Mixed Use

The Mixed Use area is located at the southern end of the Village, along M-22 (Frankfort Ave). Adjacent to the Residential 3 district, the area includes some large parcels, one including a former school building, which is currently vacant and presents redevelopment or adaptive reuse potential.

Future Land Use Recommendations

The intent of the Mixed Use District is to accommodate and encourage redevelopment or reuse of the former school property, in order to provide opportunities for a variety of uses including civic, commercial, and residential uses.



- Public uses or activities such as farmers markets or community space are encouraged.

Development Considerations

- A mix of residential, commercial, office space, and civic uses should be permitted, provided traffic, noise, lighting, and other impacts to surrounding neighborhoods are limited.
- Development patterns and building design should be compatible with and complementary to existing Village character.
- Higher residential densities may be permitted through a site planning process that ensures development is compatible with adjacent neighborhoods.
- Development should be connected to other parts of the community through trails or sidewalks.

Business

The Business district, which extends along Frankfort Ave/M-22 and M-168, includes the traditional central business district of the Village. Land uses within this area include retail, office, and service uses, as well as institutional or government buildings such as the Village offices and Post Office. The district is pedestrian oriented and human-scaled, particularly in the traditional central business district along M-22/Frankfort Ave. Buildings and uses tend to have a more auto-oriented design along M-168. Buildings are one to two stories high, with minimal or zero front setbacks. Parking is located to the side or behind most buildings, with on-street parking in front.



- building styles, and lot configurations
- Sidewalks, nonmotorized pathways, and/or waterways are encouraged in order to provide connections to the downtown, residential neighborhoods, parks, and the City of Frankfort.

Future Land Use Recommendations

The intent for this district to develop a vibrant, distinct, pedestrian-friendly downtown. Uses that provide basic goods or services for residents and visitors are encouraged, along with tourist- and water-based businesses such as retail, concessions, and kayak and canoe liveries.

Development Considerations

- Street furniture, street trees and landscaping, and eye-level design elements are encouraged
- Streetscape treatments of a consistent design or theme are encouraged
- Development patterns should be consistent with Elberta's historic character, existing

Waterfront Development

The Waterfront Development District includes historically industrial acreage along Betsie Lake and Lake Michigan and a number of existing commercial uses, as well as the Village-owned Waterfront Park, which includes a variety of civic uses.



This district represents the Village's largest developable area. Because of the potential for redevelopment along the waterfront, this district has been regulated under planned unit development (PUD) procedures allowing for residential and commercial development. A number of studies and planning processes have been conducted within the district, including 1996 Ann Arbor Rail Road Terminal Yard Amended Acquisition and Development Strategy, a brownfield redevelopment plan, and a public charette process.

Future Land Use Recommendations

The Waterfront District is intended to include a variety of residential and commercial uses that are well-connected with the waterfront, the downtown, and existing residential neighborhoods. Any future development or redevelopment will be consistent with the adopted Acquisition and Development Strategy, the overall guidance and goals of the Elberta Village Master Plan, and appropriate zoning regulations.

New development or redevelopment is expected to occur under regulations that provide for comprehensive Village review and involvement, as well as some flexibility for development in terms of density, design, and use.

Development is expected to occur over time in a phased approach, and building design and densities may vary within the district, reflecting changing market conditions and architectural styles. As such, additional planning for this district is recommended, in order to ensure that there is adequate public input on development and that zoning regulations can accommodate the need for phased development that reflects community goals. Some planning or zoning approaches that may be considered for this property include:

- An overlay zoning district with form-based elements to guide the design of the property over the long term
- Amended PUD regulations that allow for phased development
- A sub-area plan to guide both zoning changes and development proposals

Elberta Village Master Plan

All options should include a public charette process.

Development Considerations

- A mix of residential, commercial, and civic uses should be permitted through a site planning or PUD process.
- Development patterns and building design should be compatible with and complementary to the waterfront and existing Village character
- Development should provide for public views of and interaction with the waterfront
- Residential densities may vary and may be higher than existing residential neighborhoods
- Residential uses may include a mix of multi-family and single-family dwellings
- Development should be connected to other parts of the community
- Public use and community events such as festivals, farmers markets, and art fairs are encouraged for civic spaces in the Waterfront District
- Trailways linking the district to the downtown, the beach area, and the City of Frankfort are encouraged.

Conservation

This district includes land protected under state, tribal, and federal guidelines, as well as areas permanently preserved as public natural areas. Areas identified include sensitive natural features such as steep slopes, critical dunes, or regulated wetlands that may impact development. Existing land uses include recreation areas and overlooks, trails, natural areas, and some low-density residential development.

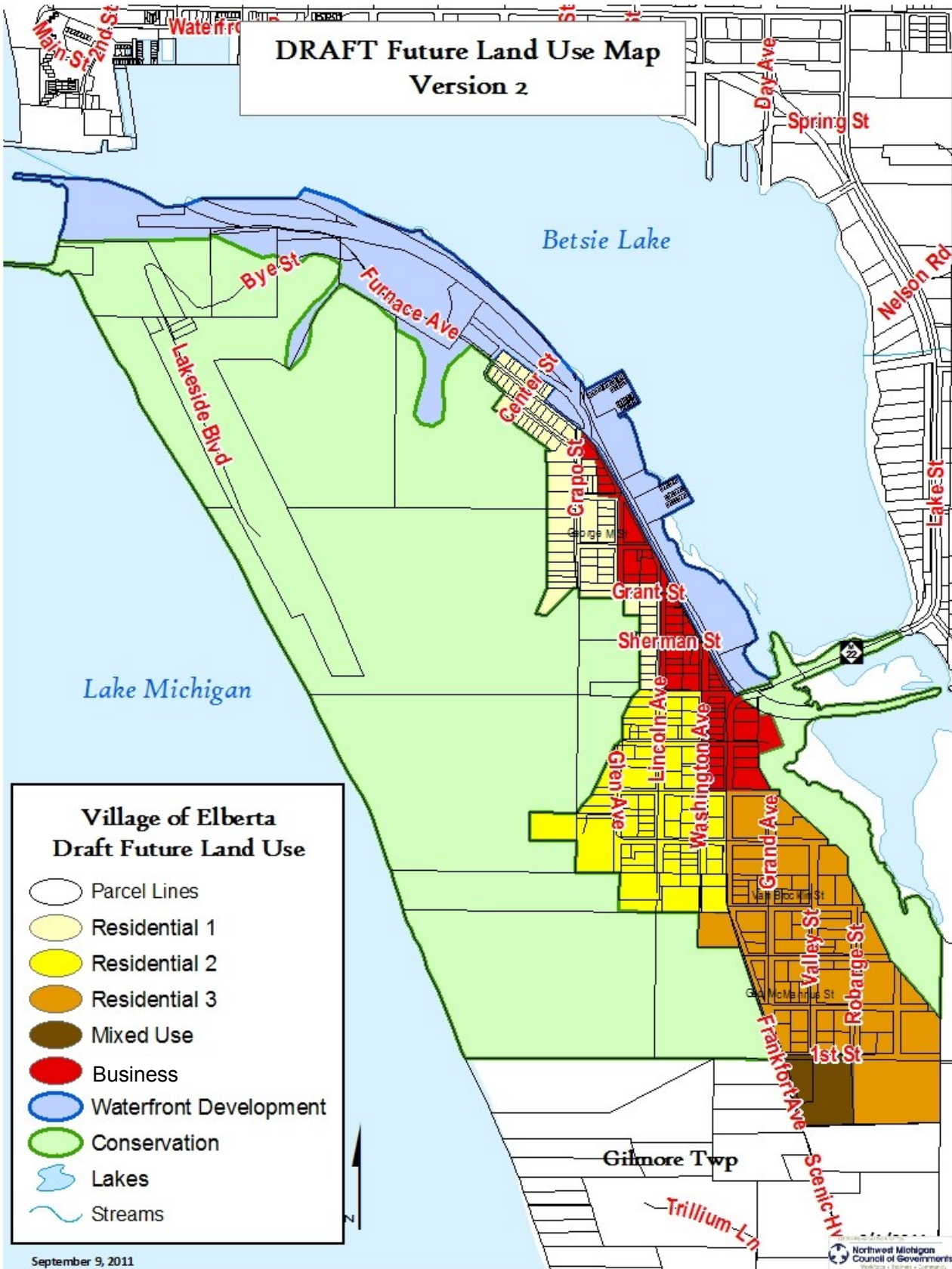


Future Land Use Recommendations

The intent of this district is to preserve important natural features and protect sensitive environmental resources. Development may be permitted in some of the identified Conservation areas, but may be subject to applicable state and federal regulations.

Development Considerations

- Any new development should consider best practices that limit impacts to the natural environment, including natural landscaping, shielded lighting, use of native vegetation, and low impact development techniques.
- Uses such as trails, natural areas, and recreation areas are encouraged.



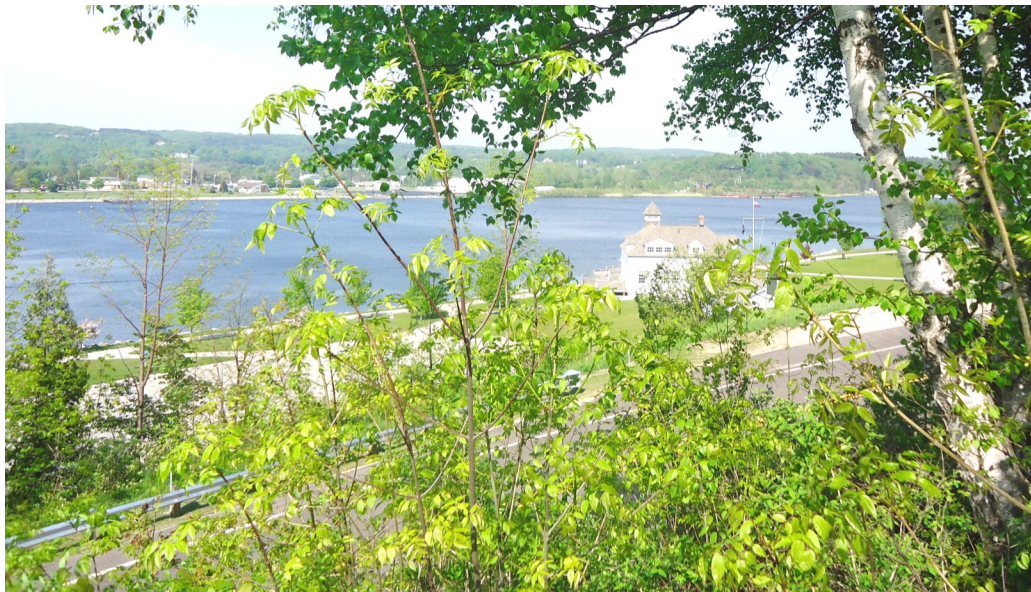
Chapter 8: Plan Implementation

Zoning Plan

Zoning has traditionally been the primary means of implementation for most master plans. Further, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008) requires the Master Plan to include a zoning plan, showing how land use categories on the future land use map relate to the zoning map. The Future Land Use Map and district descriptions act as the Village of Elberta Zoning Plan. The proposed land uses illustrated on the future land use plan map are a guide and not intended to indicate the precise boundary between uses. These uses could vary depending on how a specific proposal relates to existing uses and to the plan.

istration and implementation of, or changes to, the Village Zoning Ordinance. The Village should review and evaluate existing regulations to determine where and if changes are needed to encourage or accommodate the desired intent of the future land use map. As part of this review, the Village should also explore the possibility of implementing or reviewing regulatory techniques, including form-based zoning and planned unit developments (PUD), that allow the community to protect and preserve its most valued characteristics while allowing for new development and redevelopment in areas that represent opportunities for infill and redevelopment.

Many goals and objectives in the Master Plan can be addressed through continued admin-



Rezoning and Conditional Rezoning

In many cases, current zoning allows for the use of properties in a way that is consistent with the intent of the Future Land Use Map. However, in some cases, rezonings may be needed to allow for the intended uses or development types of the Future Land Use Map.

Conditional zoning is a technique permitted in Michigan which allows a property owner to voluntarily attach conditions to a rezoning request. These conditions restrict the development of the property to that scenario proposed by the applicant, and must be offered by the applicant—not imposed by the local government. This technique may be useful in circumstances where possible impacts to adjacent uses are a concern.

Capital Improvements, Grants, and Spending

While many Village planning goals will be implemented through zoning or other policies, some projects or objectives will require local expenditures. Because some expenses or improvements may be eligible for grant funding, the Village should pursue grant opportunities as appropriate. Other, non-grant funded spending needs will be addressed in the Village budget, which is adopted annually and addresses expenditures for facilities, maintenance, staffing, and other administrative functions.

To aid in the budgeting process, the Village should consider a capital improvements plan (CIP) that provides a blueprint for capital expenditures such as roads, utility improvements, parks, and heavy equipment. The CIP would help the Village use tax revenues efficiently, aid in administration, and support grant applications.

Leadership and Public Input

The Village Council is elected every four years to represent the community. Responsibilities include adopting plans and ordinances, setting tax rates, authorizing expenditures and borrowing, hiring administrative staff, providing oversight of public facilities, and other duties as necessary. The Council also appoints the Village Planning Commission, which is charged with development of plans and zoning ordinances, along with review of development proposals. Both elected and appointed leadership should attend regular training sessions on planning and zoning fundamentals, best practices, and emerging and innovative approaches to community development.

To ensure that the community is responsive to community and development needs while protecting the public health, safety, and welfare, the Village Council, Planning Commission, and staff should engage in regular, open communication with the community. Regular focus

groups, public discussions, or other forum type opportunities should be considered as a means to continuously obtain input and feedback. Pre-development meetings with property owners or developers should be available and encouraged to clarify ordinance requirements and approval procedures.

Partnerships and Citizen Engagement

While many of the plan's objectives may be addressed through Village policies, ordinances, or other regulations, many of the goals and objectives will require strong partnerships with community stakeholders.

The plan recommends pursuing partnerships with local service clubs, schools, nonprofits, regional agencies, and other levels of government. Partnerships broaden the scope of available grant dollars and other revenue, encourage citizen engagement in community activities, and enhance staff capacities and efficiencies. Possible partners may include:

- Benzie County
- Neighboring units of government
- Frankfort Public Schools
- Traverse Bay Intermediate School District
- Benzie County Chamber of Commerce
- Traverse Bay Area Economic Development Corporation
- Northwest Michigan Council of Govern-

ments

- SEEDS
- Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy
- Betsie Valley Trailway Management Council
- Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail
- Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency
- Northwestern Michigan College
- Michigan State Housing Development Authority
- Michigan Department of Transportation
- Michigan Economic Development Corporation
- Watershed Center



Partnerships with some of these organizations may provide volunteer capital to implement some small-scale community projects. Volunteer activities will be critical to building citizen engagement and community pride.

To ensure that partnerships are efficient and effective, the Village may wish to consider partnership agreements that clearly identify responsibilities, accountability, and length of commitment.

Plan Updates

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act requires that all plans be reviewed, and updated if necessary, every 5 years. While comprehensive updates may not occur as often as every 5 years, regular review of the plan and its objectives will be important to ensure that the plan and related ordinances are effective, whether the goals and objectives are being addressed, whether the plan's policies are still relevant and appropriate, and which objectives remain to be addressed.

During the plan review, several objectives should be identified and prioritized as an implementation schedule, in order to help focus the Planning Commission's activity throughout the year.

The Recreation Plan, which is included in this

Master Plan, should be reviewed and updated every five years, to ensure that goals are relevant and objectives are being addressed.

Provision of Municipal Services

Municipal services have the capacity to service substantial new development. However, if necessary, the Village will consider the expansion of infrastructure to accommodate the logical extension of development from existing utility service locations.

The Village will also consider providing assistance in the development of street and other utility improvements within designated rights-of-way or in alternative rights-of-way recommended by the EDC and approved by the Village Council. Typically, the Village will act as the vehicle to obtain grants and loans or will establish special assessment districts for financing such improvements.

Land adjacent to the Village which requires municipal services shall be considered for incorporation into the Village and recognized in the Village Master Plan.

Preservation of appearance

The beauty, visual appearance, and historic characteristics shall be, to the extent possible, preserved.