

CHAPTER NINE: GOALS, POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapters of the comprehensive plan have been concerned with data on housing, transportation, economy, land use, natural features, recreation and community services. The inventory of this information is essential since it describes the existing conditions in Burt Township; identifies the changes that have occurred over time in these areas; and lastly, presents the issues, problems, and opportunities of the community. This chapter will be concerned with the development of a strategy for both development and preservation of the Township.

One of the purposes of this plan is to serve as a guide for preservation, development and redevelopment in the Township. If a community is to have a sound plan, the community needs first to set goals. A goal's statement expresses the public opinion about what kind of place the community should become, and is based on the studies and community values as expressed through citizen participation and group input. Policies and objectives are then developed which are specific descriptions of what government, private organizations, and individuals need to do in order for the community to work toward the achievement of its goals.

Finally, for the plan to have value, the policies and objectives must be converted into action programs. Plan implementation should include the adoption of the Master Plan, use of the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, Capital Improvement Program, and other enforcement codes.

As one example, it may be a community goal to place great emphasis upon the preservation of the unique coastal resources of Burt Township. In view of such a goal, it may make good sense to restrict development to those uses that are compatible with these coastal resources. Thus, the Township can achieve its goal through the enforcement of its zoning powers to limit the kinds of land use activity within the coastal area. Goals bring clarity, continuity, and consistency of policy decision-making over an extended period of time.

To assist in the understanding of these terms, the following definitions are used:

- Goal:** The generalized end toward which all efforts are directed. It is normally stated in terms of fulfilling broad public needs, or the alleviation of major problems. Goals are generally immeasurable and idealistic.
- Policy:** A statement of position or course of action which provides a means of attaining the stated goal. These are factual in nature rather than value-laden, and can be measured by the impact they have on existing conditions.
- Objectives:** A specific attainable end, derived from a related goal or policy, to be accomplished within a specific time. When obtained, they represent significant and measurable progress toward the isolated goal, thus providing a means of evaluating progress.

The following goals, policies, and objectives were carefully developed and adopted by the Burt Township Planning Commission.

HOUSING

Explanation: These goals, policies and objectives recognize the need for a variety of housing types. The majority of available housing in Burt Township is single-family residences. There are limited numbers of multi-family housing in the Township. Many housing units are used seasonally and nearly all of the vacant units recorded in the Township are for seasonal or recreational use. The Grand Marais Citizens Housing Authority, a nonprofit corporation formed in August 1991, maintains a 14-unit structure to provide affordable housing to senior citizens.

Goal:

Create a housing supply to meet current demands, which provides a choice of housing types which are decent, safe, sanitary, and affordable for permanent and seasonal residents.

Policies:

1. Encourage new housing developments to locate in planned residential areas.
2. Land use controls should encourage a wide variety of housing types.
3. Encourage new residential development in areas with suitable water, soils, utilities and public facility systems.
4. New housing should be located in environmentally sound areas.
5. Promote low income/senior housing for year-round residents.

Objectives:

1. Establish strong enforcement of zoning, subdivision control regulations and building codes.
2. Annually review changes which have occurred in the Township's housing stock (new construction, demolition, conversions, etc.) to determine the extent to which choices exist with respect to housing type and price range.
3. Burt Township should more actively participate in Michigan State Housing Development Authority's (MSHDA) housing rehabilitation program.

LAND USE

Explanation: Burt Township has experienced growth in the number of housing units in the past ten years. In some places, development has occurred as strip development along roads and shores, with little or no guidance. Commercial land uses are somewhat limited. The expansion of the electrical infrastructure east from Grand Marais to the Alger County line and the development of a municipal wastewater system may enable further economic development. The amount of land held publicly and by large corporate landholders somewhat restricts-development as well. These goals, policies, and objectives will give direction as to the change in land use patterns that are occurring.

Goal:

Provide for a consistent and compatible arrangement of land uses in Burt Township.

Policies:

1. Encourage the preservation of prime forest production areas and scenic/unique natural areas from more intense types of land use, particularly within the coastal zone.
2. Correlate the use of land with the suitability of soils.
3. Ensure that the use of land and the intensity of use are suitable to the natural environment.
4. Preserve the aesthetic quality of the coastal zone by establishing proper building setback and sign regulations.

Objectives:

1. Annually review Burt Township Zoning Ordinance to ensure that development is properly located and the uniqueness of areas preserved.
2. Update detailed soils information for the Township so that it is available for planning purposes.
3. Provide information to the MDNR on all zoning permits that are located within the coastal zone.
4. Develop an informational letter and brochure which describes the rules and regulations that may apply within the coastal zone and distribute to real estate agents and others as appropriate.
5. Coordinate zoning decisions with the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore when located within the buffer zone.
6. Work with property owners in the Grand Marais area to resolve property disputes by surveying and replatting this area.

ECONOMY

Explanation: Economic growth in Burt Township is desirable. The economy is heavily dependent on the tourism industry. Presently the Township's tax base is largely composed of seasonal and residential properties. These goals, policies and objectives reflect the need for a stable economy of the Township.

Goal:

To provide an environment in which a diverse and stable economic base may be developed.

Policies:

1. Encourage the expansion of retail, wholesale, and service industries within the Township.
2. Encourage the development of an industrial park within the Township.
3. Encourage concentrated commercial development where practicable.
4. Encourage home business or occupations where compatible with existing land uses.

Objectives:

1. Identify areas suitable for development as an industrial park.
2. Steps should be taken to actively promote and expand industrial and commercial interests in the Township.

NATURAL FEATURES

Explanation: These goals, policies and objectives reflect the need and desire to give full consideration to the natural character and qualities of the land and water resources in making development decisions. Through the use of zoning, subdivision regulations and the provision of utilities and services to an area, Burt Township will be able to meet its objectives.

Goal:

Preserve and enhance Burt Township's natural environment.

Policies:

1. Locate new development in areas where the natural environment is suitable.
2. Assure that proper steps are taken to protect property in high risk erosion areas.
3. Correlate the use of the land with the suitability of the soil.
4. Protect ground and surface waters from contamination resulting from improper septic tank treatment.
5. Encourage well-designed development in specific areas of the Township in order to economically provide needed services and preserve the rural nature of the Township.
6. Increase the public's awareness through education and other means to protect the fragile environment of the Piping Plover.
7. Areas that are considered natural or scenic sites should be protected and retained.
8. Utilize the Michigan Land Trust Fund Program and other programs as a tool for preserving natural and/or scenic areas.
9. Establish a program of water quality monitoring in the Township.

Objectives:

1. Develop a lagoon for wastewater treatment and storage on the land acquired by the Township from the State of Michigan.
2. Annually review the Burt Township Zoning Ordinance to assure that development is properly located and the uniqueness of areas are preserved.
3. Utilize information from the Prime Forestland Identification Project in making land use and zoning decisions.
4. Work closely with local, state and federal agencies to preserve lands, particularly those with unique qualities.
5. Encourage the Alger/Luce/Schoolcraft Health Department to conduct perk tests in April within the coastal zone.
6. Annually conduct water quality testing in the bay each March, July and October.
7. Establish a water quality monitoring program in other Township water bodies as appropriate.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Explanation: Providing community facilities and services is a critical issue. These services and facilities, which include police and fire protection, the disposal of solid waste and wastewater, and the provision of water to homes and businesses, are vital elements in Burt Township's future and well-being. The availability of public facilities is one factor that influences growth in an area.

Goal:

Provide public services as desired by Township residents at the least possible cost and, at the same time, protect the health and well-being of Township residents.

Policies:

1. Make needed improvements to the Township's public water system.
2. Continue adequate fire-police protection, ambulance and coast guard auxiliary service to all areas of the Township.
3. Continue to solve the solid waste problem.
4. Promote recycling and reuse of materials as a means to help solve the solid waste problems.

Objectives:

1. Work with the Alger County Solid Waste Planning Committee in developing updates to the County's Solid Waste Plan.
2. Work with the Coast Guard to acquire that portion of their excess property along Coast Guard Point not being transferred to the National Park Service.
3. Identify options and pursue funding to economically deal with the sand in-fill problems of the harbor.
4. Complete a study to evaluate options to correct the on-site septic problems found in downtown Grand Marais.
5. Implement changes necessary to improve the sewer problems in Grand Marais.
6. Provide adequate maintenance for the Burt Township Hall, community building and other facilities.

RECREATION

Explanation: Maintaining and improving upon the recreation facilities and opportunities in the Township is desirable. Consideration of the recreation policies should lead the community toward the attainment of its overall recreation goals. Specific development projects and programs should be evaluated with respect to these recreation policies and to their contribution to the recreation system in Burt Township.

Goals:

1. Provide a wide variety of recreational opportunities to all residents and visitors in the Burt Township/Grand Marais area.
2. Make maximum use of recreational opportunities offered in our natural environment.

Policies:

1. Projects should be within easy access to all residents and visitors.
2. Whenever and wherever possible, facilities should be for multiple and/or year-round use.
3. The Township Board should work with the National Park Service in providing recreation opportunities and programs.
4. Facilities should be designed to compliment and preserve the unique qualities of surrounding areas.
5. Whenever possible, the Township and private interests should coordinate the development of recreational facilities and programs.
6. Existing facilities should be upgraded before new ones are built.
7. Proper maintenance should be ensured for all facilities.
8. Enhance and improve the harbor facilities.

Objectives:

1. Develop support facilities, particularly a rest room and shower facility for the marina.
2. Upgrade existing facilities in Woodland Park.
3. Acquire additional lands, particularly along water courses, to expand recreation opportunities in the Township.
4. Encourage the enhancement and preservation of the Grand Marais Historical Museum.
5. Work on improving recreation facilities as identified in the Recreation Development Schedule.

TRANSPORTATION

Explanation: The dominance of the private automobile as the primary means of transportation will continue to strongly influence the future of Burt Township. Improvements to county roads are of primary importance, but must be done in an environmentally sensitive way.

Goal:

Provide for the efficient movement of people and goods through a balanced transportation network.

Policies:

1. Coordinate improvements to the transportation system with the overall development of Burt Township.
2. Maintain the tree canopy along H-58 wherever possible.
3. If additional improvements are made to H-58, then they have to be done in such a way as to preserve the character of the existing road.
4. Encourage and support the enactment of Heritage Route legislation in Michigan.

Objectives:

1. Continue to work with the Alger County Road Commission, MDOT, PRNL and others to assess the appropriateness of road improvements along H-58.
2. Make necessary improvements to roads considered inadequate in Burt Township.
3. Determine the need and location for additional bicycle routes in Burt Township.

4. Encourage the continuation of county-wide public transportation services in Burt Township.
5. Utilize annual PASER Ratings to rank local road improvements projects in Burt Township.
6. Work with the Alger County Road Commission to restrict the speed along H-58, particularly through PRNL.
7. Evaluate the appropriateness of abandoning Grand Marais Avenue between Randolph and Brazil Street.
8. Establish a rural emergency house numbering system in Burt Township.
9. Work with local, state and civic groups to develop alternative trails for off-road vehicles.