



VILLAGE OF BENZONIA

MASTER PLAN

Including The 5-Year Park & Recreation Plan

2020

FINAL DRAFT
JANUARY 23, 2020

NOTE: A FULL COLOR PDF VERSION IS AVAILABLE ON THE VILLAGE WEBSITE

www.villageofbenzonia.com
AND AT THE VILLAGE OFFICE

1276 Michigan Ave, Benzonia, MI 49616



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Acknowledgments

This plan would not have been possible without the support and efforts of the citizens of the Village of Benzonia, Village staff, and Village Board members. Members of the Village Planning Commission participated directly in collaborating on this document. It truly takes a Village!

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*"SOONER OR LATER YOU MUST MOVE DOWN AN UNKNOWN ROAD
THAT LEADS BEYOND THE RANGE OF THE IMAGINATION, AND THE ONLY
CERTAINTY IS THAT THE TRIP HAS TO BE MADE" BRUCE CATTON*

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION

TOP OF THE HILL, 2019 - ORIGINAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

This Master Plan is to lay the groundwork for actual and coordinated improvements in the Village of Benzonia. Master planning efforts are often seen as long processes that result in a report that sits on a shelf, where tangible results are hard to see. The Village Council and Planning Commission are eager and willing to move the Village of Benzonia progressively forward. They were looking to organize a community wide planning effort that will avoid the 'sit on the shelf' plan and result in ideas with realistic goals and objectives that the Village can immediately move on to start making positive changes for the community. This plan will also look to the future and help set the stage for decisions that will continue to shape the Village in the next 5, 10 and 20 years.

This document will be the first ever master plan created solely and specifically for the Village of Benzonia. Its primary purpose is to guide the Village's future development based on the community's needs and desires towards the most efficient and economical use of the land. The plan will promote the public health, safety, and general welfare of the Village; provide a guide for adequate transportation systems, public utilities, and ensure efficient expenditure of public funds.

This master plan will also address park and recreation planning in the Village and serve as the 5-year Recreation Plan. Through its recreation grants program, currently funded through the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund and the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) provides financial assistance to communities that would like to purchase land for parks, or are planning to improve or develop recreation facilities. To be eligible to apply for MDNR grant programs, a community must have a 5-year Recreation plan approved by the MDNR, that meets certain requirements.

PROJECT BACKGROUND & KEY PLAYERS

As mentioned, this document will be the first ever master plan created solely for the Village. The previously adopted master plan was an amended document to the Benzie County Comprehensive Plan 2020. While that plan met the criteria of the Michigan Enabling Act in order to base the Village's zoning ordinance, it did little to dive into the specific needs and unique circumstances of the Village.

In 2017 the Village staff, with support from the council, began the 'engagement' process (or step one) of the Redevelopment Ready Community (RRC) Certification Program and completed the required self evaluation. This is a free program by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) designed to support community revitalization efforts and local retail businesses. One of the benefits that will be particularly beneficial to Benzonia is; it allows communities without a traditional 'downtown' to be able to provide more development incentives to potential developers. That MEDC responded to the Village's self evaluation in December of 2018 and gave the Village a formal evaluation and a list of directives required to meet the RRC Best Practices in order to become certified. Currently, there are no other municipalities in Benzie County participating in the program and only a handful in the Northwest Region. This will be a key program to help secure additional funding and also put Benzonia on the map for potential redevelopment opportunities.

Another recent development in the Village is that the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) is moving forward with a resurfacing project for US-31 through the Village. Planning is underway and a few public information meetings have been held, construction is expected to begin in the Spring/Summer of 2020. There will be some opportunities for the Village to gain some key transportation related improvements, however, they will be minimal. Current plans are for MDOT to resurface/reshape the road, provide 5 foot minimum width sidewalks for the length of the project and making some improvements to intersections. Lack of current plans, or any other type of corridor/street plan for the Village may have limited the coordinated planning efforts and funding opportunities that may have been available to work with MDOT to create more significant pedestrian related streetscape improvements. The Village wants to create more substantial streetscape improvements such as furnishings, street lights, street trees, planters, etc. and is in the conceptual stage with an engineering consultant with the goal of seeking additional funding.



In addition, the Village recently received one of its first major MDNR recreation grants to help provide some improvements to Academy Park. (First since 1977) At the time of this report, planning for the improvements is completed and installation is scheduled to be completed in 2020.

The current Planning Commission, with strong support from the Village Council recognized that with the above project and programs in the pipeline, there are many prime opportunities for improvements to the Village. However, there lacks a central organizational structure to guide the Village in a cohesive manner moving forward. It was with this idea that this master plan process began.

The Master Plan was led by the Planning Commission with assistance from a planning and design consultant. The Village Council reviewed and provided support for the master plan process along the way. There were several opportunities for public engagement during the process in the form of a public workshop meeting, public survey, and a public review meeting of the draft plan. A final public hearing was held per the MPEA and MDNR requirements. A stakeholder group of key community members were also involved in the process to gain their unique perspectives on issues related to the Village.

The Final Master Plan adoption is subject to public hearing and approval by resolution of the Village Planning Commission and Village Council.

A CLOSER LOOK REDEVELOPMENT READY COMMUNITY - BENEFITS

Working through and accomplishing the RRC Best Practices is beneficial to the Village of Benzonia for a number of reasons:

- Streamlining processes and procedures internally makes better use of staff time and allows for cross-training and succession planning.
- Participating communities recognize the value in receiving a third party, outside review of their planning, zoning and development plans, processes and policies.
- Certification is the “Good Housekeeping” seal of approval, indicating that your community goes above and beyond statutory requirements and is truly open for investment.
- Communities with a traditional downtown need to be formally engaged in RRC to be prioritized for community development incentives.
- Communities without a traditional downtown must be certified RRC to be eligible for community development incentives.
- RRC is an ongoing partnership with a community, and MEDC will work with the Village throughout the process to provide support when needed.
- There is technical assistance match funding available to communities that have received a formal evaluation and passed a resolution to move forward.
- MEDC will promote up to 3 of the community’s available redevelopment sites upon certification. They will assist in the development of site marketing materials and bring them to conferences and events both in Michigan and across the country. This gives the Village a chance to promote its redevelopment opportunities to developers that have never completed a project in the Village.

Source: <https://www.miplace.org/programs/redevelopment-ready-communities/>

USE OF THE PLAN

This Master Plan is a general statement of the Village's goals and objectives and provides a single, comprehensive view of the community's desires for the future.

This Master Plan will serve as an aid in daily decision-making. The goals and policies outlined in the Plan will guide the Planning Commission, Village Council, and other Village representatives in their deliberations on zoning, development proposals, capital improvements, and other matters related to land use and development.

This Master Plan provides the statutory basis upon which zoning decisions are made. The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (P.A. 33 of 2008, as amended) requires that the zoning ordinance be based upon a plan designed to promote the public health, safety and general welfare. It requires that a planning commission create and approve a master plan as a guide for development of the zoning ordinance, and review the master plan every 5 years after adoption. **It is important to note that the Master Plan and accompanying maps do not replace the Village of Benzonia Ordinances or existing Zoning Map.**

Zoning is just one of the instruments used to implement the goals and objectives this plan. This master plan will be an invaluable tool moving forward for a number of reasons:

- At its most basic level, this Master Plan will be used as the basis for the Village's Zoning Ordinance.
- The gathering and analysis of comprehensive community information and data enables community leaders to gain a unique perspective on the specific challenges and opportunities of the Village.
- By involving citizens and stakeholders in the planning process, the Plan serves as the supported community vision, including goals and objectives to achieving the shared vision.
- It will serve as a guide to make future park and recreation improvements.
- The plan will help meet criteria to move forward with the Redevelopment Ready Community program.
- This plan will set the stage for the Village to move forward with an realistic Capitol Improvement Plan that will ensure most economic use of public funds.

This Master Plan attempts to coordinate public improvements and private development and should be supported by the Capital Improvements Plan. For example, public investments in transportation infrastructure or public space should be concentrated in areas identified in the Plan which will result in the greatest benefit to the Village and in turn inspire quality private development.

Finally, this Master Plan serves as an educational tool and gives citizens, property owners, developers and adjacent communities a clear indication of the Village's direction for the future.



CHAPTER II.

VISION

SPEED
LIMIT
45

"GROWTH IS INEVITABLE AND DESIRABLE, BUT DESTRUCTION OF COMMUNITY CHARACTER IS NOT. THE QUESTION IS NOT WHETHER YOUR PART OF THE WORLD IS GOING TO CHANGE. THE QUESTION IS HOW." EDWARD T. MCMAHON



Every master plan needs a direction, a statement that will guide everything about the recommendations that are found within the document. The Planning Commission has created the following Vision statement to best summarize their thoughts about the direction they wish for the master plan. This statement was carefully crafted after public input was received during the beginning stages of the project. The Vision takes into account overall feelings received from the stakeholder interviews, the discussions the commission members and consultant had with the community at the public workshop, along with comments from the charrette exercises. It also takes into account the vast number of various comments received in the public surveys and from general comments from the public received during the process.

VISION

The Village of Benzonia was founded and originally known as a progressive minded community on the hill. The Village has long academic roots, a rich and colorful history, it is community-driven and has strong family values. The founders knew people would be attracted to this wilderness, these beautifully forested lands with pristine views of the surrounding lakes and rivers, this “good place”.

We seek to continue this progressive mindedness with great respect for the natural resources of the region as we move forward with the continued and necessary growth of our community. We know this process and associated projects will not happen overnight, but stand committed to make the step-by-step improvements to keep the Village moving in the right direction.

We will provide guidance as best as possible for new developments and also encourage responsible redevelopments. We will encourage projects that will help to revitalize our historic “top-of-the-hill” and enhance our commercial areas while keeping our small town charm. We want to strengthen our neighborhoods, provide for a healthy environment and protect our natural resources. We want to continue to look to the future and promote new technologies, strive for sustainability, and help drive our local economy to support our local businesses. We want to continue to attract people and especially more young families to our community. We do this all with our eyes forward, while preserving our culture, our history and our quiet, small town way of life.



SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT & ORGANIZATION OF THIS PLAN

This Master Plan for the Village of Benzonia will be organized around the overarching principles of sustainability. Sustainability is definitely a word that gets thrown around a lot in this day and age, and if used thoughtlessly and incorrectly it can become meaningless. However, when one looks at the root of the word, the most basic definition, it simply means the ability to “last or continue for a long time.” Communities cannot last or continue for a long time without planning and living in a way that uses resources responsibly.

There are several ways of thought that pertain to the notion of sustainability, one of those is the idea called the “Triple-Bottom-Line”(TBL). This idea was conceived in the mid-90’s and includes the 3 P’s (people, planet, and profit). It has been used as a way to measure performance and support sustainability goals for organizations. The organization of this Master Plan will use these ideas behind the TBL framework:



The background data, public input and design charrette, the inventory of the community and the recommended goals and objectives are all organized around these three principles and are presented in this report accordingly. The colors of the report chapters are related to the colors presented in the diagram here and the intended ideals they represent.

This is to provide not only a basis to organize this plan, but a guide to illustrate to future decision makers, who will be referencing this plan, how all decisions and actions must work together in order to support a sustainable future for the Village of Benzonia.





KEY ASSETS

In order to affirm and help develop the vision for this plan a few questions were asked during the workshop and the public survey to gauge the community’s first reactions or feeling towards the current state of the Village (FIGURE 2.0), as well as what they like BEST (FIGURE 2.1). The following word clouds are a summary of the responses. Words that were repeated most often in the answers are indicated by the largest font size.



FIGURE 2.0 - RESPONSE SUMMARY TO “WHAT IS THE FIRST THING THAT COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK OF THE VILLAGE OF BENZONIA?”

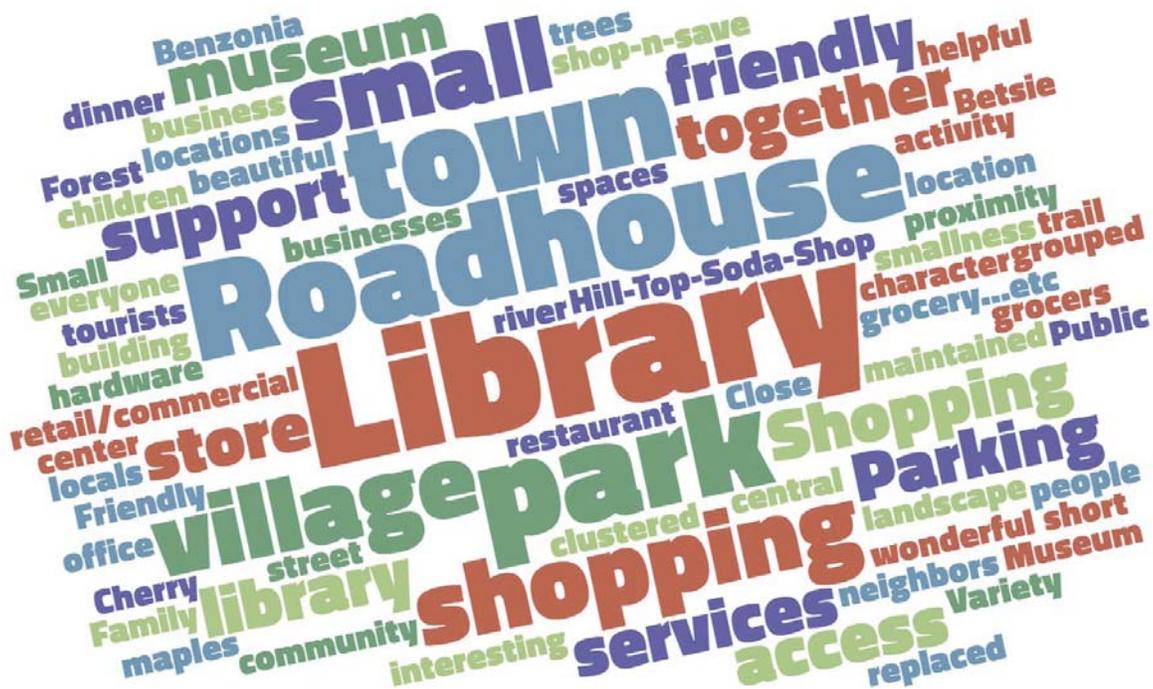


FIGURE 2.1 - RESPONSE SUMMARY TO “CAN YOU LIST ONE THING YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT THE VILLAGE?”

CHAPTER III.

THE PROCESS

**"DO NOT TRY TO MAKE CIRCUMSTANCES FIT YOUR PLANS.
MAKE PLANS THAT FIT THE CIRCUMSTANCES."** GEORGE S. PATTON



PUBLIC OUTREACH

One of the most critical portions of master planning for communities is involving the public and creating a process to best reach out for feedback in a variety of ways. Long term success of the master plan process is dependent on involving the public. The Village committed early on in this project to involve the Village residents in a variety of ways and also to meet all the requirements for the MDNR Park and Recreation Plan component, as well as the per the The Michigan Planning Enabling Act.

PUBLIC MEETING #1

The public outreach components of this plan included a Public Visioning Workshop that was scheduled near the beginning of the project. The meeting began with an open house style event where there were several stations to engage participants. The inventory maps of the Village were displayed for comments and to spark discussions. A 'visioning' wall was displayed that prompted comments about first thoughts that come to mind regarding the Village, opportunities, and constraints. Another activity was a Visual Preference Survey to gauge participants first reactions to a number of images and development types (FIGURE 3.0). The consultant then gave a presentation summarizing the inventory and setting up the participants for a design charrette. Meeting participants were split into 3 groups and created a plan with their ideas for the future based around the "Triple-Bottom-Line" framework as discussed earlier (FIGURE 3.1). Their plans are shown in the appendix along with the Visual Preference Survey summary and attendance sheet. The compiled plan is shown here in FIGURE 3.2.



FIGURE 3.0 - VISIONING EXERCISE AT PUBLIC WORKSHOP



FIGURE 3.1 - DESIGN CHARRETTE AT PUBLIC WORKSHOP

PUBLIC SURVEY SUMMARY

Public comment cards and the public survey were also handed out at the Visioning Workshop. The workshop kicked off an approximately 3 week period to collect public surveys. The survey was made available by hard copy at the workshop, the Village office, and the Benzonia Public Library. An on-line version was also made available and was promoted via various social media sites, the Village website and the Library website.

The survey was also organized around the Triple-Bottom-Line framework as a way to gather responses that would relate and either support or disavow aspects of the master plan. The survey was broken into the following sections:

- Village Character – How does it look and feel?
- Village Land Use and Rules
- Village Parks and Recreation
- Village Transportation
- Living and Working in the Village
- Demographics

There were 55 responses to the public survey as well as 2 other detailed comments that were turned in and were evaluated with the surveys. Full results of the survey can be found in the Appendix, the following is a summary of the results.

VILLAGE CHARACTER HIGHLIGHTS

This initial section of the survey contained 13 questions to gauge the overall feeling that residents have about the Village. In general, most respondents consider the Village a quiet and friendly small town, however there were also a large number of people who felt the overall aesthetic is rundown, outdated, lacks style/identity and needs improvements. Many of the comments also dealt with US-31 and how they feel it is unsafe, traffic concerns, and pedestrian concerns, especially for crossings.

A majority of people do feel like the Village should grow and have more development in the future. When asked about the types, most of the uses listed were 'quieter' type developments, such as small retail shops, parks, and residential spaces. Respondents were mixed on their views of how they like the look of current residential in the community, a majority felt neutral. A majority of respondents do NOT like the look of commercial development in the Village. Again, people were split on how they like the overall look of the Village, a slight majority were NOT satisfied with the current overall look. Nearly all (90%) of respondents said they would support zoning or additional guidelines to guide the look of new development to align with this overall vision. Even though there may be frustrations with the look and traffic concerns in the Village, 56% of respondents were satisfied with their quality of life in the Village.

VILLAGE LAND USE AND RULES HIGHLIGHTS

A majority of people said they were aware that the Village had an ordinance - however, reading through the comments, most were unaware of what it actually contained. Most respondent agreed that the ordinance likely needs to be updated, 37% are not satisfied with the contents. Some of the highest priority thoughts for improvements included strengthening the environmental regulations, site development (commercial and residential), lighting/light pollution, sign regulations, permitting process, and urban agriculture. There was strong consensus that blight is an issue in the Village, and many are unsatisfied with the current code enforcement. A lot of comments pertained to blight, and poorly maintained buildings as eyesores.

VILLAGE PARKS AND RECREATION SUMMARY

Overall there seemed to be great support and enthusiasm for parks and recreation facilities, especially future improvement potential. However, current use of the Village Park facilities per the survey comments is low. In all the questions about park usage there was a larger percentage of respondent that said they either do not use the parks or use them only once or twice a year. Many respondents were unaware of the



FIGURE 3.2 - COMPILED MAP FROM THE VISIONING EXERCISE - THIS MAP HAS BEEN REFINED THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS AND IS THE BASIS FOR THE OVERALL VISION AS SHOWN IN CHAPTER VII, REFER TO FIGURE 8.0.

Village trails. When asked why they didn't use the facilities, many of the comments mentioned they didn't know about them, lacked signage to know about them, and lack of promotion. Overwhelmingly, much like the results of the public meeting, the idea of additional trails and pedestrian connection was the most popular idea for new and improved facilities. Other ideas for new facilities that were noted most often were; bringing back a sledding hill (FIGURE 3.3), picnic spaces/shelters and more playground space. There were also several comments and responses that supported the ice rink in Academy park and would like to see it stay and improved upon. There were a lot of great comments with additional concerns and ideas, these are all listed in the Appendix.

VILLAGE TRANSPORTATION SUMMARY

The biggest takeaway from the comments on this section of the survey is that most people agree that US-31 through the middle of the Village is an overall safety concern and most people do not feel comfortable walking, bicycling or crossing this highway. When asked about the other streets in the Village, about 65% of people said they do feel comfortable walking. One of the only other streets that had concerns was Traverse Avenue, as some mentioned high speeds and difficulty of walking on Traverse Avenue. There were also many comments about lack of sidewalks and the poor quality of sidewalks in the Village overall - 77% of people do not feel that sidewalks in the Village are adequate, and almost all support the development of additional sidewalks. When asked about where the Village should start, the comments were varied (see Appendix), but most agree with starting on US-31 and M-115. Other priorities mentioned were, strengthening the connection to Beulah, Traverse Ave (River Rd.), South Street, and assuring connection to all shopping and retail areas. A majority of people like the current look of the Village Streets, and there were many comments with concerns about the speed of drivers throughout the Village.



FIGURE 3.3 - THE TOW ROPE ON THIS SLEDDING HILL IN BENZONIA BECAME THE FIRST TOW ROPE AT BUCK HILLS (CRYSTAL MOUNTAIN)¹.

¹Shared Moments: A Journey Through Time., The Benzie Area Historical Society, Signature Book Printing, 2007.



LIVING AND WORKING IN THE VILLAGE SUMMARY

This section was to gain an understanding of the location and household makeup of people who were responding to the survey and how they feel about housing and commercial development in the Village. About half of respondents (46%) said they were homeowners in the Village, the remaining respondents are people that frequent the Village either for work, shopping, or live nearby. Of the homeowners that responded, a majority have lived in the Village 10 years or more. The largest household size category that filled out the survey was households of 2-3 people.

When asked about appearance of housing, the responses were split, 50% said they were satisfied with the look of existing homes in the Village. When asked to think about how the Village should plan for future housing choices, most responses were geared towards the addition of more low-key residential options such as; traditional single family (what it is now), rental housing, senior/assisted living, compact multi-family, and planned unit developments. Least mentioned were subdivisions and mobile home parks. Some of the other comments mentioned concern over not having sewers, and assuring that new housing developments are quality and attractive, 89% of people agreed that improving the quality of housing is important. When asked about affordable housing, 81% of respondents agree it should be encouraged by the Village. However, there was trepidation noted in some of the comments, again mostly in concern with the quality of housing and ongoing upkeep.

In regards to retail and commercial, a majority of respondents felt that there should be more in the Village. Some of the most preferred types included; restaurants (full service and quick/take-out), specialty retail stores, office spaces and medical services. Medical services might include smaller office spaces for dentist, chiropractors, wellness stores, specialty doctors, physical therapy and the like. Most respondents think that new retail developments should be focused on the US-31 southern corridor and Michigan Avenue (top-of-the-hill).

The last few questions were to get a feeling for residents overall priorities that may be used to help guide new development. There was a strong support for the idea of sustainability and that sustainable development should be important as the Village looks to guide new development. Similarly, the idea of historic preservation was also viewed as important. Residents also seemed to support the idea of protecting the steep slopes in the Village and the overall idea that some types of special protections or development methods may be beneficial. The idea of adding light industrial areas into the Village mix received some support, however 26% of respondents disagreed as well.

The last couple questions dealt with the original historic retail section of the Village, in an attempt to get an idea for how people view this area of town. Because the Village of Benzonia lacks a traditional 'downtown' area, it's this area on the 'top-of-the hill' that serves this purpose, and most respondents agreed. When asked if there were other ideas on what it could be called, the 'top-of-the-hill' was again mentioned over and over. Many of the comments throughout the survey, as well as the entire public feedback process, noted that the Village of Benzonia was nondescript and lacks an identity. One of the comments even said, "blink and you miss it." A major challenges moving forward will be to overcome this hurdle and begin to bring back a sense of identity for the Village on the Hill.

RESPONDENT PROFILE

Of the 55 people who took the survey, all were over 35 years of age, with the largest group in the 35-65 year age group. A majority (67%) of the people who took the survey were female. A majority of the respondents said they were retired (37%), while nearly half of the respondents were either employed full time or self employed. A majority of the people also reported having a college or graduate degree, while another 32% had at least some college experience. Of the people that responded, a majority were in the \$25,000-75,000 annual income range.



STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS AND QUESTIONNAIRES

The Planning Commission members reached out to several individuals in the Village community to gain additional insights into their thoughts and concerns for the future of the Village. These individuals have a varied background and interests in the community and brought perspectives ranging from education, municipal leadership, local small business, to historic and long time resident status. Their responses to a variety of questions asked are summarized below.

OVERALL FEELINGS ABOUT THE VILLAGE

In general, the stakeholders have an overall attitude that the Village is doing OK, but that there is opportunity for improvements. Some of the biggest assets named are the Village's proximity to the area's natural resources like Crystal Lake, and its central and convenient location in the County. Others mention its small size and the fact that it is not 'too developed' lends to some of its charm. Walkability is a concern.

OVERALL THOUGHTS ON LAND USE/REGULATIONS

While there were a few stakeholder that were not entirely familiar with the current Ordinance, most express concern that it should be updated to be consistent with new and improved development goals that will arise from the master plan process. There was also concerns that the current ordinance does not have enough regulations, especially in regards to 'architectural' control.

THOUGHTS ON PARKS AND RECREATION

Stakeholders were eager to express ideas about the Village park spaces. A common thread was that all need to have better regular care and maintenance. However, there is an understanding that it is a small Village and staffing is limited. One idea for improvement included trying as best as possible to keep the ice rink going in Academy Park, on a low-key/casual use scale. There was an idea that reaching out to others in the community to help coordinate upkeep, as well as provide programming will allow this to be a feasible idea. Other ideas for improvements included more and better trails, fountains and improved parking at the parks. It was stressed that appealing to the young families (children and adolescents) in our community is critical.

VILLAGE TRANSPORTATION IDEAS

The thoughts from stakeholders on this subject were right on par with the public survey responses. It was agreed that more walking opportunities and better connections are a must. There was great consensus that lack of safety, speed of traffic on US-31, and the lack of ability to safely cross this road are of the biggest concerns. There were also comments about the lack of sidewalks in general and the notion that there are no bike lanes and that these may be just as important as sidewalks. Traffic control and parking on US-31 was also mentioned as a major concern.

IDEAS ABOUT LIVING AND WORKING IN THE VILLAGE

When asked about housing challenges in the Village there were two main thoughts that the stakeholders agreed upon. The first is that the Village has a problem with lack of affordable housing, and available "quality" housing in general. This is especially true for the elder population. The stakeholders also pointed out that there seems to be a lack builders or developers that are willing to build these types of housing as well. The second point in agreement is that there seems to be a lack of quality rental housing as well, especially for seasonal workers. There may be rental housing available on a weekly basis for tourists, but a lack of rental housing available for workers or year round families that desire rental.

Some of the biggest challenges for small business were considered and stakeholders again agreed that the seasonal nature of the businesses makes for a unique set of problems for this area. Thoughts included ways to figure out how to draw from a larger market base, to increasing the pool for employers to have quality employees in the summer months (being able to provide better places to live). Other concerns were for business on the top-of-the-hill having lack of parking and access for deliveries. Another aspect that was raised was the tax rates for business owners in the Village and whether they are comparable with other municipalities in regards for the services received, and if this might deter new businesses from opening shops in the Village. Perhaps the Village should make comparisons to remain competitive with other municipalities



in the area. It was discussed if there were possibilities to provide some sort of economic incentive to small business owners in the Village, especially businesses that are open year round and provide employment for the community residents year round.

The last item that was discussed with the stakeholder group was to have them choose one idea or improvement that they would like to see MOST in the next 5-10 years. The major ideas that came up that are a priority for stakeholders are; improving the infrastructure and making sewer service available in the Village, providing more assisted living or senior housing options, intersection improvements for US-31 so that residents can safely cross this road (medians and or crosswalks), stopping the use of J-brakes in the Village limits (noise concerns), and improving walkability overall.

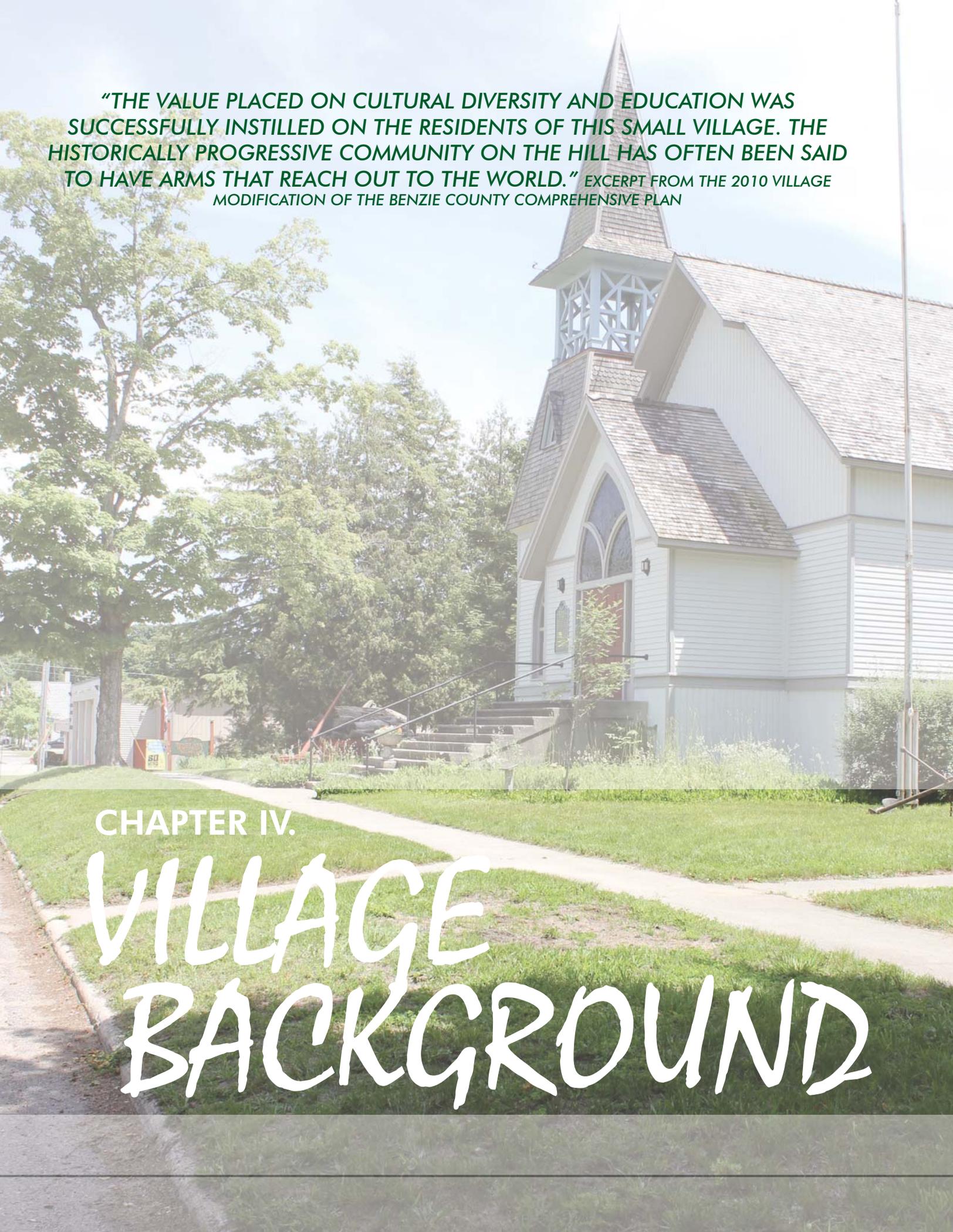
PUBLIC MEETING #2

A second public meeting on the master plan was held after the draft plan was completed to present a summary the findings for the public feedback and present the draft of the master plan. The meeting was advertised in the local paper, Village and Library websites as well as various social media pages. The meeting was an open house style meeting with displays to prompt discussion and leave feedback via the consultant as well as comment cards. In addition, a hard copy of the master plan was made available at the Village office and the Benzonia Public Library for anyone to review, a PDF file was also made available on the Village website. The attendance sheet and summary of comments is available in the Appendix.

PLAN ADOPTION

Before the second public meeting the Planning Commission, at their regularly scheduled monthly meeting, recommended to Council that the draft plan be released for review to the adjacent jurisdictions for the required 63 day review period. The Council resolved the release of the draft plan at the November 4, 2019 Council meeting, and notices of the plan were sent to adjacent jurisdictions and others as required. The plan was also made available as a PDF on the Village website. After the required review period, the Planning Commission advertised a final public hearing in the local newspaper for January 23, 2020. The hearing was also advertised on various social media message boards. The final draft was reviewed at the Planning Commission meeting and voted by resolution to recommend to the Village Council for adoption. The Village Council then held a special meeting and adopted this master plan on January 24, 2020.





"THE VALUE PLACED ON CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND EDUCATION WAS SUCCESSFULLY INSTILLED ON THE RESIDENTS OF THIS SMALL VILLAGE. THE HISTORICALLY PROGRESSIVE COMMUNITY ON THE HILL HAS OFTEN BEEN SAID TO HAVE ARMS THAT REACH OUT TO THE WORLD." EXCERPT FROM THE 2010 VILLAGE MODIFICATION OF THE BENZIE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

CHAPTER IV.

VILLAGE BACKGROUND



BACKGROUND AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

The Village of Benzonia is a small municipality located in center of Benzie County which sits in the Northwest Lower Peninsula of Michigan, (FIGURE 4.0). It is bisected by one of the major US Highways that run through the Northwest Michigan Region, US-31. Today it is comprised of 715 acres. The Village provides a major commercial corridor for the County and includes a shopping center and grocery that serves as one of the main retail centers in the Region. The Village is located in close proximity to Lake Michigan and Crystal Lake, one of Michigan’s largest inland lakes, both of which draw visitors to the area for shopping, especially during the summer season.

This chapter will discuss the Village’s history, its population makeup and trends, as well as some household and economic data. In order to plan for the future it is important to understand the unique setting and circumstances that create a community. The following village history discusses the progressive thinking settlers that Benzonia was known for. It is with hope that this master plan will draw inspiration from these original ways of thought and help to guide future leaders in a similar progressive way as they help shape the Village’s future.

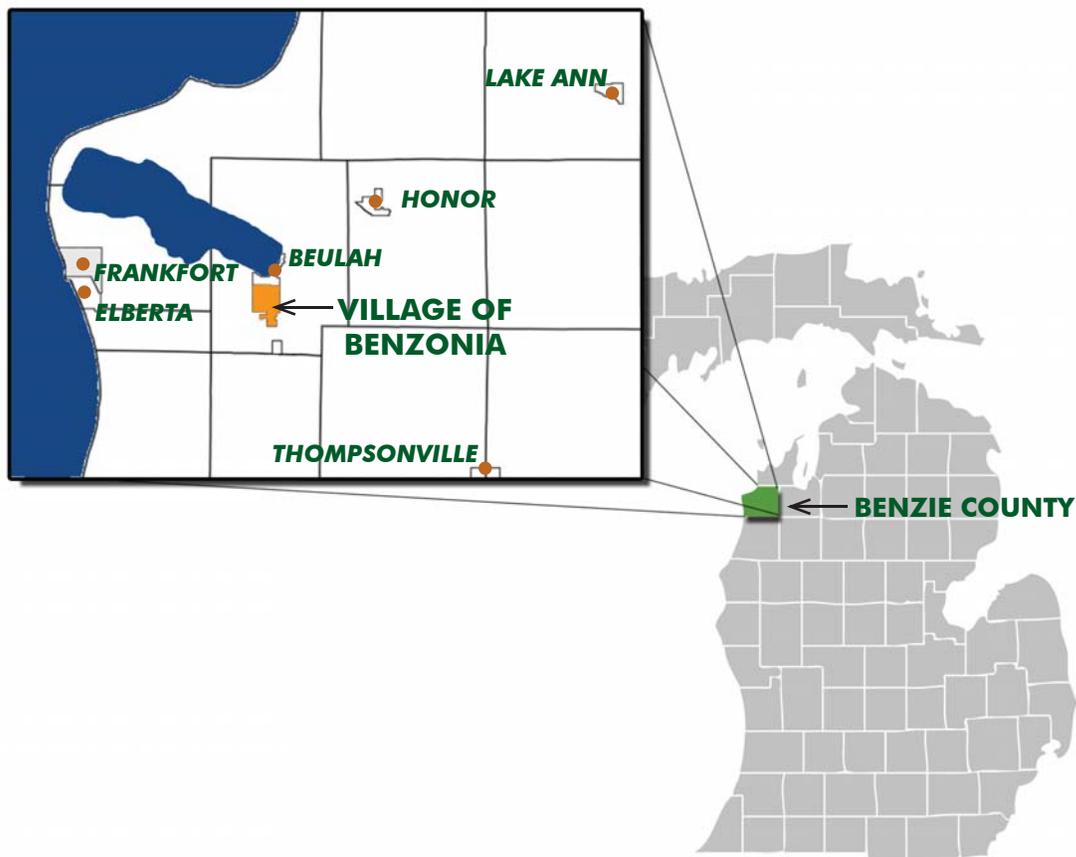


FIGURE 4.0 - BENZONIA VICINITY MAP

VILLAGE HISTORY

The following historical summary is taken from the Village of Benzonia Modification of the Benzie County Comprehensive Plan 2020.

Reverend Charles E. Bailey (1822-1894) is credited with establishing the Village of Benzonia. Born in New York, he attended the theological seminary at Oberlin College in Ohio. Reverend Bailey became desirous in establishing a colony, church, and college, modeled after Oberlin, in some wilderness area to which settlers might soon be attracted. This area of Northern Michigan was chosen as the site for the colony. To this location the name of Benzonia was give, settled on even before the site itself was chosen. Benzonia is said to be a composite name created from the Latin and Green languages suggesting "a good place".

Modern settlement of Benzie County first began in Benzonia in 1857, with the small group of colonizers arriving soon after. The village prospered and here the earliest institution of higher learning in Northern Michigan was founded. In 1863, Grand Traverse College was chartered "to afford to both sexes, without distinction of color, the opportunity of acquiring a liberal education." The first college building was erected in 1869. From Ludington to Charlevoix the pioneer college was depended upon to prepare teachers for the region. The trustees of the college formed a new corporation in 1891 under the name Benzonia College. In 1900, Benzonia College was changed to an academy fostering unique opportunities in education with a



FIGURE 4.1 - MICHIGAN AVENUE, BENZONIA, MI¹. DATE UNKNOWN.



focus on art and music. The Benzonia Academy was widely recognized as a reputable preparatory school, but beset with financial difficulties and unable to compete with tax-supported schools, the academy ceased operation in June 1918. The trustees deeded the property to the Benzonia Congregational Church to be used in the service of the community.

Most notably among the alumnus of Benzonia Academy is Pulitzer Prize winning Civil War historian and Presidential Medal of Freedom winner, Bruce Catton, whose father was the last head of the academy. At the dedication of the historical marker commemorating Benzonia College, Catton remarked, "The men who came here more than a century ago to found this institution lighted a small fire as a beacon on the edge of a great wilderness."

Until an 1863 treaty was signed, the entire Grand Traverse region was the recognized territory of Native Americans, the Ottawa and Chippewa tribes. In 1869, Benzie County became organized as a political entity separated from Grand Traverse County. Benzonia was incorporated as a village by an act of legislature in 1891. At that time, the village consisted geographically of one square mile, with its exact center being at the "top of the hill" junction of Michigan and Traverse Avenues (FIGURE 4.1). After the lowering of Crystal Lake, Benzonia and Beulah carried on as a single incorporated municipality from 1899 to 1932. The legal name of the enlarged village was Benzonia. Since that time, some lands along the highway corridor have been set out from the incorporated limits of the Village and others added.



¹Shared Moments: A Journey Through Time., The Benzie Area Historical Society, Signature Book Printing, 2007.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The following demographic summary will look specifically at Village of Benzonia statistics. The idea is to identify overall trends to help the Village make informed decisions regarding planning for the community's best interest. Comparisons will be made to County, State or National data as needed to help illustrate these trends. All of the census data is referenced from American Fact Finder data by the U.S. Census Bureau.

GENERAL POPULATION

The Village's population in 2017 was estimated to be 535, which is slightly more than the 2000 population, and about a 7% increase since the slight decrease noted in the 2010 census. This is different than the Benzie County average which had actually shown a population decline from 2010 to 2015 of -0.4%. This indicates that the Village is generally showing a more steady gradual rise in population (FIGURE 4.2).

POPULATION BY AGE

It is important to gauge trends in population by age (FIGURE 4.3) because this can help a community plan the correct types of facilities and infrastructure that will meet the needs of the future residents. The Benzie County master plan notes that recent changes in population show the greatest growth in the age group of 50 and over. The Village data backs up this trend showing larger overall increases in the 45-64 age group. However, the median age of residents in the Village has stayed relatively stable.

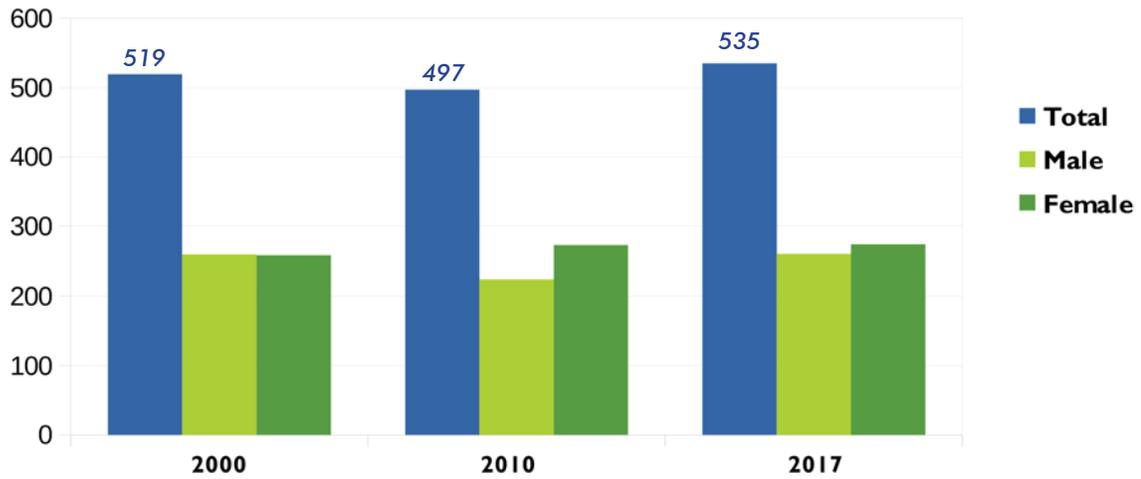


FIGURE 4.2 - VILLAGE POPULATION 2000 - 2017

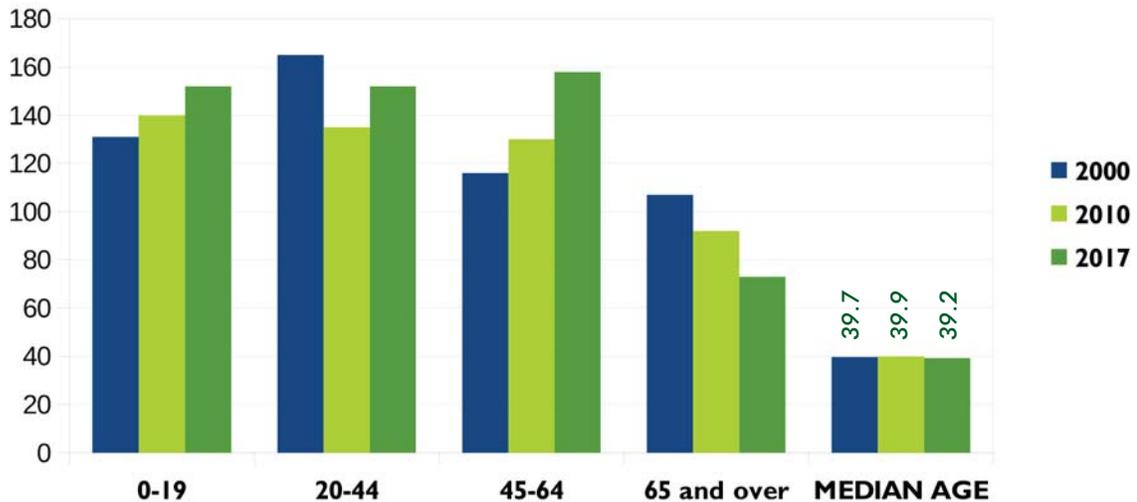


FIGURE 4.3 - VILLAGE POPULATION BY AGE 2000 - 2017



HOUSEHOLDS

Households and families are basic units used in the analysis of demographic information, however they are not the same thing. A household is composed of one or more people who occupy a housing unit, not all households contain families. Under the U.S. Census Bureau definition, family households consist of two or more individuals who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption, although they also may include other unrelated people. Non-family households consist of people who live alone or who share their residence with unrelated individuals.

An individual's living arrangements usually change at different stages of life. The average size and composition of households are highly sensitive to the age structure of the population. But they also reflect social and economic changes. In the United States, the mix of household types has changed enormously over the last three decades. One of the most notable changes is the declining proportion of family households and the rise in single-person households. In 1970, 81 percent of all households were family households, but this was down to 68 percent by 2003¹.

The Village's family households have steadily decreased since 2000, (FIGURE 4.4) while the average household size and family size has steadily increased (FIGURE 4.5). This is in contrast to the County growth

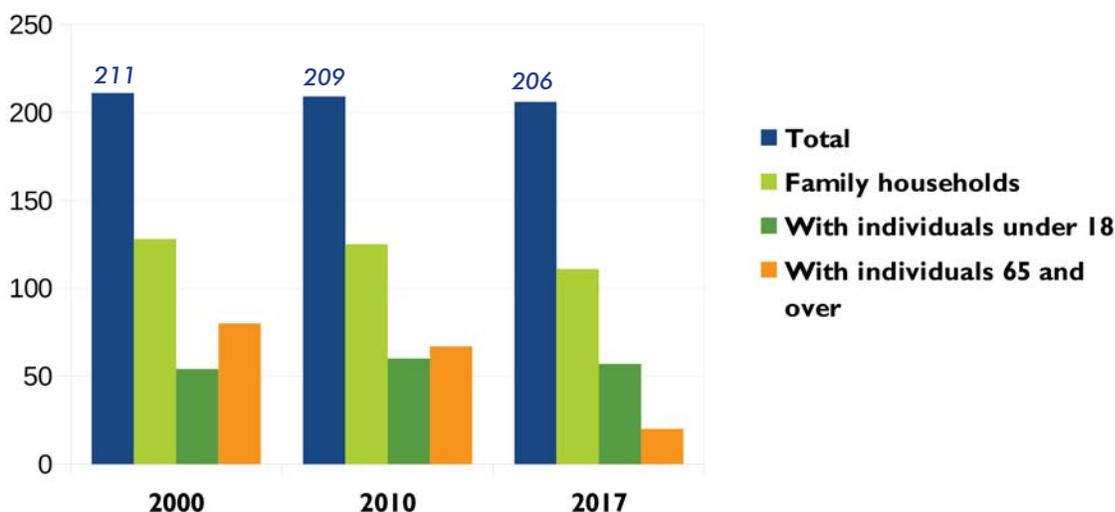


FIGURE 4.4 - VILLAGE HOUSEHOLD TYPES

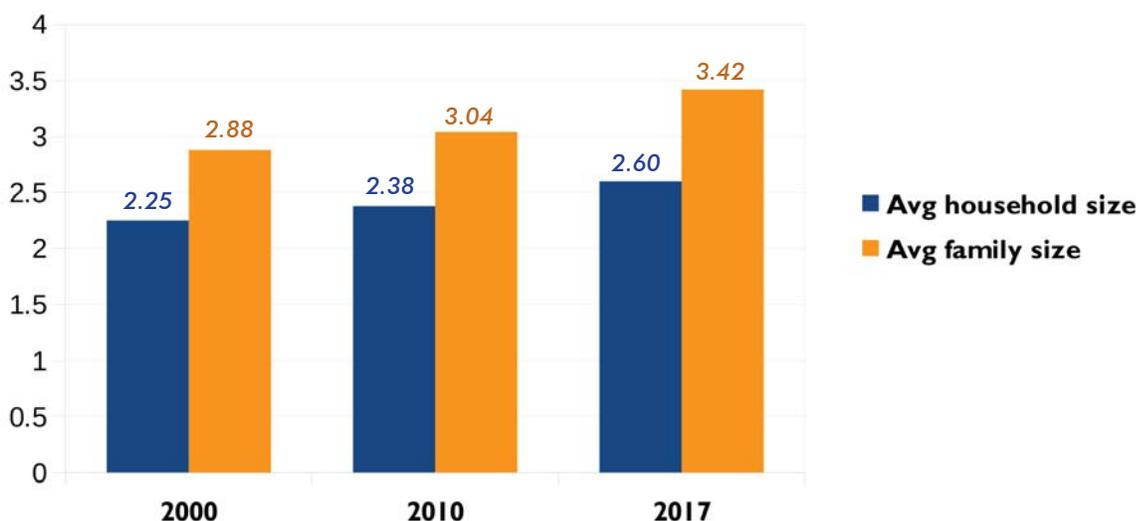


FIGURE 4.5 - VILLAGE AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD AND FAMILY SIZE

¹Population Reference Bureau's Population Bulletin, "Population: A Lively Introduction," 4th edition., JOSEPH A. MCFALLS JR. 2003.

pattern, as the County Master plan indicates that average household size has been dropping by about 4% across the region. In addition, total housing units have also been on the rise since 2000 (FIGURE 4.6). However, it is interesting to note that owner occupied houses have declined, showing in contrast a sharp increase in rental and seasonal housing as well as vacant housing. Because we know that the overall population of the Village has increased since 2000, this may indicate that more people are living together in various arrangements due to the lack of quality housing stock in the area or other economic and social factors. Refer to Chapter VI for additional information on area housing.

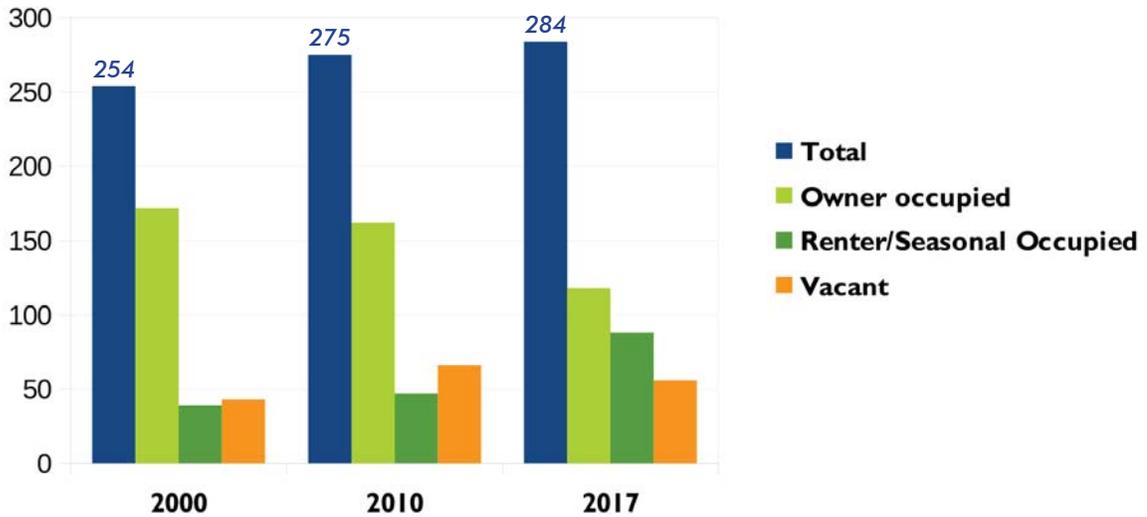


FIGURE 4.6 - VILLAGE HOUSING OCCUPANCY 2000 - 2017

PREVIOUS PLANNING HISTORY

While there are limited previous planning studies that were related directly to the Village of Benzonia, there are a number of plans on a County and Regional scale that were used as reference in the creation of this Master Plan. Benzie County and its communities are fortunate to have access to a number of extensive studies completed by Networks Northwest that document a wealth of information on this Northwest region of Michigan. The following is a list of plans that were reviewed for this document, along with other documentation and studies that are referenced throughout.

A CLOSER LOOK

SEASONAL POPULATION CHANGE

One of the biggest influences for the population makeup in Benzonia, as is similar throughout Northwest Lower Michigan, is the seasonal influx of residents in the summer months. This creates a unique set of challenges for the local economy, especially in the areas of labor force and seasonal housing. The ability to **provide** quality seasonal housing for summer employees and visitors directly affects the ability of employers to **have** a quality workforce to in turn properly provide goods and services to both visitors and residents. When one is lacking, it affects the other. There may be opportunities for Benzonia to provide these areas of unique housing that could help fill the gaps in seasonal housing and the related workforce.

40% = avg. increase in the seasonal resident population in the months of June-August



- 2017 Benzie County Master Plan, Networks Northwest, 2017.
- Benzie County Recreation And Cultural Plan 2015-2019, Benzie County Parks And Recreation Commission With Networks Northwest, 2015.
- Benzie County Open Space And Natural Resource Protection Plan, Open Space And Natural Resources Protection Committee, April 2002.
- Benzie County Comprehensive Plan 2020.
- A Housing Market Analysis Of Benzie County, Alliance For Economic Success. 2017.
- US-31 Benzie County Corridor Transportation Management Tool. Michigan Department Of Transportation - North Region, 2018.
- Northwest Michigan Regional Non-Motorized Strategy, Northwest Michigan Council of Governments and Michigan Department Of Transportation, 2008.
- Framework For Our Future, A Regional Prosperity Plan For Northwest Lower Michigan. (Various Chapters) Networks Northwest, 2014.

In addition, the current Village zoning ordinance and its associated amendments were also reviewed, along with neighboring community zoning ordinances.

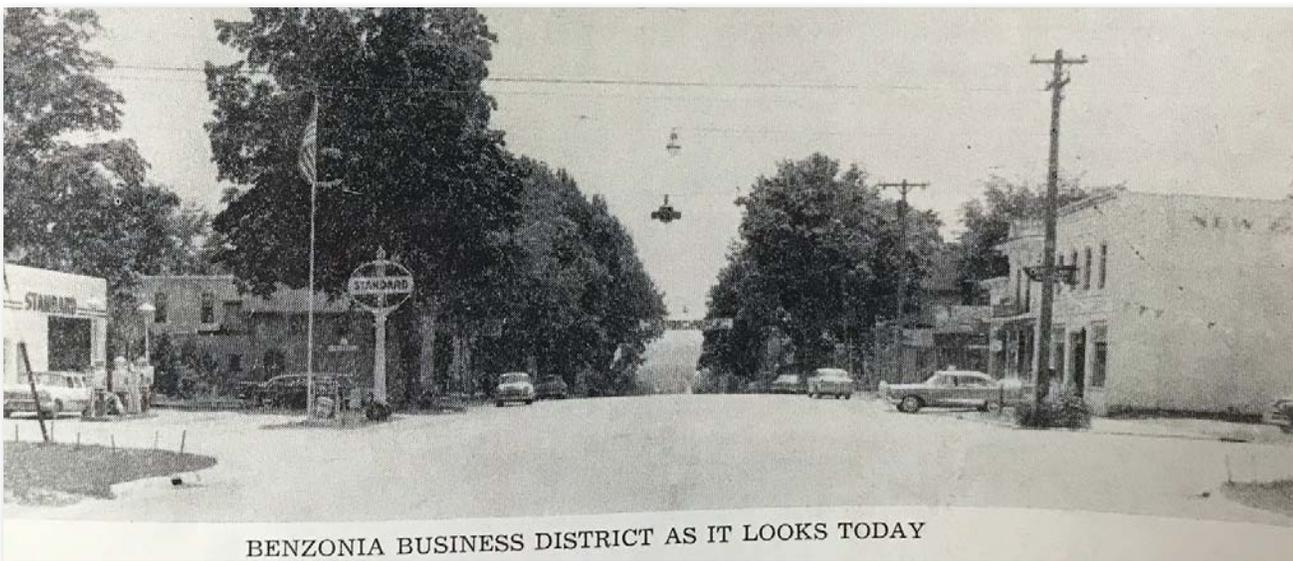
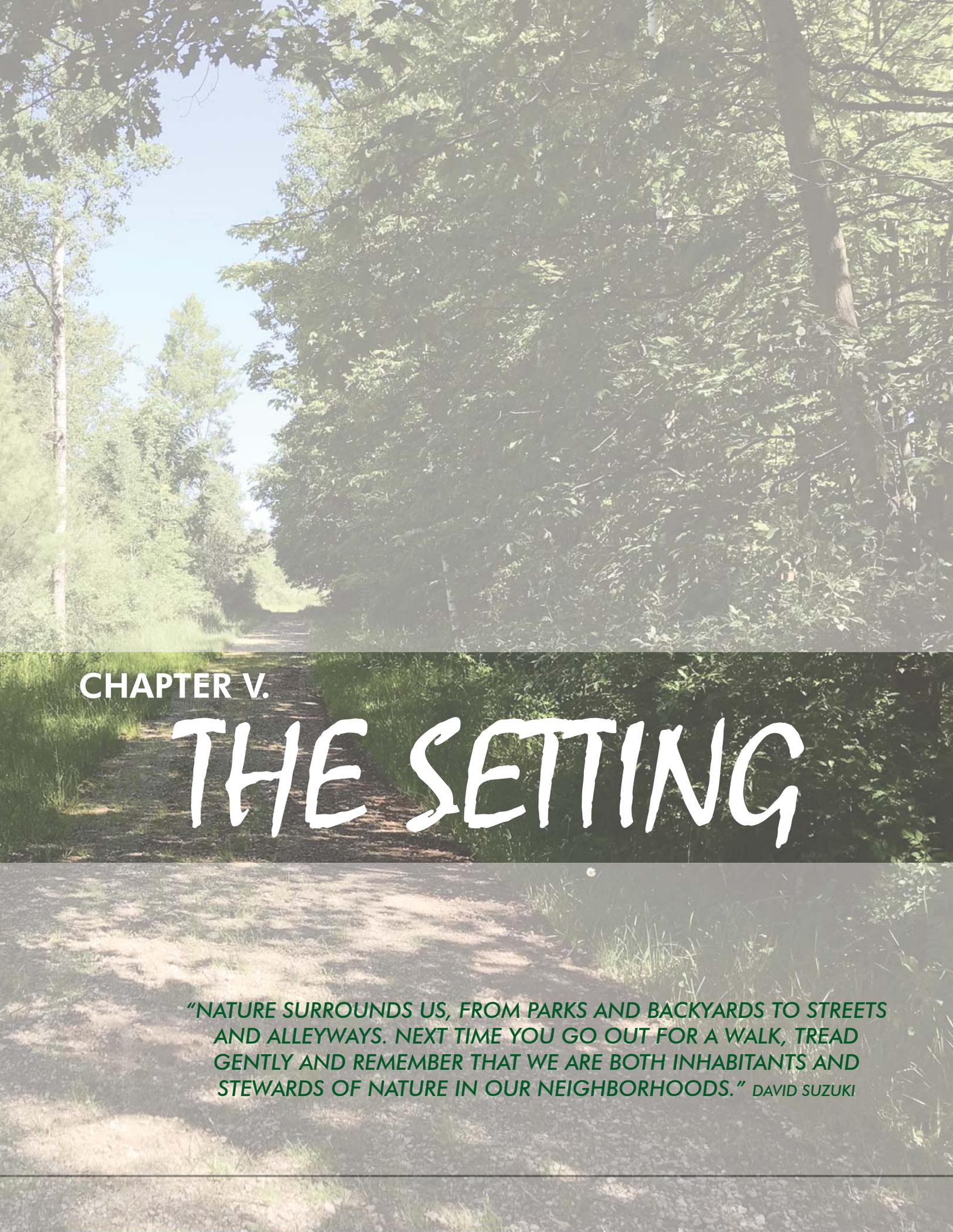


FIGURE 4.7 - TOP-OF-THE-HILL, 1900 (top photo) AND 1958 ¹

¹Benzonia-Beulah Centennial, The Record Publishing Company. Beulah, Michigan, July 1958.

A photograph of a dirt path leading through a dense forest of tall trees. The path is in the foreground, and the trees are in the background, creating a sense of depth. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day.

CHAPTER V.

THE SETTING

"NATURE SURROUNDS US, FROM PARKS AND BACKYARDS TO STREETS AND ALLEYWAYS. NEXT TIME YOU GO OUT FOR A WALK, TREAD GENTLY AND REMEMBER THAT WE ARE BOTH INHABITANTS AND STEWARDS OF NATURE IN OUR NEIGHBORHOODS." DAVID SUZUKI



NATURAL RESOURCES

The Village of Benzonia, like many other communities in this Northwest Region of Michigan, is fortunate to be near an incredible amount of natural resources that provide tremendous assets to the people of the Village. The Village’s small size means it easily shares local county-wide natural resources like the lakes and rivers, regional parks, trails, wide open vistas and the natural beauty of vast forested lands. The areas natural resources and small town feel are one of the biggest draws for residents to live in the Village. This is reinforced by the public survey. When asked the question, “What do you like best about the Village of Benzonia?”, many responses included the phases; small town, quiet, forests and parks.

WATER AND WETLANDS

Benzonia does not have any major lakes, streams or waterways that are in the Village Limits. The closest water bodies are the Betsie River to the south and Cold Creek to the east. The watershed boundary between the Cold Creek and Betsie River Watersheds run along the ridge in the Village from northwest to the southeastern portion of the Village. There are some areas of wet and hydric soils. However, there is only a small portion of wetlands per the National Wetlands Inventory in the furthest southern parcel, near the Betsie River (FIGURE 5.10).

TOPOGRAPHY

One of the Village’s most challenging natural assets is its varied and steep topography. There are few areas in the Village that are truly flat. The “top-of-the-hill” that most people refer to as the original/historic retail district of the Village is literally situated at the top of the hill. The high spot of the Village is located near Academy Park. There is another high point near the east end of South Street. The entire northeastern part of the Village has incredibly steep slopes in excess of 25%. Many municipalities have ordinances that protect slopes and ridge lines with development restrictions for slopes over approximately 18%, some communities even require special provisions for slopes over 12%. Improper development of steep slopes and excessive tree clearing on steep slopes can cause irreparable erosion problems that may have far reaching and long lasting consequences. The steep slopes do however provide several areas in the Village with significant viewsheds overlooking the lower valleys of the Betsie River, Cold Creek or even towards Crystal Lake (FIGURE 5.10).

A CLOSER LOOK GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Green infrastructure is a term that can encompass a wide array of specific practices, and a number of definitions exist according to American Rivers¹:

- Green infrastructure is an approach to water management that protects, restores, or mimics the natural water cycle.
- Green infrastructure is effective, economical, and enhances community safety and quality of life.
- Green infrastructure incorporates both the natural environment and engineered systems to provide clean water, conserve ecosystem values and functions, and provide a wide array of benefits to people and wildlife
- Green infrastructure solutions can be applied on different scales, from the house or building level, to the broader landscape level.

On the local level, green infrastructure practices include rain gardens, permeable pavements, green roofs, infiltration planters, trees and tree boxes, and rainwater harvesting systems. **At the largest scale, the preservation and restoration of natural landscapes (such as forests, floodplains and wetlands) are critical components of green infrastructure. The preservation of the Village’s forests and other environmentally sensitive lands will ultimately help provide support to keep our region’s water safe and clean.**

Green infrastructure investments boost the economy, enhance community health and safety, and provide

¹www.americanrivers.org

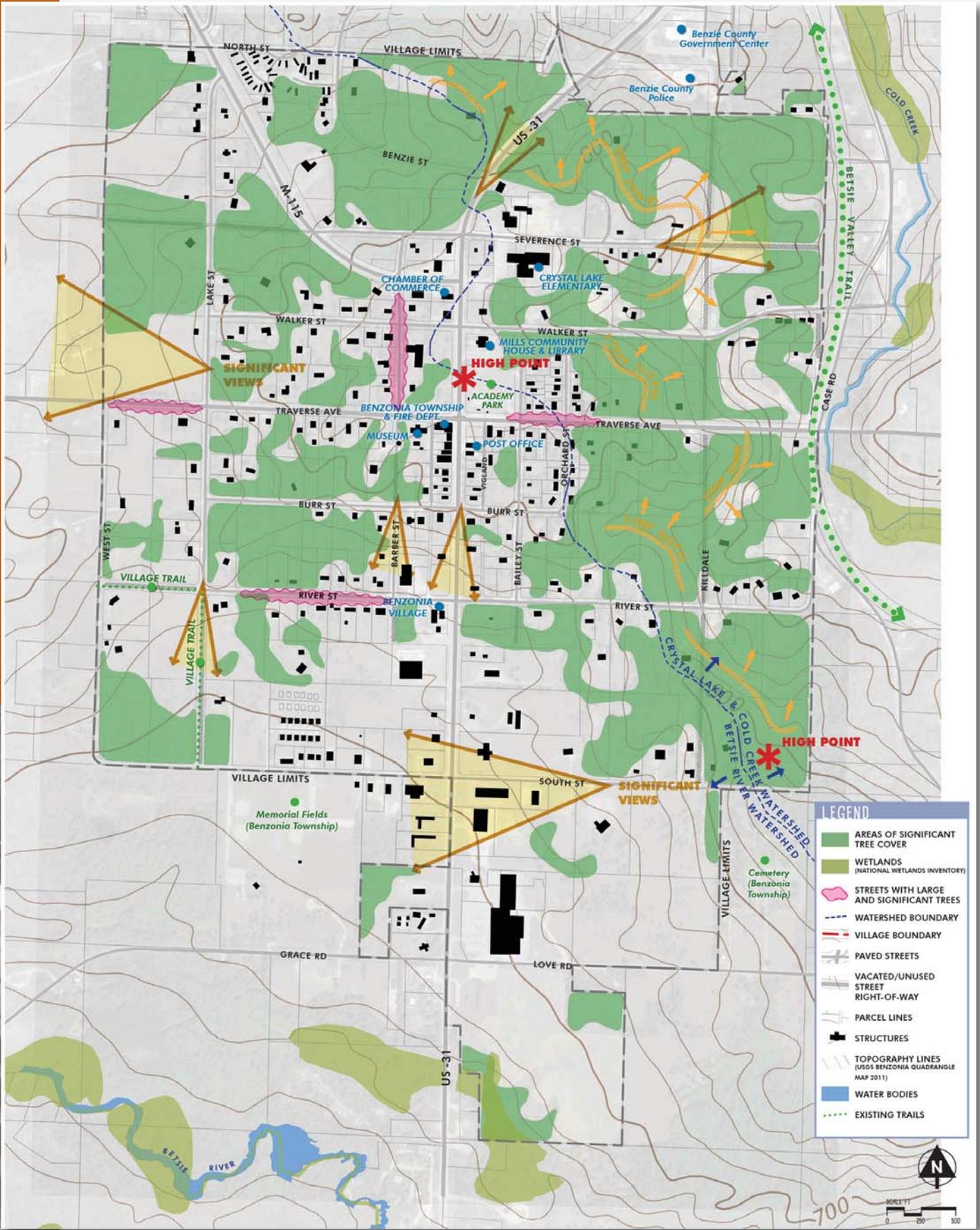


FIGURE 5.10 - NATURAL RESOURCES MAP

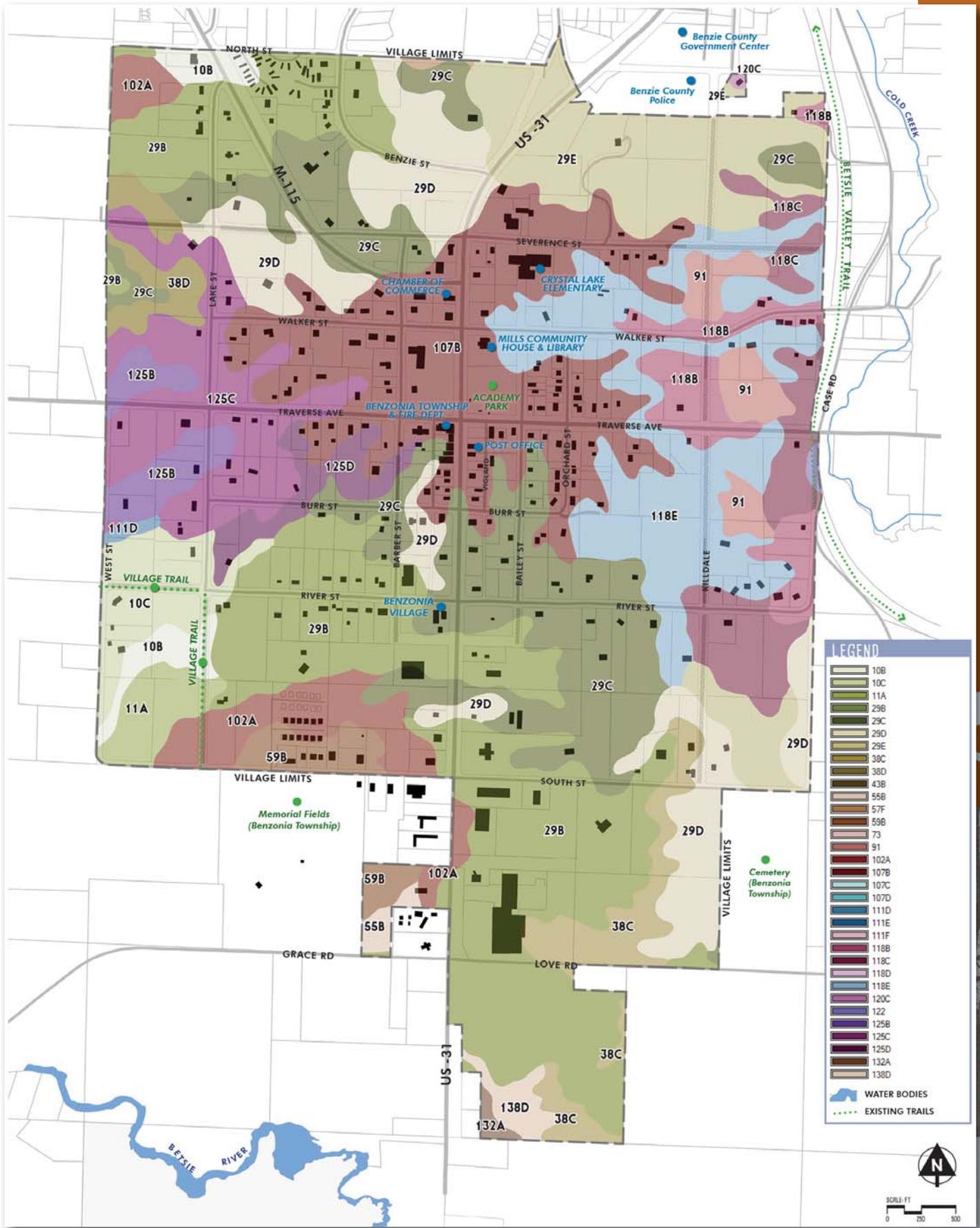


FIGURE 5.11 - EXISTING SOILS MAP¹

¹Soil Survey of Benzie and Manistee Counties, Michigan. USDA, NRCS, and USFS, 2002 and 2004. Refer to https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_MANUSCRIPTS/michigan/MI614/0/Benzie_Manistee_MI.pdf for more information on soil classifications.

SOILS

Another of the Village’s biggest challenges is its soils (FIGURE 5.11). The entire village sits primarily on various soil mixtures (sandy to clay loams to muck) of glaciofluvial deposits that have severe limitation in regards to septic systems either via poor filtering capacities or restricted permeability rates. Near the “top-of-the-hill” sits a section with the soil series of Benzonia and Fogg-Benzonia sands, that while still having some limitation in regards to septic systems, it is not as harsh as other areas of the Village. There are many parcels in the Village that will not pass a perc test to allow a traditional septic drain field system. In addition to the soils not being well suited for septic systems (FIGURE 5.13), many of the soils are also not particularly well suited for development, meaning there may be challenges in building and designing foundations for larger structures (FIGURE 5.12).

VEGETATION

The amount of steep slopes and vacant properties allows the Village one of its greatest natural resource assets – there are a lot of forested parcels with large trees. There are also extremely large old trees located in Academy Park and nearly all of the other Village owned parcels. As mentioned above due to steep slopes in the Northeastern portion of the Village much of the area there remains heavily wooded. In addition, many of the Village streets have large old street trees that are likely nearing 100 years old if not already. The trees along Barber, Walker, and River Streets are particularly impressive and provide wonderfully shaded and aesthetically pleasing streetscapes. The amount of large and significant trees contribute greatly to the Village’s overall character and are something that should continue to be protected as much as possible (FIGURE 5.10).

TRANSPORTATION

STREETS

The Village is situated near the center of Benzie County and is at the crossroads of two of the main federal (US-31 or Michigan Avenue) and state highways (M-115). Benzonia has come to be known for the home of the only traffic light in the County, at the intersection of M-115 and US-31. US-31, in this stretch through the Village, has the highest Average Daily Traffic Count of any other location in the County (FIGURE 5.14). The roads under the County jurisdiction that are in the

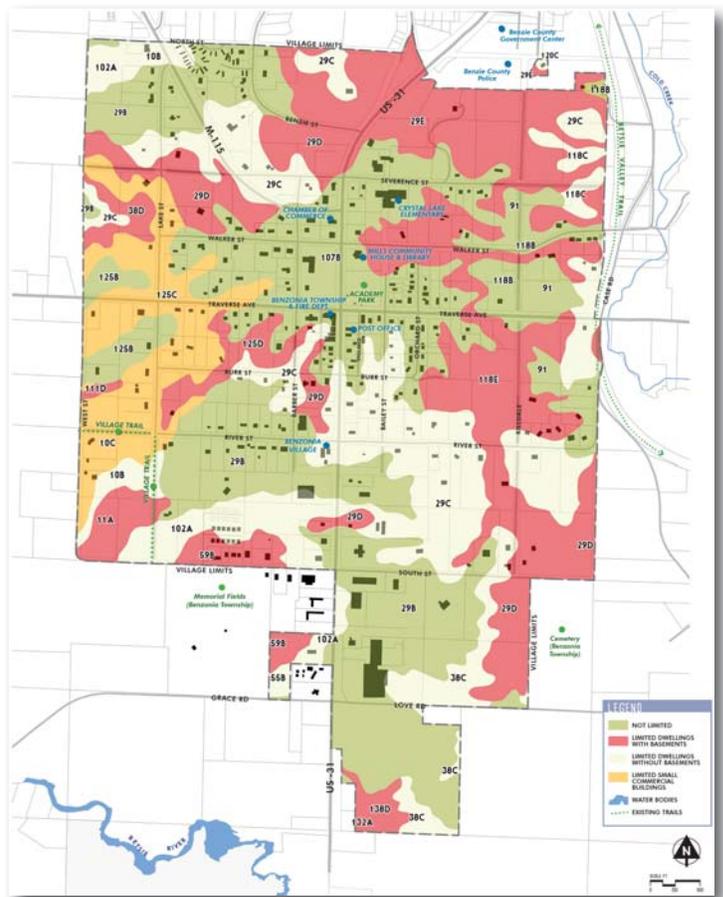


FIGURE 5.12 - SOILS WITH BUILDING LIMITATIONS (SHOWN IN RED)

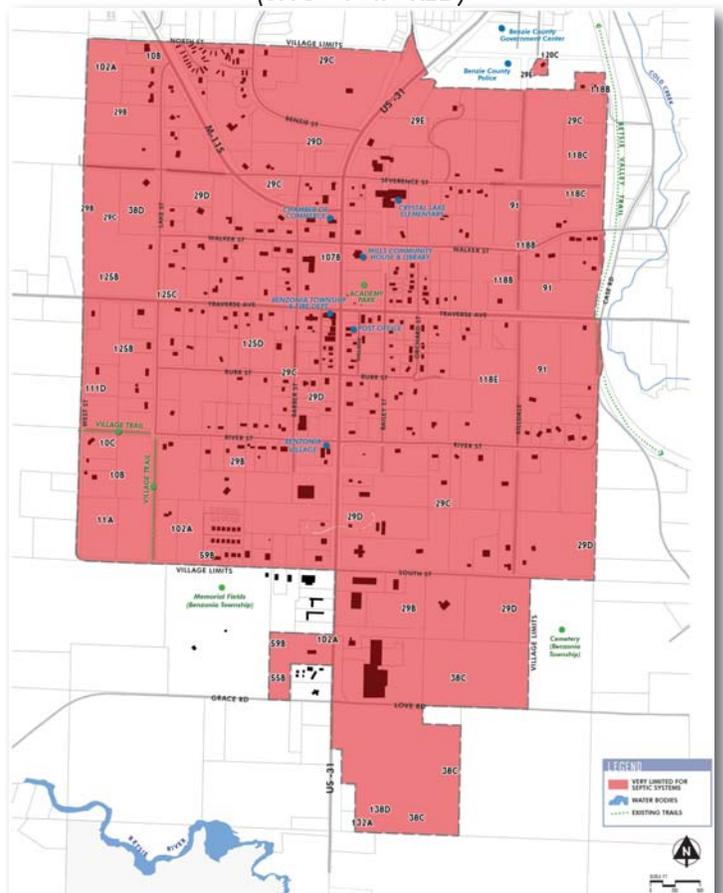


FIGURE 5.13 - SOILS WITH SEPTIC LIMITATIONS (SHOWN IN RED)

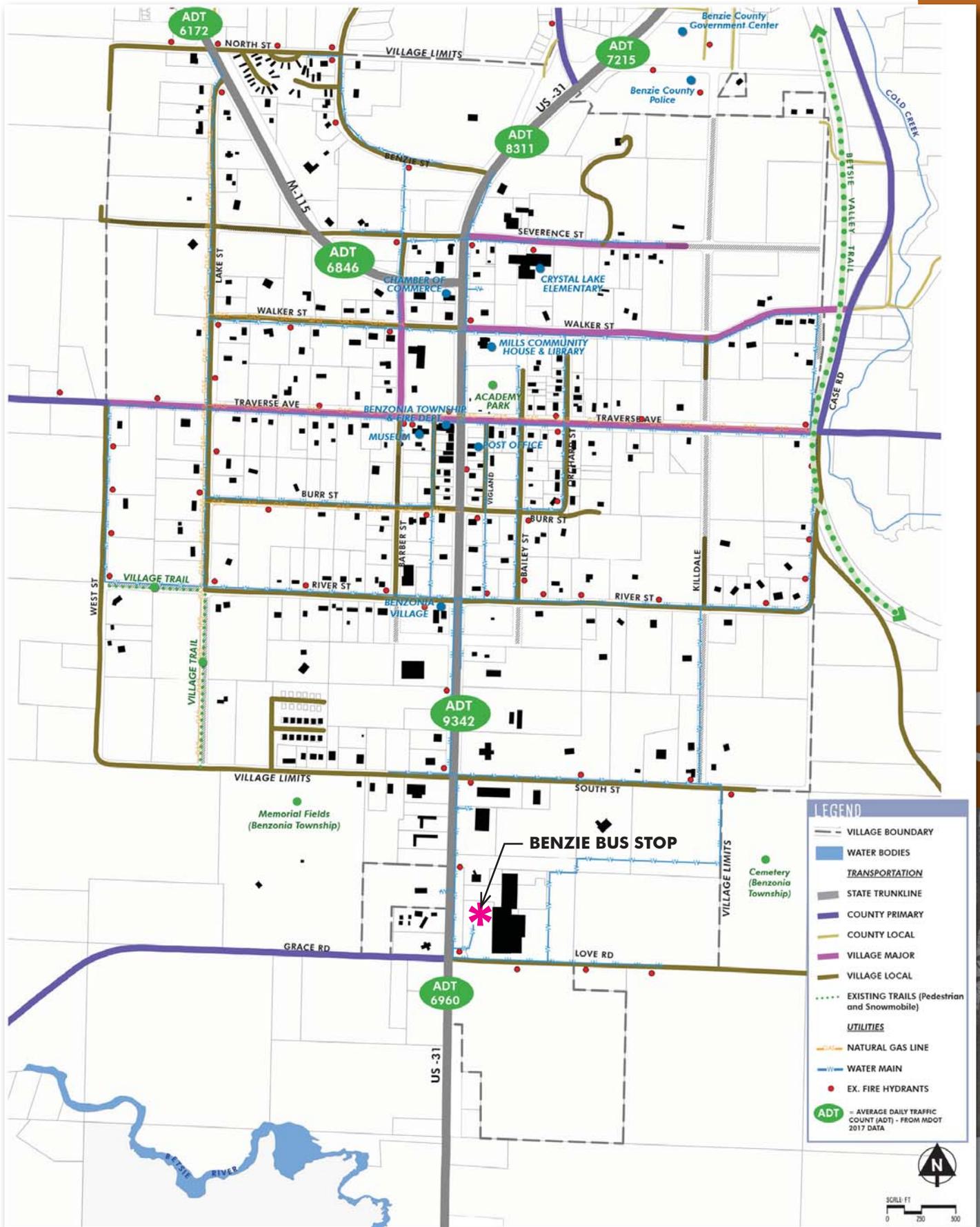


FIGURE 5.14 - EXISTING TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES & UTILITIES MAP

Note: Additional information on current natural gas line locations can be found in the appendix.

Village include Traverse Avenue and Case Road along the eastern edge. The remainder of the roads are controlled and maintained by the Village. The Village streets are laid out on a traditional street grid, and are for the most part narrow, which helps maintain speeds on local roads. As a part of the public feedback process, many concerns were voiced over the speed and dangerous conditions of some of the other roads, particularly US-31 and Traverse Avenue. Some of the local streets near the ‘top-of-the-hill’ may have the potential to add additional on-street parking due to the R.O.W. configurations. These streets should be looked at on a case-by-case basis when they are improved as the need for additional parking may one day be desired.

The gateways, or entry points that announce one’s arrival into the Village limits, were also documented as a part of the inventory process. The Village has, in recent years, installed 2 gateway signs along US-31 near the Village limits. The signs are well designed and graphically seem to support the general character of the Village. However, there is also a large amount of sign clutter along US-31 and the smaller size of the signs unfortunately makes them appear ‘lost’ in a sea of signage. Refer to (FIGURE 5.15) for an example of this for the gateway sign near the Village of Benzonia/Beulah border. This, along with the many concerns voiced from public comment about traffic speed, general lack of identity for the Village, etc., seem to lead to the conclusion that improving the Village’s gateways and overall signage should be a priority. This could be completed with streetscape or corridor planning which should include a component with an overall wayfinding plan for the Village and identifying all the Village gateways points that would benefit from additional arrival signage.

NON-MOTORIZED SYSTEMS

Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are vital components in a community’s transportation infrastructure. Not only do they reduce traffic congestion and pollution by providing alternate means of vehicular travel, they also provide recreational opportunities which encourage healthy lifestyles and thus enhance the quality of life within a community.

Bicycle facilities can be located both within and outside of roadway right-of-ways. Within roadway rights-of-way, they are either bicycle lanes or cycle tracks (separated from roadway for bicycles only) that provide dedicated space for bicyclists. Or they are ‘share the road’ routes that typically include improved shoulders, signage, and sometimes pavement markings. Outside the roadway, bicycle facilities are commonly referred to as trails - often part of “Shared Use” facilities where cyclists share the facility with pedestrians and other non-motorized modes of travel.

The Village of Benzonia is very limited in the provision of safe facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists. There are few sidewalks in the Village and very few painted or visible road crossings. A few of the intersections along US-31 provide curb cuts with accessible ramps, however they do not truly meet accessibility guidelines, as many lack detectable warning domes and connections to accessible routes.

There are no signed or dedicated bicycle facilities on any of the roadways in the Village. The Village trails and the adjacent Betsie Valley Trail provide limited spaces to ride bicycles safely, however there are no signed roadway facilities to connect to the trails. The Village



FIGURE 5.15 - CONFLICTING SIGNS AT THE VILLAGE GATEWAY OR ‘ARRIVAL POINT’



does provide bicycle racks in Academy park (both east and west), and near the post office.

Complete Streets, as defined by Michigan law, are roadways planned, designed, and constructed to provide appropriate access to all legal users in a manner that promotes safe and efficient movement of people and goods whether by car, truck, transit, assistive device, foot, or bicycle. (Michigan Public Act 135 of 2010)

It is unsure at the time of this plan whether the improvements with the resurfacing project along US-31 by MDOT will provide for true Complete Street Policies. Other than the proposed minimum 5ft sidewalk additions and minimal pedestrian crossing improvements at Traverse Avenue there is little else in the project that will speak to the notion of Complete Streets. No bicycle facilities are included; sidewalks are the bare minimum; and no integration of public transportation is included. Also no pedestrian street lighting, street trees, site furnishing or innovative stormwater treatments are included in the project. It will be up to the Village to plan for future improvements that would truly make the Streetscape along US-31 a 'Complete Street.' (see 'A Closer Look')

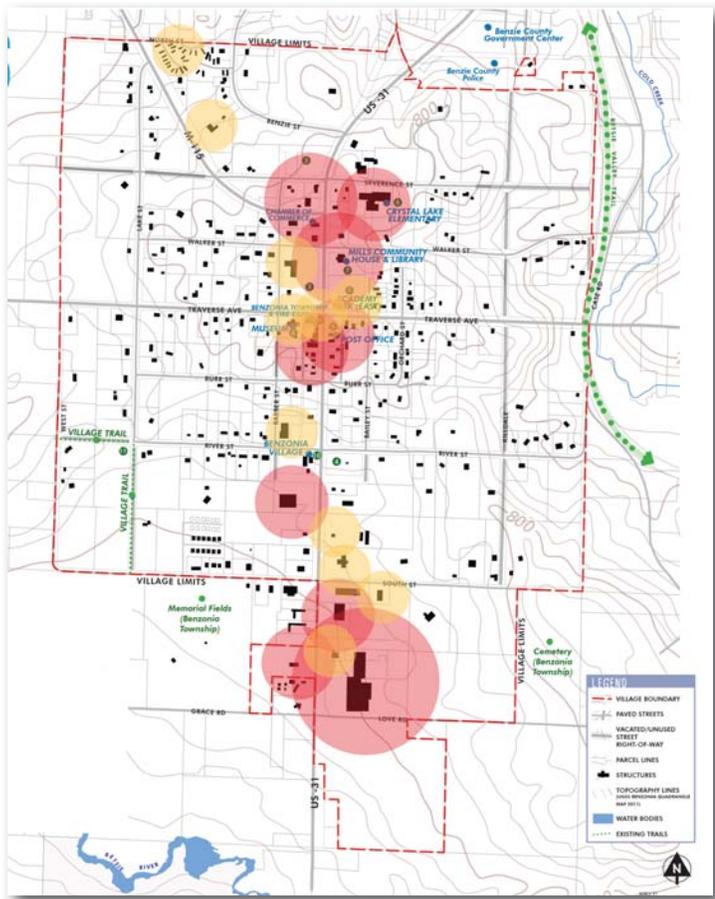


FIGURE 5.16 - ATTRACTORS AND GENERATORS (MAJOR SHOWN IN RED, MINOR IN YELLOW)

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

The Benzie Bus began operating in Benzie County in 2007, and today provides a fixed route system as well as a dial-a-ride system. Currently there is only one fixed route stop in the Village limits, located at the Shop-N-Save Plaza. The bus will also pick up and drop off at other locations in the Village per the dial-a-ride service.

When looking at streets and circulation patterns in order to best plan for future transportation infrastructure it is helpful to identify the attractors and generators in a community. These are places, whether they are public places, commercial, cultural or recreational that have the potential to either generate or attract high volumes of traffic (either motorized or non motorized). Some of the major attractors in the Village are indicated in red on FIGURE 5.16, more minor attractors are shown in yellow. Major attractors include places like the Shop-N-Save Plaza, Stapleton’s Gas Station, or the Roadhouse Restaurant (when they are open for business). One can see these are all located mainly along the Michigan Avenue Corridor. Future transportation improvements and corridor planning should take this into consideration.

UTILITIES

WATER AND SEWER

The Village provides water service to all village residents. The system utilized wells and one water tank near Barber Street and Traverse Avenue. The Village participates in the Wellhead Protection Program by the MI Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy. This program assists local communities that utilize groundwater for their municipal drinking water supply systems in protecting their water source.

No municipal sewer system is currently available. There are no storm sewers in the Village, there are typical

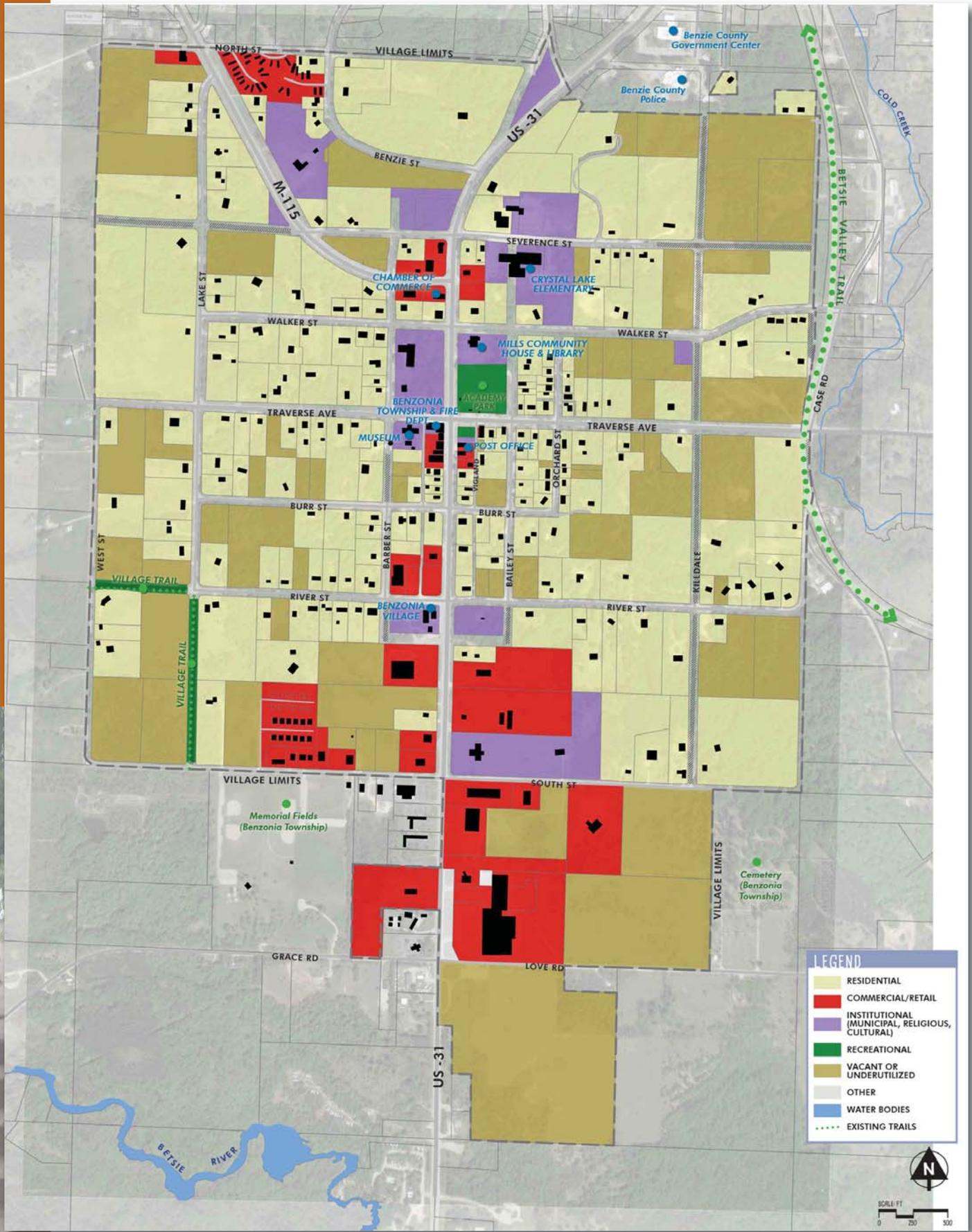


FIGURE 5.17 - EXISTING LAND USE MAP



pipe systems to drain roadways. All stormwater drainage is directed to ditches and various culverts that eventually drain towards low points (towards the Betsie River or Cold Creek). The current zoning ordinance requires that new developments keep all stormwater on-site per the Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Act, PA 347 of 1972. It is noted that there are some drainage ditches along US-31 in the R.O.W. near Shop-N-Save Plaza that likely serve as a form of bioretention. There are several ‘ditches’ that are maintained to allow vegetation (some native) to grow in them and, whether intentional or not, serve to help filter stormwater runoff from the roadways and shopping centers before it flows on towards the Betsie River (FIGURE 5.18)

ELECTRICITY

Electricity is provide to the Village by Consumers Power, all the facilities are overhead distribution systems.

NATURAL GAS

Village residents do have the option to utilize natural gas service provided by DTE. However, not all areas of the Village are currently served.

RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

The Village does provide weekly residential garbage pick-up services as a part of the Village taxes. No garbage services are provided for commercial users. Recycling is provided by the County recycling program at an area drop off located near the Save A Lot shopping center.

CABLE/INTERNET

Cable access is provided in the Village limits by Charter Communications. There is access to the Internet via a couple options to residents of the Village. High speed Internet is available via cable to residents in the Village by Charter. Other lower speed options are available via fiber, DSL, or a few wireless options. The Village of Benzonia does not offer public WI-FI access at this time.



FIGURE 5.18 - SOME OF THE EXISTING UNINTENTIONAL BIORETENTION AREAS

EXISTING LAND USE & ZONING

Understanding the existing land use patterns and how they relate to the Village’s historic character, natural resources or community needs is essential in order to determine the direction of the future land use plan. Existing land use (FIGURE 5.17) and the associated descriptions are used to identify what the current use or land cover is on the parcel at the time of this master plan, regardless of what it is zoned. For example, even if a parcel is zoned ‘residential’ its existing land use may be ‘vacant’ if there is currently no use or structure on the parcel.

Zoning is different from existing land use in that it identifies what is permitted for development (or redevelopment). This is what

Category	Acerage	Percentage
Residential	297.01	41.5%
Commercial	69.03	9.7%
Institutional	40.87	5.7%
Park	5.95	0.8%
Vacant	203.31	28.4%
Road/R.O.W.	96.94	13.6%
Other	1.89	0.3%
Total	715	100.00%

FIGURE 5.19 - EXISTING LAND USE SUMMARY

is legally allowed for people to build and occupy on a parcel by parcel basis. What that development then physically looks like, size and placement and other similar type regulations, is what is legally allowed by the Zoning Ordinance.

The reason a master plan process looks at existing land use and current zoning is to set the stage for the creation of the future land use map and zoning plan descriptions. It is this end product that will be used to guide the Village in making future land use recommendations and guide development in the coming years. It is the intent of this document to be a long term vision (20 plus years), to be reviewed every 5 years, and updated as needed. Desired results of a master plan are not immediate, they take time and evolve. Following the Vision and Goals and Objectives will help lead towards the desired outcome that the community has envisioned. This chapter includes a description or inventory of the current conditions for each category as well as analysis to help guide the future land use map, goals and objectives.

The existing land use categories for this master plan include residential, commercial and retail, institutional, recreational, and vacant and/or underutilized (FIGURE 5.19). Uses were determined by both review of aerial photography and the parcel search records from the County Equalization Department. Because of the small size of the village, any areas that were questioned were also physically reviewed in person.

RESIDENTIAL

The largest land use in the Village falls into this category and what can be classified as single family residential on a traditional street grid. The size and architecture of the homes varies greatly. There are several beautiful homes near the “top-of-the-hill” that may nearly qualify as historic and range from Colonial type to Victorian types of architecture. A majority of homes in the Village are the more traditional architectural style of ranch homes or two-story type farm houses. The quality of homes in the Village varies as well. While a majority of the homes are well-kept, some are in disrepair and more recently blight has begun to be a problem on some lots. There is one mobile home park located near North Street. There are some limited multi-family type developments in the Village in the form of duplexes, triplexes, and a few small apartments near the “top-of-the-hill”.

VACANT OR UNDERUTILIZED

This use makes up the second largest land use in the Village. Vacant does not mean anything negative about the parcel, or that there is not an owner, it simply means that there is currently no development on the parcel. Some of the parcels in the Village that fall into this category may be nearly unbuildable (or very difficult) to develop, due to steep slopes or lack of septic ability. Because of this, many of the vacant parcels in the Village are heavily wooded which contributes to the natural character of the Village that many residents spoke highly of in the public survey and comments.

COMMERCIAL AND RETAIL

The existing commercial and retail uses are shown in red. These are primarily located in 4 distinct locations in the Village. The primary retail and shopping center for the entire County is located near the Shop-N-Save Plaza along US-31 from Grace/Love Road north to about the Village Office at River Street. This includes the main shopping plaza with several larger type retail stores in various configurations, on the east side of US-31. The west side of this district includes McDonald’s, one of the only fast food chain restaurants in the County, along with a few commercial offices, lawn tractor/snowmobile, marina, mini-golf and Tractor Supply. This area is interspersed with some commercial uses under control of the Township of Benzonia. There is also a retail/commercial district of businesses with access off of South Street. These include 2 smaller shopping plazas to the east with several small businesses, including a dollar store, cell phone dealer, financial services, and ice cream shop and local florist, as well as a funeral home further to the east - all of which are capable of generating significant traffic at certain points. The west side of South Street is primarily comprised of services related to the car dealership, various storage buildings and Memorial Park.

The “top-of-the-hill” is the district that comprises the original commercial area of the Village. Some of the buildings are well maintained and house facilities for local favorites like the Roadhouse restaurant and the Cherry Hut, as well as some Art gallery buildings. Many of the other buildings have either fallen into disrepair, or have been so modified over the years that there is no semblance to the original architecture





and character that once comprised this section of the Village. With its close proximity to the historic buildings such as Mills Community House and the Museum, there is great potential for improvements to once again make this area the heart of the Village.

The final commercial district is near the M-115 corridor and US-31 intersection. Here is found Stapleton’s, one of the more well know gas station and convenience stores (with a fast food option) in the County. There are also a few commercial offices in this district as well as the Benzie County Chamber of Commerce. Historically there were additional commercial and retail buildings in this location that have since been demolished. There is potential to build up this area as an improved commercial corridor.

INSTITUTIONAL

This designation groups several uses together – these are uses that are not commercial in nature but cater to the public. They include municipal uses like the Village and Township offices as well as the Village controlled vacant parcels. These vacant parcels owned by the Village are primarily wooded. The category also includes religious institutions. There are 3 churches in the Village. Some of the land associated with the Benzonia Congregational Church at the “top-of-the-hill” is also used as Academy Park West. The remaining institutional uses include the Crystal Lake Elementary School grounds, the Museum and the Mills Community House.

RECREATIONAL

These are the park lands in the Village. A full inventory of these resources can be found in the next chapter under Recreation Inventory. Some of the parcels overlap with the Village owned vacant parcels, and are mentioned in the Recreation Inventory as well.

ROADWAYS AND RIGHT-OF-WAYS

The remaining area in the Village is comprised of the roadways. The highways have fairly wide right-of-ways (R.O.W.). This is mentioned because even though they are wide, this does in turn provide potential for development as related to transportation, streetscapes, green infrastructure, village gateways and wayfinding potentials. These types of future improvements would all likely require close coordination with MDOT. Some of the roadways in the Village have also been vacated and are indicated on the maps. The Village has converted some of these to multi-use trails, there may be potential to do the same on some of the other vacated streets.

EXISTING ZONING

There are currently 4 designated zoning districts included in the Village of Benzonia (FIGURE 5.20)

- R-1 Single Family Residential
- R-2 Mixed Residential
- C-1 Compact Commercial
- C-2 General Commercial

SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (R-1)

The district comprises the largest zoned area in the Village at about 55% of the total area, there are 244 total parcels zoned R-1 (FIGURE 5.21). The primary allowed use is for traditional single family style developments. Accessory uses include private garages or typical lawn/garden sheds. Currently accessory dwelling units are not specifically allowed. However, there is a provision that allows for the construction of a second dwelling on the lot, if the area is twice that of the

Category	Acerage	Percentage
R-1	397.7	55.6%
R-2	52.2	7.3%
C-1	13.02	1.8%
C-2	114.77	16.1%
Roads/Other, etc.	137.31	19.2%
Total	715	100.0%

FIGURE 5.20 - EXISTING ZONING SUMMARY

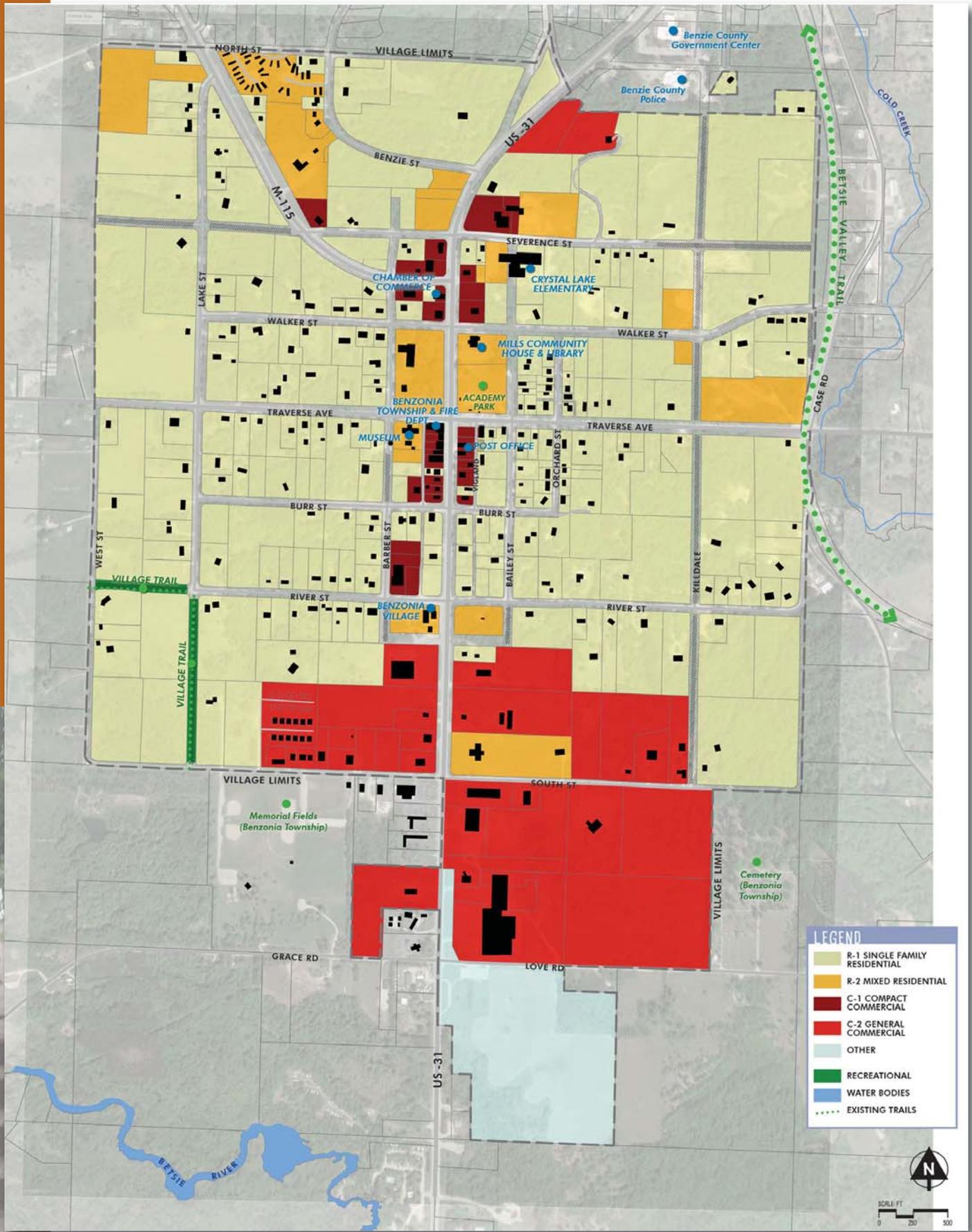


FIGURE 5.21 - EXISTING ZONING MAP



district minimums. Special land uses allowed are for institutional uses and bed & breakfasts.

Lot sizes for this district vary greatly in size and average 1.63 acres. Smaller lots are nearest the “top-of-the-hill” near the original center of town. As the lots move from the ‘center’ of town most get larger, some residential lots are well over 2 acres in size. The front setback for this R-1 district is 40ft from the right-of-ways no matter the size of the lot. This can be adjusted on a case-by-case basis by the zoning administrator. Development may be more challenging on smaller lots with larger front setbacks; the 40ft setback may not be as appropriate in tighter-knit neighborhoods with majority of small lots. Allowing residential development closer to the streets can create a different feel for the streetscape, it increases a sense of community, slows perceived speeds of traffic and improves walk-ability.

MIXED RESIDENTIAL (R-2)

This district comprises about 7% of the zoned area in the Village, there are 23 total lots zoned R-2 and the average size is 2.28 acres. These areas are spread throughout the Village and a majority of the uses on them are either religious or municipal. The only residential use is the existing mobile home park. The only difference in the zoning description in the ordinance is that it also allows two-family and multifamily dwellings. The allowed special land uses also include boarding house and mobile home parks. While it seems that this zoning district was created to allow for the potential for multifamily developments, it may be difficult due to the number of religious and institutional uses (like Mills Community House and Academy Park) that are included in this district. To further encourage multifamily and alternative housing options for the community it may be more beneficial to look at considering this a mixed-use district in conjunction with the C-1 district boundaries. With some additional changes to the ordinance this may then allow greater flexibility for higher density residential developments.

COMPACT COMMERCIAL (C-1)

This district was primarily created because of the historic compact businesses that were traditionally located near the area at the “top-of-the-hill”. There are 31 total lots at about .42 acre average size. Residential uses are allowed above the ground floor only. This is currently the closest zoning district to a ‘mixed-use’ zoning classification that the Village offers. The zoning ordinance states that one of the intentions was to allow for a more walkable setting with central parking provisions rather than parking provided on each lot. There are no setback or minimum lot requirements required. Any dimensional requirements are provided for in whatever the proposed use may be for the parcel under the supplementary use regulations. Currently the requirements for development in this district are quite flexible with little regulation in the ordinance provided. This may be a good thing in some instances when there is an experienced developer that has good intentions and committed to preserving the character and well being of the community. However, too much flexibility can also be detrimental to the community character or environment in the hands of an inexperienced developer and approving authority.

GENERAL COMMERCIAL (C-2)

This district makes up the second largest area of zoned property in the Village at about 16%. There are 66 total parcels zoned C-2 at an average lot size of 1.74 acres. This area was developed to be geared more towards automobile driven development such as shopping centers and strip malls with off street parking. Some of the special land uses that are allowed in this district are geared towards a more ‘industrial’ zoning district. Uses such as light manufacturing, warehouses and storage buildings are often found in industrial zoned areas. One of the ways this would make a difference is that typically there are different buffering requirements for higher intensity land uses from lower intensity land uses. Without a strong buffer requirement and standard of materials in the zoning ordinance, by allowing all the special land uses to be under a few zoning districts it can ‘muddy’ these buffering requirements which may be detrimental to the lower intensity (i.e. residential uses).

OTHER

These are areas that are currently un-zoned on the current zoning map. This is primarily the large parcel located south of Love Road. At one point it was intended as a residential development that never materialized.

"IT IS DIFFICULT TO DESIGN A PLACE THAT WILL NOT ATTRACT PEOPLE. WHAT IS REMARKABLE IS HOW OFTEN THIS HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED." WILLIAM H. WHYTE

CHAPTER VI.

LIVING &
WORKING

SUNSET FROM SOUTH STREET



HOUSING

In order to be able to plan appropriately for the future, planning leaders need to have a basic understanding of the current housing scenario for their community. The following is a summary of housing data from the region that affects the Village of Benzonia - however, some studies and reports are nearing 5 years old or more at the time of this document. The Northwest Region of Michigan is fortunate to have access to a variety of housing and economic data from the Networks Northwest organization. While most of the data is arranged by County there is some Village specific data, and the County data can help to show trends in the local area. The Planning Commission should be sure to review the most up to date studies as they are released in order to stay up with current housing trends when making decisions that affect housing.

One of the key points to be aware of across the County is that there is an overall lack of affordable housing, and there has been for years. The 2013 Housing Survey reports that it's not just affordable housing, but also housing choices that are of higher quality or better condition that have also been in high demand for sometime.

The following are a few excerpts from the 2013 Housing Survey¹.

"Housing choices that are of higher quality or better condition were identified as a priority for about two-thirds of respondents (68%), although that proportion was significantly higher in Benzie and Wexford Counties."

"Affordable housing was seen as a priority by a significant majority of respondents. Price was identified as a major factor in housing choices by nearly all respondents (96%), and 61% indicated that housing needs related to price were not being met in their communities. Further, 85% indicated that their community needs additional affordable housing options. Many comments in the survey focused on shortages of, and the need for more affordable housing in their communities and in the region."

Understanding the need for affordable housing and being able to provide for it is critical to the success of the overall community. When people do not have options and are forced to pay high housing costs, or live elsewhere and are forced to commute long distances to make a living they have less spending money for basic necessities like food, transportation and medical care. And when they struggle with basic necessities it makes it extremely hard to support more specialty retail business like restaurants, ice cream stores and mini-golf courses. This in turn makes these businesses rely on seasonal tourist to survive

"Energy-efficient housing was as highly prioritized by respondents as affordable housing, and responses presented a significant consensus around the need for more energy efficient housing choices. 85% of participants indicated that more energy efficient housing choices are needed in their communities, and energy efficiency was noted."

Rental housing has seen a continuous up tick in demand since 2000 in the Village, as shown in Figure 4.6 in the Village Background chapter. The renter-occupied rate in the Village has doubled from the 2010 rate of 22.4% of houses were renter occupied, to a projected 44.7% of homes being renter occupied in 2017. This is backed by some of the public feedback comments that indicate that rental housing is still important in the Village. As noted earlier, the population trends indicate a higher rate of growth for senior population as well as an increase in single person homes, which in turn indicates that smaller rental units and smaller housing options may continue to be in demand.

In short, there is a shortage of affordable and quality housing stock in the Village of Benzonia. There are opportunities for the Village to capture some of the housing market demand from a County wide level and fill in some of the housing gaps that exist in the more regional context.

¹2013 Housing Survey Report, Framework For Our Future, Networks Northwest, 2013.

EXISTING HOUSING STOCK

While a full inventory and evaluation of homes in the Village was not a part of this plan, a general overview and summarization of public feedback displays some issues with the current housing stock in the Village. While a majority of the homes in the Village are quality single family homes, there are some that are in disrepair and could be considered blight. The following are a few examples of the various types of current, well maintained single family homes and a duplex in the Village (FIGURE 6.0).



FIGURE 6.0 - EXAMPLES OF QUALITY, WELL MAINTAINED HOUSING STOCK EXISTING IN THE VILLAGE (TOP LEFT IS EXAMPLE OF DUPLEX HOUSING IN VILLAGE)

There are many resources available from Networks Northwest in regards to how to best implement a variety of housing types into the community. These resources (as they are updated) should be reviewed by Planning Commission members when making housing decisions. Some of the strategies that best fit the needs for the Village are included in the goals and objectives and the implementation section of this report. Potential housing types are shown in FIGURE 6.1. As mentioned in previous chapters, septic limitation in the Village are of great concern and will likely drive types of housing allowed.



SUITABLE HOUSING TYPES FOR THE VILLAGE



Traditional Single Family



Multi-Family(compact duplex or tri-plex)



Carriage House



Accessory Dwelling Units



Multi-Use Buildings



Senior Housing/Assisted Living

FIGURE 6.1 - EXAMPLES OF POTENTIAL HOUSING TYPES FOR THE VILLAGE

EMPLOYMENT & INCOME

A look at employment in the Village shows that there is still a relatively high rate of unemployment in the community (FIGURE 6.2). When compared to Benzie County and the State of Michigan unemployment rates, the Village of Benzonia has consistently has higher unemployment rates over the last 20 years. When looking at the median income of households in the Village (FIGURE 6.3), the median income in 2017 was \$49,236.00, which is about a 40% increase since 2000, and a 7% increase since 2010. This is slightly less than the County average.

OVERALL COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND ASSETS

The following is to give snapshot of some of the best assets and more beloved places that the community holds in high regard. These are the foundations and ideals that will provide support for any new development

or growth in the community. In order to get a feeling for this, several questions were asked during the public survey process. Below is a list of just some of the best assets that were determined after the public feedback process, including additional community comments received as well as stakeholder comments.

- The community members themselves, typically progressive minded and willing to seek opportunities.
- Rich and Academic History.
- Large street trees near the “top-of-the-hill” neighborhoods.
- Mills Community House and the Benzonia Public Library.
- Crystal Lake Elementary School.
- Benzie Area Historical Museum.
- Small Year-Round Businesses (Roadhouse Restaurant, Hill Top Soda Shoppe, Stapleton’s, etc.)
- Academy Park.
- “County” Shopping Center (Shop-N-Save, Tractor Supply, Hardware and Others).
- Post Office.
- Central Location in the County.

LABOR FORCE			
Year	2000	2010	2017
Total (persons working in area)	220	271	258
Employed	199	227	231
Unemployed	21	44	27
Unemployment rate (village)	9.5	16.2	10.5
Unemployment rate (county)	6.2	11.7	6.5
Unemployment rate (state)	3.8	12.3	4.5

FIGURE 6.2 - UNEMPLOYMENT RATE COMPARISONS 2000 - 2017

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME			
Year	2000	2010	2017
Median Income/Year (village)	\$28,650.00	\$45,833.00	\$49,236.00
Median Income/Year (county)	\$37,350.00	\$44,718.00	\$53,185.00

FIGURE 6.3 - MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME COMPARISONS 2000 - 2017

HEALTHY COMMUNITY

One of the ways to help understand a community’s overall quality of life is to look at its health.

Per the 2019 County Health Rankings (collaboration between the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute.) Benzie County ranked 18 out of 83 counties as far as overall health outcomes. So in comparison, the Benzie community ranks rather well compared to other counties in the State. Part of this is due to the vast natural resources in the area, as mentioned in the inventory, which allows residents great access to make healthy exercise choices.

Some of the notable category statistics for the County include:

- 30% of the population is obese.
- 84% of the population has good access to exercise opportunities
- 27% of the population reports physical inactivity
- 11% report frequent physical distress
- 12% report frequent mental distress
- 11% report food insecurities



Community health is directly impacted by community design. Healthy community design includes a mix of uses, is a walkable community with bicycle opportunities, includes transit and transportation options, and offers easy access to recreation. When these things are included in good design they encourage increased physical activity, safety, access to healthy food, greater social connections, and thus a higher quality of life.

A CLOSER LOOK

ALICE (ASSET LIMITED, INCOME CONSTRAINED, EMPLOYED)

The ALICE project is a partnership with United Ways across Michigan and the Consumer Energy foundation to gain a better understanding of the people in Michigan communities that are employed yet still struggle to make ends meet. These households earn more than the Federal Poverty Level, but less than the basic cost of living for the county they live in (the ALICE threshold). When you combine the ALICE households with the poverty-level households, that equals the total population in the community that is struggling to afford their basic needs.

This is important to understand during a master planning process because these households may not provide as much economic support to local commercial areas as non-poverty households. These households will generally consume differently, spending more money on basic necessity type retailers and less on 'extras' like specialty shops and gift stores. These households may not travel as far for recreational needs and require more support for a healthy lifestyle from recreation sources close to their homes, in the Village. These households may require various types of rental and more affordable or non-traditional housing options.

ALICE IN BENZIE COUNTY

2017 POINT-IN-TIME DATA¹

Population: 17,462 Number of Households: 6,911
 Median Household Income: \$53,185 (state average: \$54,909)
 Unemployment Rate: 6.5% (state average: 5.9%)
 ALICE Household: 32% (state average: 29%) Households in Poverty: 10% (state average 14%)

42% OF HOUSEHOLDS IN BENZIE COUNTY ARE EITHER IN POVERTY OR ALICE

The household survival budget used to determine the basic cost of living for ALICE reflects the bare minimum that a household needs to live and work today. It does not include savings for emergencies or future goals like college.

2017 HOUSEHOLD SURVIVAL BUDGET FOR BENZIE COUNTY

	Single Adult	Family of 4(2 adults, 1 infant, 1 pre-schooler):
Monthly Total:	\$1,790	\$5,194
Annual Total:	\$21,480	\$62,328
Hourly Wage Required:	\$10.74	\$31.16

THE LARGEST INCREASE IN ALICE HOUSEHOLD TYPES SINCE 2010 IS FOR AGE 65 AND OVER.

¹Michigan ALICE Report, 2019.

**"IF YOU HAVE FOUND A QUIET BENCH IN A QUIET
PARK AND SAT DOWN, BE SURE YOU HAD A VERY
PROFITABLE DAY!" MEHMET MURAT ILDAN**



CHAPTER VII.

PARKS & RECREATION



COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

The description of the community can be found in Chapters IV, V & VI.

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

There is no formal Park and Recreation staff for the Village of Benzonia. The park and recreation facilities for the Village are developed and maintained under the direction of the Village Council. The council provides for a council member to serve as the Chair of a Parks Committee that manages more detailed park and recreation issues that may arise and reports to the Village Council at monthly meetings. The park maintenance is provided by the Village Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent, along with a few limited volunteers.

Funding for the parks in Benzonia is provided by the general fund, grants, tax revenue, and rare donations. The current annual budget is \$81,000, however this is due to the current grant received for Academy Park. Typically the annual park budget is approximately \$10,000.

INVENTORY OF PARKS, NATURAL AREAS, AND RECREATION FACILITIES

The Village of Benzonia has an assortment of park/public properties that provide community recreation spaces, and forested areas that provide visual appeal to the neighborhoods (FIGURE 7.0), but actual usable amenities are few. The primary park space provided for Village residents is Academy Park, located in the historic center of the Village and adjacent to Mills Community House. A description of the other public community facilities is also provided within this chapter.

The parks were inventoried by the consultant during a physical field assessment. An accessibility evaluation was completed by comparing the park facilities to the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design, an accessibility ranking was given to each park facility. In addition, the facilities were given a connectivity evaluation based on how easily identifiable they are as a public park facility and their connection and access to multiple modes of transportation (automobile, pedestrian, bicycle, and public).

Accessibility Evaluation: score of 1-5, where 1 = none of the site elements meet the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design, 2 = some, 3 = most, 4 = all, 5 = the facility meets Universal Design Standards

Designing spaces that are ADA accessible only addresses minimum requirements set forth by the law. Universal Design is a process that looks beyond the written codes and laws and seeks to design the built environment in a way that looks to the population and the myriad of physical challenges or disabilities across all age groups. These may be people with health issues like low vision, hearing loss, what many refer to as their “bad back” or similar. It includes attention to the small details that provide additional comfort for all users, no matter the degree of disability.

ACCESSIBILITY EVALUATION



Connectivity Evaluation: score of 1-5, where 1 = no site elements are provided to identify or facilities provided to connect the park to the community, 2 = some, 3 = fair amount, 4 = good, 5 = the site is easily identifiable and well connected with parking, trails or sidewalks, and access to public transportation.

CONNECTIVITY EVALUATION



1. ACADEMY PARK (EAST)

Type: Neighborhood Park

Description: The primary active park space for the Village. Located in the heart of the Village and adjacent to the Mills Community House. Accessed from US-31, Traverse Avenue and Bailey Street.

Size: 2.9 acres

Inventory of Facilities:

- Baseball/Softball Field (fence backstop with 2 dugout structures and 2 sets of bleachers)
- 2 Basketball Courts (4 hoops)
- 4 Tennis Courts (2 - Ed Johnson Memorial Courts)
- Playground (metal slide, swing set, merry-go-round, plastic climber/slide (3-5yr old), plastic climb structure, spinning apparatus, spring riders (2), spring rocker)
- Picnic tables (2)
- Ice Rink in Winter (volunteer basis, appears to be well liked and desired per notes from public review period)
- Benches
- Bicycle Racks (6)
- Water Fountain (near baseball/softball)
- Parking Areas (Shared with Mills Community House and informal spaces off of Traverse Avenue and Bailey Street)
- Open Space



Accessibility Analysis: Poor. No accessible parking or routes to facilities. Some improvements planned for 2020.

ACCESSIBILITY EVALUATION



Connectivity Analysis: Fair. Some sidewalks to the park with limited unimproved car parking provided and bicycle racks. Various signage provided, some needs updating.

CONNECTIVITY EVALUATION



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE:

Academy Park is the heart of the Village’s park and recreation system. Because of the Village’s small size and the central location of this park it has extreme influence on the overall look and feel of the Village in all future development scenarios. It is recommended that any future improvements not be made ad hoc, but be carefully planned with other community facilities, such as road improvement projects/sidewalks, adjacent facilities (Mills Community House), Academy Park West, and even the neighborhood in close proximity. An overall park master plan for future long term improvements may greatly benefit and assure overall cohesiveness for Academy Park East/West before any other future improvements are made.





2. ACADEMY PARK (WEST)

Type: Neighborhood Park

Description: Park land is a part of the Congregational Church grounds and a long term lease arrangement with the Village. It provides a picnic area with parking on the southern end that is shared by the museum, township offices, and adjacent business on the “top-of-the-hill”. The Park contains large mature trees and provides a beautiful open space area in the heart of the Village.

Size: 1.4 Acre (approx)

Inventory & Analysis of Facilities:

- Picnic Tables (3)
- Grill (1)
- Bicycle Racks (3)
- Informal Parking
- Open Space
- Historical Marker (Benzonia College)



ACCESSIBILITY EVALUATION



Accessibility Analysis: Poor. No accessible parking or routes to facilities.

CONNECTIVITY EVALUATION



Connectivity Analysis: Poor. While the park provides shared parking on the southern edge there is little else to connect the park to the neighborhood. The one driveway access is poorly marked and difficult for users to understand that you can drive into the picnic area. There is no signage to indicate that it is Village park space for public use. No sidewalks are provided to the park.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE:

There are many opportunities to make improvements to this park and make it a more usable asset to the Village’s park system - if indeed the park lease agreement with the Congregation Church is going to proceed into the foreseeable future. An immediate improvement would be to improve access to the park and better identify it with signage. The driveway from US-31 could be formalized with a few simple parking spaces provided. Access could also be improved from Traverse Ave to make it more identifiable and accessible. During the public input period it was noted that child educational groups utilize the park space. Additional child play components were desired. Could also benefit from a master plan effort with Academy Park East.



3. VILLAGE TRAIL - LAKE STREET

Type: Park Trail

Description: This trail is located on the vacated portion of Lake Street between River Street to the north and South Street to the south. The trail consists of a gravel surface with barriers on either end to deter automobile traffic. The trail has no facilities other than to serve as a walkway. There is a significant elevation change from South Street up to River Street, making the route very steep towards the northern half. Nice views to the south are afforded at the River Street entrance. The route provides a nice shortcut for the Lake/Burr/River Street Neighborhood to the facilities at Memorial Park on South Street.

Size: 0.25 miles, 1.8 acres.

Inventory of Facilities:

- Gravel Trail, approximately 8 ft. wide.



ACCESSIBILITY EVALUATION



Accessibility Analysis: Poor. No accessible parking or routes to facilities.

CONNECTIVITY EVALUATION



Connectivity Analysis: Poor. The park has no signage to identify it as a public use facility, except for a small sign that reads 'walking path' on the dead end road sign. It was noted during public input that many people were not aware of the trail. There are no sidewalks or parking provided to the trail.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE:

As mentioned, the route provides a valuable community connection for residents in this neighborhood to Memorial Field on South Street. There are opportunities to strengthen this connection and make additional improvements to the trail that would provide better accessibility. One improvements would be to improve the trail surface to an ADA compliant surface material, and adding rest areas (and/or benches) at recommended intervals. The trail could also be more easily identified with proper signage on each end. Additionally the connection to Memorial Park could be strengthened by provided a route along South Street connecting to Memorial Park. While the trail is primarily provided as a walk-to facility for the neighborhood, adding some limited parking spaces may be considered at some point in the future, if this trail ever connects to a more 'Village-wide' trail system.





4. VILLAGE TRAIL - RIVER STREET

Type: Park Trail

Description: This trail is located on the vacated portion of River Street between Lake Street to the east and West Street to the west. There is no formal trail, the Village keeps the grass mowed to provide a walking path and open space. The trail has no facilities other than to serve as a walkway, and may serve as a snowmobile route in the winter. The route provides a nice relatively flat area in the neighborhood to walk for kids, elderly, dogs, etc. with nice views to the south due to the higher elevation.

Size: 0.13 miles, 1 acre.

Inventory of Facilities:

- Grassy Open Space



ACCESSIBILITY EVALUATION



Accessibility Analysis: Poor. No accessible parking or routes to facilities.

CONNECTIVITY EVALUATION



Connectivity Analysis: Poor. The park has no signage to identify it as a public use facility. There is a small sign that gives snowmobile guidelines for riding snowmobiles on the 'road closed' marker at the West Street entrance. It was noted during public input that many people were not aware of the trail. There are no sidewalks or parking provided to the trail.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE:

This route provides an additional community connection for the residents in this neighborhood to each other and to the Lake Street Trail which leads to Memorial Field on South Street. At some point in the future this segment could become part of an overall trail system for the Village. Due to the relatively flat grade and wide boundaries of the vacated street R.O.W. there is a decent amount of space to add additional park facilities. For example, a small picnic shelter, benches and/or a trailhead location for an overall trail system may be of interest for the Village residents at some point in the future. More immediate improvements would be to improve the signage at the entrances and identify it as a facility that is part of the Village Park System and open for public use.



5. MUNICIPAL PARKING (POST OFFICE CORNER)

Type: Mini-Park

Description: This miniature park is located at the corner of US-31 and Traverse Avenue and provides parking space for the Village. The paved parking area has significant greenspace which is landscaped (by volunteers with assistance from the Village staff) on the Traverse Ave and US-31 perimeters. The areas includes flower gardens and a brick paved area with bench and bicycle racks near the post office. As a part of the overall look of this intersection, a small area at the northwest corner of the intersection is also maintained as a flower garden by volunteers. The garden is nicely landscaped and has a nice sign identifying it as 'Dorothy's Corner Garden,' which matches the other Village identification signs.

Size: 0.22 Acres.

Inventory of Facilities:

- Public Parking Lot (17 spaces, 1 accessible)
- Bench/Sitting Area
- Bicycle Racks
- Flower Gardens (volunteer maintained)

Accessibility Analysis: Fair. The parking area includes an accessible space that connects to the Village sidewalk along US-31. The sidewalk does go to both the post office and the intersection at US-31/Traverse Avenue.

Connectivity Analysis: Fair. The park includes well maintained signage to identify it as a public use facility. Also the parking is connected to the Village sidewalk system, however limited. It serves a key purpose as it provides one of the few significant public parking areas in the Village.



ACCESSIBILITY EVALUATION



CONNECTIVITY EVALUATION



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE:

This facility serves as an important piece in the Village's park inventory mainly because of its close proximity to the heart of the Historic Retail District. Its primary role as a municipal parking area will continue to be valuable, especially as other areas around it are improved in the future. As limited green space is available, it will serve well as a complimentary pocket park type facility for any future streetscape improvements, as it will be able to provide decent space for amenities such as street trees, rain gardens, site furnishing, and public art opportunities. One recommendation would be to name the space something fun that reflects the historic character of the "top-of-the-hill" district of the Village, rather than just calling it 'Municipal Parking'. The name could be similar to the 'Dorothy's Corner Garden' on the opposite street corner.





6. FORESTED AREA (NW OF SEVERENCE/US-31 INTERSECTION)

Type: Natural Resource Area

Description: These parcels are forested space owned by the Village, the County Recreation Plan notes it as “dedicated park lands in the original Village of Benzonia Plat.” The parcels contain some areas of steep slopes as it slopes from the southern end at Severence Street to the northern edge down towards Beulah. Some primitive foot trails were observed from Severence Street, some neighbors may be using it as a cut through to Beulah to avoid walking along US-31.



Size: 2.8 (Adding the space for the right-of-way for Barber Street allows 3.2 acres)

Inventory & Analysis of Facilities:

- No public facilities are provided. Accessibility and Connectivity not rated.

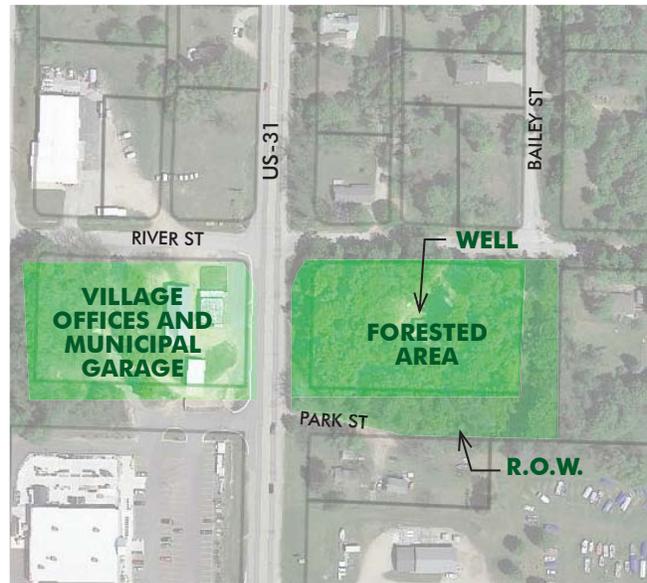
LOOKING TO THE FUTURE:

Lands set aside as resource areas do serve a valuable purpose in a community, especially when they are heavily forested, as they provide various environmental benefits, wildlife habitat, stormwater benefits, and provide pleasing visual buffers. Some future development ideas that came up during the public input sessions were to potentially look at trail systems here, low key nature trails or single track bike trails, facilities that would basically leave the forest intact.

7. FORESTED AREA (SE CORNER OF RIVER RD/US-31)

Type: Natural Resource Area

Description: This parcel includes forested space owned by the Village, the County Recreation Plan notes it as dedicated park lands in the original Village of Benzonia Plat. The Village recently installed a new well-head on the property.



Size: 1.75 acres (Adding the space for the right-of-way for Bailey and Park Streets allows 2.8 acres)

Inventory & Analysis of Facilities:

- No public facilities are provided. Accessibility and Connectivity not rated.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE:

Again, lands set aside as resource areas are valuable to the community. While this parcel contains a Village well structure, improvements could still be made in the future. There were long ago previous ideas to connect this park space to Academy Park via an interpretive trail in the alley. Again low-key type improvements may be appropriate here at some point in the future; for example nature or interpretive trails, small neighborhood picnic shelters, or bike trails. If the Village Offices/Yards were ever improved there may also be the possibility of some visual connection of the two spaces to make a nice central ‘Village Space’ which could serve as a secondary gateway to the more historic “top-of-the-hill” district.

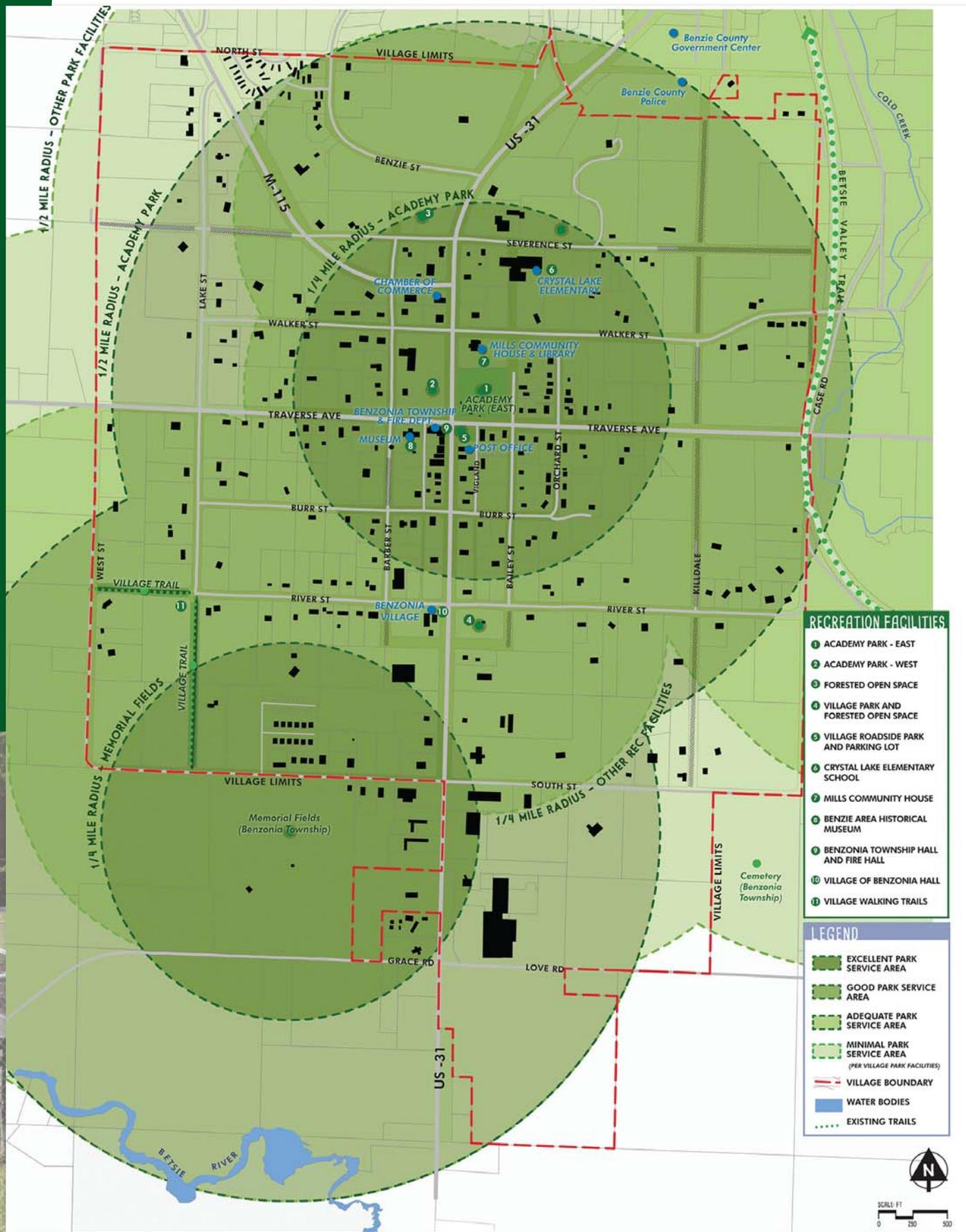


FIGURE 7.0 - OVERALL PARKS INVENTORY MAP WITH SERVICE AREAS



8. VILLAGE OF BENZONIA OFFICES AND MUNICIPAL GARAGE

Type: Special Use

Description: This complex houses the Village Offices and the garage/shops for the Village Equipment. The building is well maintained, however the pole-building type construction offers nothing architecturally significant, and the facility is unattractively sited in a sea of asphalt. There are the originally platted streets (Barber and Park Street) that cuts through the rear of the lot into Tractor Supply parking lot that contains large trees with decent lawn space. River Street residents use this as a walkway to the shopping areas.

Size 1.75 acres (Adding the space for the right-of-way for Barber and Park Streets allows 2.8 acres)

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE:

There is great potential for improvements to these facilities, however as mentioned above they are well maintained and there is no immediate need. At some point when improvements are needed, the complex could be more aesthetically designed in a way that looks cohesive with the village park space across Michigan Ave. Street trees or plantings could buffer and provide improved stormwater drainage for the site. As mentioned previously, this space has the potential to create almost a secondary gateway into the original historic “top-of-the-hill” district. Investing in or redeveloping quality public properties can set the tone for other quality developments from public developers in the future.

OTHER PUBLIC COMMUNITY FACILITIES

These are public facilities available for Village residents for various occasions, ranging from cultural events like plays and band performances, to public meetings, to special library events, to local voting precincts. These are facilities that are located in the Village limits but not owned or maintained by the Village.

9. CRYSTAL LAKE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Description: Owned by Benzie Central Schools, it is a K-5 elementary school. The school grounds include 2 outdoor play areas and an indoor gymnasium/cafeteria. The school system bus garage is also located across the street from the Elementary School. Directly adjacent on the north side of Severance street is the location of the Old Benzonia High School. While once an impressive architectural building it now sits derelict and may be considered an eyesore. However, this area near Severance Street has a long history of playing an integral part in the Benzie School System and a part of the educational story of the Benzonia community.

10. MILLS COMMUNITY HOUSE

Description: This historic structure is owned by the Mills Community House Association and houses the Benzonia Public Library. It was built in 1909 as a part of the Benzonia Academy, it is the only remaining building from the Academy which closed in 1918. The library is a Village treasure, as made apparent in the comments from the public survey. It was often the answer for ‘what is the one thing you like BEST about the Village’. It first started operating in 1925 and is the County’s oldest continuously operated library. Along with the library, there are 2 meeting spaces and a commercial kitchen available in the building. It is a historic site and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972.

11. BENZONIA AREA HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Description: The Museum is housed in the original Congregational Church building built in 1887 and is on the Michigan State Register of Historic Sites. The museum operates out of the building and is operated by the Benzie Area Historical Society. The museum houses a number of unique local artifacts and museum displays, a collection of historic photographs, and offers a number of community and educational programs.

12. BENZONIA TOWNSHIP HALL AND FIRE STATION

Description: This building is owned by Benzonia Township and houses the township offices, a large meeting room, and the fire hall. It serves as a voting precinct for the Village. Recently it was announced that the Fire Station has outgrown the space and is looking for a new location to build an expanded fire hall and township offices. It is unclear what would happen to this building, but has potential to be a prime redevelopment opportunity at a key intersection in the Village.

13. BETSIE VALLEY TRAIL

Description: The Trail is 22 miles long from Frankfort through Elberta and Beulah to Thompsonville in Benzie County. From Frankfort to Beulah it is non-motorized and mostly paved. From Beulah to Thompsonville (13 miles) the aggregate trail surface is open to snowmobiles in the winter. Pets are permitted on most parts of the trail as long as they are on a leash and under control. The trail is owned by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) and is operated and maintained by Benzie County. The Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail is a non-profit advocate, to support the efforts of the MDNR and County and to help see that the trail is maintained and enjoyed. Currently there is no dedicated pedestrian or bicycle connection to the trail from the Village. Due to the trail's location at the bottom of the hill, the route that may offer the least physical barriers as far as topography would be a pedestrian connection to the trail along Walker Street, as this road may have the gentlest grades from the "top-of-the-hill" to the trail.

REGIONAL PARKS INVENTORY

In addition to the Village park resources, a review of park and recreation facilities in a 10-mile radius is also provided. Even though the Village of Benzonia is rather small in area, it is very close to a wealth of other premium park and recreation facilities in the region (FIGURE 7.1). One can see within 10 miles there is access to park facilities that range from Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, a number of facilities managed by the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy (Green Point Dunes, Railroad Point), playgrounds and park facilities from other municipalities such as Frankfort, Elberta, Beulah and Honor, roadside parks and many public access points to various lakes and rivers. These resources are not listed in-depth as it is well known that one of the unique treasures of this area is the abundance of, and access to, beautiful natural park and recreation resources.

PREVIOUSLY GRANT ASSISTED FACILITIES SUMMARY

The Village had previously received 2 small grants for Academy (Kiwanis) Park in 1976, and 1977 and a larger grant was awarded to the Village for Academy Park improvements in 2018. Grant summary from the MDNR can be found in the Appendix.

NATURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY

The description of natural resources can be found in Chapter V, under Natural Resources.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING AND INPUT PROCESS

PLANNING METHODS

Per the MDNR recommendations, the Village of Benzonia park land and facilities were compared to the minimum guidelines set forth by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA, 1983, 1995). Although the NRPA's updated guidelines were set more than 15 years ago, the MDNR still recommends their use as standards to help establish minimum community needs in terms of land area and number of facilities. However, as these guidelines are relatively old, this plan will be based on the Village's own particular resources and resident preferences and demands to best suit the community's desires for recreation. Recreation needs for a particular community are often better documented through public input rather than relying only on the national guidelines.

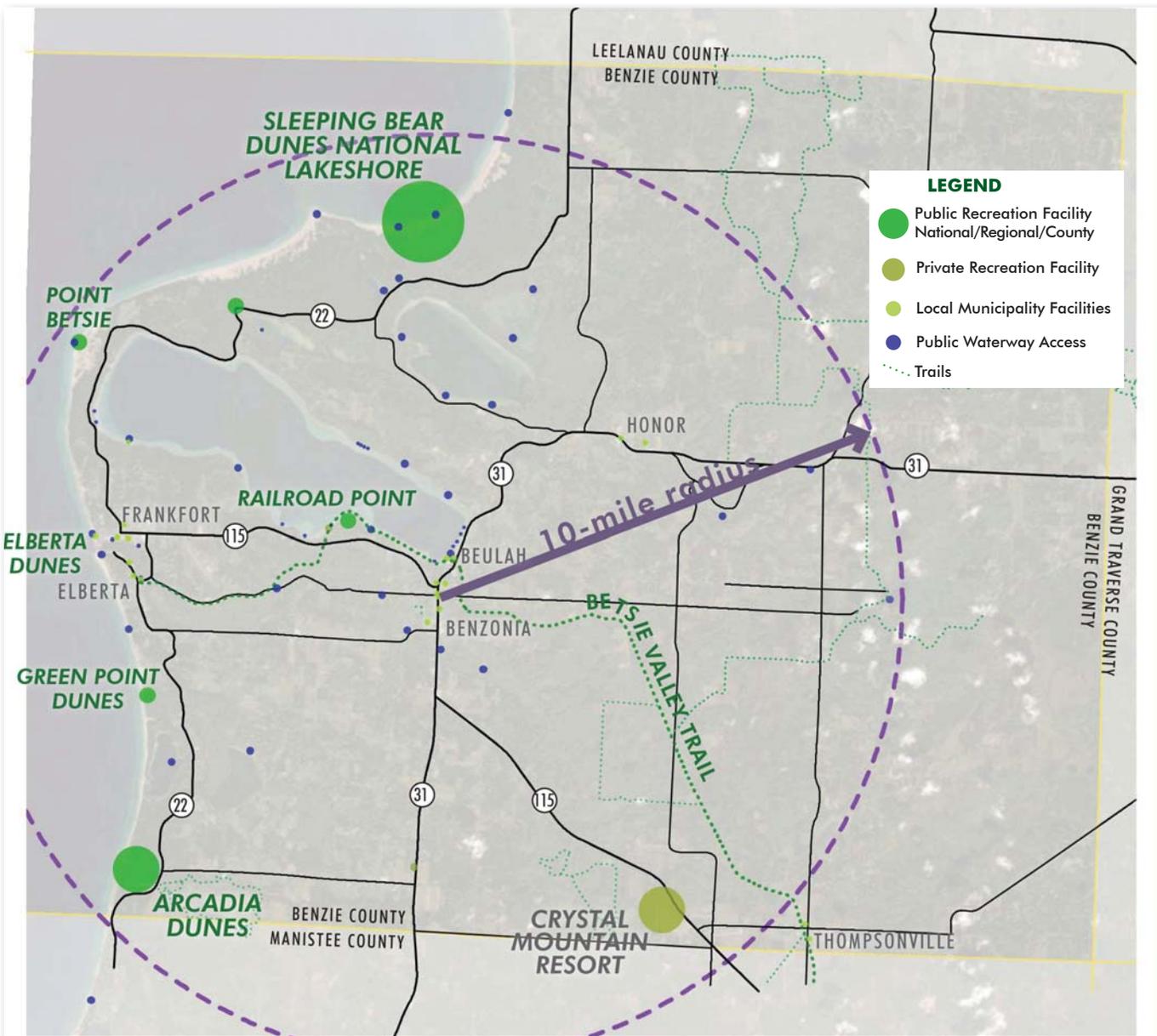


FIGURE 7.1 - REGIONAL PARKS INVENTORY

Public input was completed by several methods for this project. A public open house was held at the beginning of the project, with a number of feedback stations, a project presentation and a design charrette. One of the charrette groups was specifically focused on Natural Resources, which included park and recreation issues. In addition, a public survey was made available, with a specific park and recreation section, and was open and advertised for approximately 4 weeks. A second public meeting was held and a 30-day minimum opportunity for additional public feedback was requested on the draft plan. The final period for public comment was provided at an public hearing advertised as a part of the Planning Commission meeting held before the plan was adopted by the Village Council. A more detailed description of the planning process can be found in Chapter III.

COMPARISONS TO NATIONAL STANDARDS

When comparing the types of recreation facilities in the Village and the amenities offered to the NRPA guidelines, the Village will be more than adequate when compared to nearly all the standards, due to the small size of the community, in both population (535) and area (715 acres). Therefore, the facility recommendation for this plan will be based more heavily on public comments received during the planning process.



PARK SERVICE AREAS

Another tool used to look at how well a community’s recreation needs are being met is to look at service areas. The NPRA has a more recent campaign initiative called the “10-Minute Movement” to ensure in all communities that there is a great park within a safe and easy 10 minute walk (or 1/2 mile) of every resident. For purposes of this master plan, this 1/2 mile radius is referred to as the communities park ‘service area’. This is diagrammed in FIGURE 7.0. As the Village area is relatively small compared to some other municipalities, an even tighter radius is also shown at 1/4 mile, this is generally considered a 5-minute walk. Residences within a 5-minute walk to a park would have an ‘Excellent’ service area.

While not technically included in the Village of Benzonia, (nor maintained by the Village) the Memorial Fields Park, maintained by Benzonia Township is included in the service area for this map as it is so close to the Village and is used frequently by Village Residents, many don’t even realize it is NOT part of the Village. Memorial Fields includes 4 softball fields, space for 2+ soccer fields, a playground, 2 picnic shelters, restrooms buildings, a Veteran’s Memorial, disc-golf course, and a dog park. While not part of the Village park inventory its facilities and nearness should be considered during any park (or other) development in the Village to assure the best pedestrian connections, appropriate adjacent land uses and the like.

Academy Park and Memorial Fields have the most extensive recreation facilities available to residents, therefore those 2 parks are placed at the center of a 1/4 mile service area - the darkest green on the map. These are the areas that would be considered to have an ‘excellent’ service area and within a 5 minute walk of a quality park facility. It should be noted there is a lack of residential in the area of Memorial Park, therefore it will be important to maintain and promote quality pedestrian connections to the park from the Village neighborhoods. For example some important future projects may be, continually improving upon the Lake Street village trail, or the addition of a sidewalk to the park from the new sidewalks that are to be placed along US-31 during the MDOT road resurfacing project in 2020.

The other park properties in the Village, due to limited available facilities were not given as high of a service area rating. Nearly the entire Village is within a 10 minute walk of a park facility. However, one of the KEY ideas behind the movement is to assure that residents are within a “safe and easy” walk. This is where the Village currently has a lot of challenges. As noted in the inventory of resources, there are very few sidewalks in the Village and the ones that exist are not accessible and many are in disrepair. An able-bodied resident may have a 5-minute walk to Academy Park, but for the elderly or disabled it would be unsafe or nearly impossible. These thoughts were also echoed continuously in the public comments. In addition, many trail connections will have to take into account the steep slopes in the Village as well. **Improving accessibility and improving pedestrian/bicycle connections should be of the highest priority in all future developments in the Village of Benzonia, park or otherwise.**

PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY FOR PARKS AND RECREATION

PUBLIC MEETING #1

Visual Preference Survey Summary:

At the first public meeting a number of images were displayed and meeting participants were asked to vote on images that most appealed to them OR images that they did not like at all. This is a list of images related to parks and recreation facilities that received the most favorable responses -

- sledding hills
- local hiking trails/nature trails/walking paths
- public art
- single track bike trails
- passive recreation areas (picnic/shelter type facilities)
- pocket parks
- outdoor exercise areas
- traditional and natural play areas





In addition to the above information participants at the meeting also gave additional feedback during the charrette exercise. A main theme of the night was that there is a high desire in the community to create more places to walk and provide more trail connections. See Chapter VIII for a more detailed analysis of the charrette results with more detailed ideas on new trail connections.

PUBLIC SURVEY SUMMARY

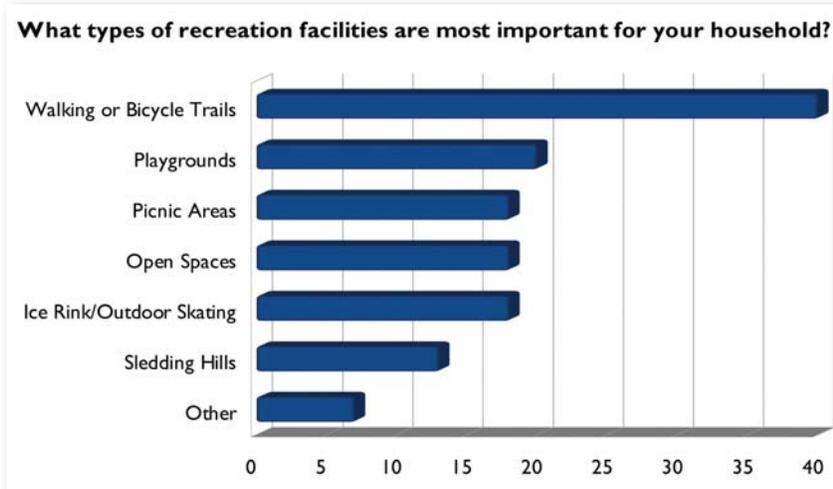
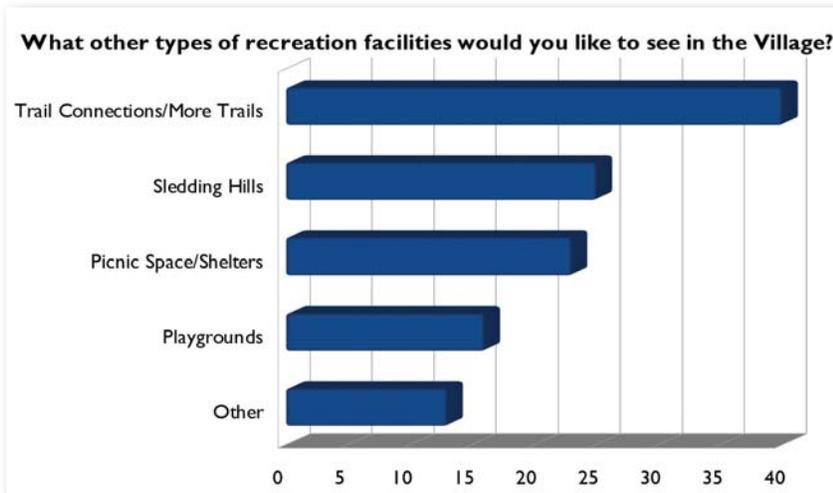
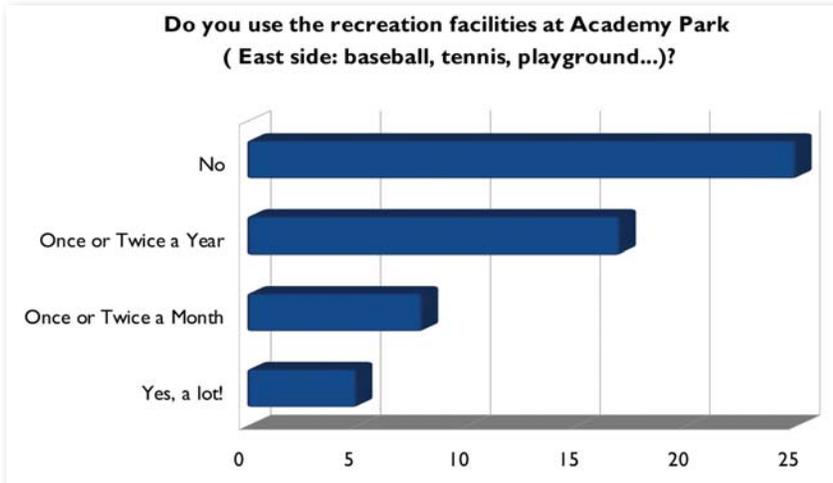
A section of the public survey was dedicated to asking questions related to park and recreation. There were 55 respondents total. Full results can be found in the appendix, a summary of the responses are as follows.

The survey asked several questions to gauge the degree of use that the Village facilities receive. When asked about Academy Park, 45% of respondents said they do not use the park. When asked about Academy Park West, 40% said they did not even know it was available for public use. Similarly, almost 60% said they never use the village trails near Lake and River Street. When reading through the additional comments it was a common thread that there was lack of knowledge in the community about the facilities themselves, many people didn't know they existed. Overall, the responses indicate that the parks are not used frequently by a majority of the community.

A portion of the questions also asked about perceived maintenance and condition of the park facilities. Overall it seemed that most people feel the park facilities are in fair condition.

There were a series of questions for respondents to indicate what facilities they would like to see in the Village and then indicate which ones would be most important to their particular households. Overwhelming the top responses were for more trails and walking/bicycling opportunities.

Other ideas that were mentioned more frequently were sledding hills, picnic spaces and playgrounds. Other spaces that were named as important to respondents households were playgrounds, picnic areas, open space and winter activities such as ice skating/rink and sledding hills were again mentioned. Additionally, stakeholder comments stressed the importance of continuing to provide for a community ice skating rink.



Public support of park and recreation facilities in the park seems to be very high. When asked about supporting park and recreation improvements and acquisition of property for future improvements, there was nearly unanimous support.



*PUBLIC COMMENTS SUPPORT THE IDEA OF A COMMUNITY ICE RINK
(HIGH SCORING IMAGE FROM VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY)*

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals and objectives related to parks and recreation can be found in Chapter VIII. Village Master Plan.

ACTION PROGRAM

The action program related to parks and recreation items can be found in Chapter IX. Implementation.

A CLOSER LOOK

MAKING CONNECTIONS: BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PLANNING

The following information is taken directly from the **Northwest Michigan Regional Non-Motorized Strategy**.

The strategy was developed and published in 2008 and included future non-motorized transportation plans and projects for the thirteen county region gathered from the Michigan Department of Transportation Service Centers, county road commissions, and groups and organizations which listed and described actions that were being taken to increase non-motorized transportation opportunities.

While little was included in that documentation specific to the Village of Benzonia, the strategies and explanations are valid to this master plan. All of the following should be explored for any new development, redevelopment or road improvement project in the Village limits.



ON-ROAD BIKE FACILITIES

On-road bike facilities are a win-win situation affecting:

- Economics
- Traffic calming effect
- Transportation options
- Healthier, more environmental
- Improve walking conditions and safety
- Makes trails more successful
- Safety

Each government or non-governmental entity can consider the following in the development of on-road bike facilities:

1. Consider implementation of 4 to 3 lane conversions with the addition of bike lanes on roads with Annual Daily Traffic (ADT) counts less than 20,000. Roads with ADT less than 18,000 should receive greater consideration (can reduce traffic speeds).
2. Consider reducing lane widths or widen roads to free up space to add bike lanes (can reduce traffic speeds).
3. Include bike parking in parks, trail heads, retail/commercial locations, etc.
4. Construct paved shoulders along high priority corridors and areas where sight distances may create safety problems (non-perpendicular rail road crossings, vertical and horizontal curves).
5. Wide curb lanes 14 feet wide or wider can be accompanied with a shared lane marking.
6. Signage – warning and/or directional
7. Bridges and overpasses – pinch points. New construction should include non-motorized facilities.
8. Identify significant on-road non-motorized corridors and major bike ride routes.
9. Evaluate each road/trail crossing; these are potential access points.



PAVED SHOULDER WITH SIGNAGE - (HIGH SCORING IMAGE FROM VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY)



HIGH VISIBILITY CROSSWALKS - (HIGH SCORING IMAGE FROM VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY)

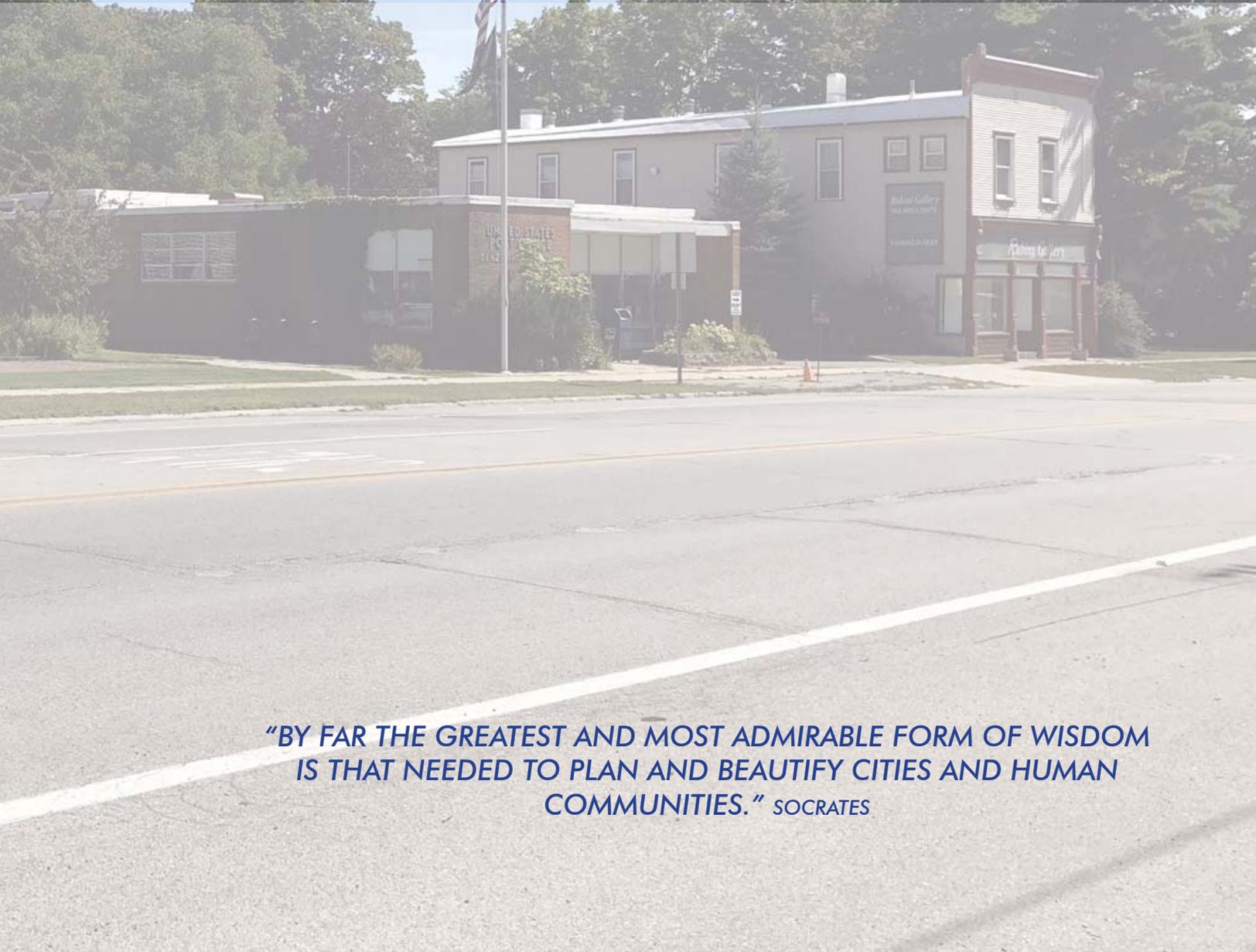
PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

Each government or non-governmental entity can consider the following in the development of pedestrian facilities:

1. Intersection improvements and design
 - Make Americans with Disabilities Act compliant
 - Reduced curb radii
 - Curb extensions
 - Crossing islands and medians
 - Channelized right turn slip lanes
 - Crosswalks
 - Pedestrian signals
2. Roundabouts
3. Mid-block crossings
4. Require sidewalks as part of new road projects in urban areas, and as part of all new development.

CHAPTER VIII.

VILLAGE MASTER PLAN



**"BY FAR THE GREATEST AND MOST ADMIRABLE FORM OF WISDOM
IS THAT NEEDED TO PLAN AND BEAUTIFY CITIES AND HUMAN
COMMUNITIES." SOCRATES**



OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

The following opportunities and constraints are summarized as a result of the master plan process. This is a compilation of public feedback, stakeholder review, and inventory of existing conditions, these are also sometimes referred to as strengths and weaknesses.

OPPORTUNITIES/STRENGTHS:

- Location – The Village’s central location in the county.
- People – The Village’s small town dynamic and willingness to seek progressive solutions.
- Current Developments – The MDOT resurfacing project, Academy Park improvements, and the Village’s participation in the RRC program.
- History – The Village has a storied history with Academic roots. Museum in the Village and the Mills Community House.
- Vacant Properties – There is physical space for developments.
- Potential Fire Hall/Township Relocation – Offers tremendous opportunity to redevelop a critical lot in the heart of the community to lead future improvements.

CONSTRAINTS/WEAKNESSES:

- Sewers – Lack of sewers is restricting size and location of potential development.
- Soils and Slopes – Creates special challenges for development, especially without sewers.
- Housing – Lack of quality and available housing stock for variety of resident types.
- Economy – Small town provides fewer jobs, less tax base, less money to work with overall.
- Small Size – Lack of resources/staff/funds. (This can also be an opportunity, easier to make changes)
- US-31 – Busy highway bisects community, lack of pedestrian facilities. (This is also an opportunity, brings people to business, events, residences, etc.)

ANALYSIS SUMMARY

The following is a summary of the overall analysis from the planning process for the Village of Benzonia. These are the major takeaway points that need to be further addressed in the goals and objectives and then the implementation plan.

SOCIAL

- Demographics: The Village, like much of the region, has an aging population and a population that drastically increases for a few months in the summer. A large portion of the local year-round population faces economic challenges and is considered asset limited (ALICE).
- Housing: Because of the demographics in the Village, a variety of housing types is required that are NOT currently available. More quality affordable housing is needed.
- New developments and any new plans for the future should incorporate placemaking principles. One of the key assets of the Village is its academic history and connection to the existing Mills Community House. This ‘theme’ should be expanded and incorporated.
- Connections are needed of all kinds – Complete Street Principles need to be incorporated in all developments, especially any roadway improvements.
- There are issues with the current roadways. Speed of traffic, crossings, and general safety are big concerns. Speed control techniques should be explored and used such as gateways, street trees, building to the street, better corridor landscaping, high visibility crosswalks, etc.
- The Village lacks overall identity. Gateway sign and landscape treatments should be improved, a wayfinding/signage plan may be beneficial in the future. As mentioned, this would provide an additional tool to help calm traffic speeds.

ENVIRONMENT

- Trees are important, as well as protecting natural resources. Regulations to protect and enhance the Village’s tree resources should be improved.

- The existing Village street trees add greatly to the Village’s neighborhood character and overall aesthetics, street trees should be protected. The Village should develop programs and policies to replace/protect street trees as some of the largest existing trees are significantly aged.
- Soils and slopes in the Village are a unique challenge and will continue to need to be dealt with in all new development scenarios.
- Village parks have identity problems. Not only signage, but in general it seems many residents are unaware of park facilities, locations, and programming. Park facilities should be better promoted and connected.
- Per public comments trail connections and addition of walking trails should be a major Parks and Recreation goal. A trail connection should be provided from the “top-of-the-hill” to the Betsie Valley Trail.
- Winter activities are important to residents. Many voiced support of the Ice Rink and the idea of bringing back a sledding hill. Both of these are facilities that could be unique to the Village and would be great opportunities to draw people and activity to the Village.
- Green infrastructure practices and sustainable design should be encouraged in all new developments. This should include village developments (parks, roads, trails, etc.) and private developers.

ECONOMIC

- In general, the community desires additional growth, however it should be reflective of the small town feel that the residents currently enjoy while improving the overall aesthetic.
- The current zoning ordinance needs to be updated and reorganized.
- The Village should continue to support small and local business owners, especially those that provide jobs to the Village year-round. Look at a variety of options and resources to provide tax reliefs, incentives, funding opportunities, special cooperation, promotions, etc. to help support.
- The Village would benefit from corridor plans for US-31 and M-115 at some point. Standards for typical roadway cross sections should be completed for highways, county roads, village streets, etc.
- Lack of sewers is a major constraint, the Village should continue to explore options to provide a sewer system, even if it is an alternative or unconventional arrangement. Any future Village development will either be stagnate or have to overcome large hurdles for any significant improvements.
- The Village needs to provide a true mixed-use zoning district to allow for a mix of development that will support the Vision for revising the retail at the “top-of-the-hill” as well as along the highway corridors. Overlay zones should be strongly considered.
- The addition of light industrial uses should be explored to offer development options, especially where traditional septic systems are not possible for other developments. This may change if sewer becomes available. Any industrial areas should require strong design standards and buffer requirements that would ensure it will be as compatible as possible with adjacent uses.

OVERALL VISION DIAGRAM

During the Public Visioning Workshop residents participated in a design charrette to help facilitate their best ideas for the future. As mentioned, the participants worked in 3 groups and each came up with a quick sketch plan based on an either Social, Environmental or Economic organizing themes. The compiled sketches are shown in Figure 3.2. Continuing through the master plan design process - their compiled ideas have been refined into an OVERALL VISION DIAGRAM, refer to Figure 8.0. Some of the initial thoughts and ideas have been added to, removed or reworked due to conversations and additional discoveries during the design process. **It is the intent that this diagram serve as a visual guide to lead, organize and coordinate future projects in the Village to help the community reach its Vision.**

The following is a brief summary of the proposed items on the visioning plan with representative inspirational images for what these spaces might look like in the future:

- Revitalizing and redeveloping the “top-of-the-hill” and creating a ‘historic zone’ was a key component during all discussions when looking at the future of the Village.
- Another major thought, was the idea of creating a ‘town center’ space in this area, incorporated with Academy Park(s). This may include additional park expansions, creating event or gathering spaces,



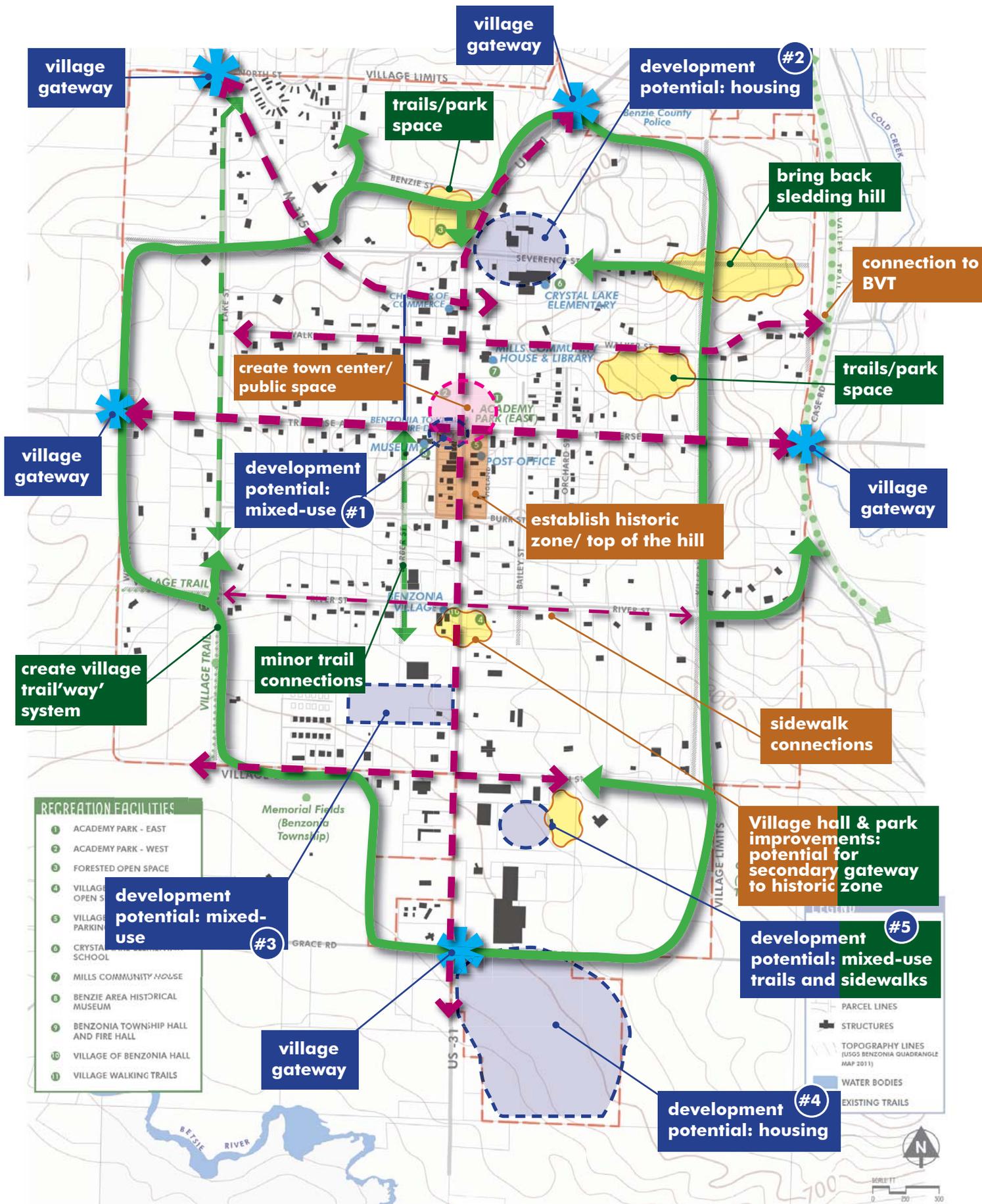
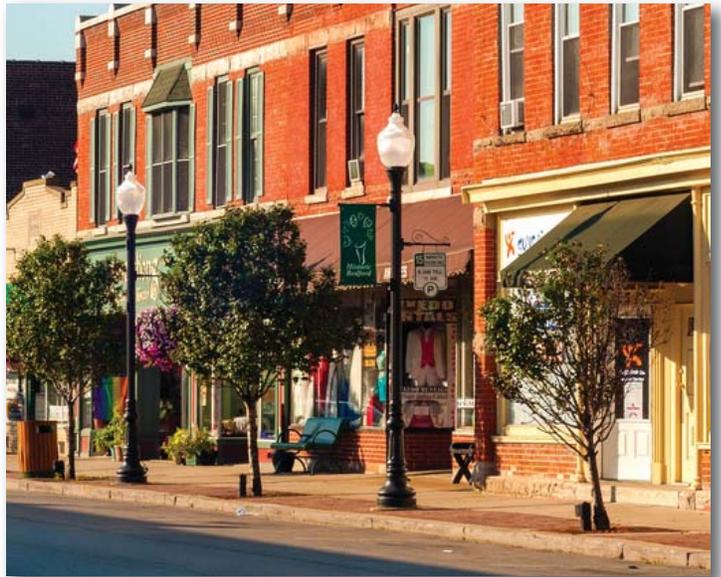


FIGURE 8.0 - OVERALL VISION DIAGRAM - BASED OFF OF VILLAGE WORKSHOP: DESIGN CHARRETTE

creating a pedestrian overpass over US-31 (even if it is far in the future), creating a splash pad or water play zone, and keeping and expanding the ice rink to have a winter gathering space.

- Another major idea is to establish and improve sidewalk connections throughout the Village, streets shown as the pink dashed arrows might receive priority consideration.
- Improving the safety and visibility of all pedestrian street crossing at sidewalk connections.
- Establishing a pedestrian and bicycle connection to the Betsie Valley Trail.
- Improving and expanding upon trail connections throughout the Village, the idea of creating a Village 'Trail-way' system around the entire Village that could provide connections to all neighborhoods, commercial areas, etc. Also looking at more minor trail connections on other vacated streets.
- Adding low-impact nature trail type or single track bicycle facilities on some of the forested parcels the Village owns or lands too steep to develop.
- Potential of adding park/public space on South Street (east of US-31) on some of the undeveloped properties (due to septic limitation) - see item 5, pg 71.
- Potential of revitalizing the Village Office complex in the future and coordinate it with improvements on the park parcel on the East side of US-31, could potential create a secondary gateway to further slow traffic before the "top-of-the-hill" historic zone.
- Looking for a suitable location to bring back a sledding hill, a feature that would be unique to the Village.
- When looking at potential development sites to identify to move forward with the RRC process there were a number of sites brought forward. **The RRC process requires a minimum of three sites be identified by the Village. (numbers on vision diagram, Figure 8.0).**
 1. There are plans for the Township Office and Fire Hall to relocate in the near future. This would be a prime redevelopment opportunity for the Village on a major street corner in the



MIXED USE STREETScape - RETAIL AT STREET



CLEARLY MARKED AND ACCESSIBLE PEDESTRIAN CROSSING WITH HIGH VISIBILITY MATERIALS



TRAIL CONNECTIONS



heart of the historic zone. A proper mixed use building here that would exemplify the principles of a mixed use development and with architecture that reflected the historic character of the Village could be a catalyst development and set a standard for all future development in the Village.

2. The old Benzonia High School Site and potentially the Crystal Lake Elementary Site (if the school relocates) - potential for mixed-use/housing and assisted living facilities.
3. There are 2 vacant parcels (currently listed as single owner) south of Tractor Supply, suitable for a mixed-use development.
4. The vacant parcel south of Shop-N-Save for housing/mixed-use with public park opportunity.
5. The vacant parcel behind Save-A-Lot near Shop-n-Save Plaza, this could be a mixed-use development and tied into the existing business, could also include a public park/open space component.

- The idea of creating a more cohesive and extensive Village Gateway and wayfinding system to help identify the Village limits, strengthen the overall character and help reduce traffic speeds.
- The overall idea that septic systems severely limit development and new development will be a challenge without a Village sewer system of some sort.



MIXED USE STREETScape - COORDINATED FURNISHINGS



PRIMARY GATEWAY SIGN TYPE WITH LANDSCAPING



SECONDARY GATEWAY SIGN TYPE



TOWN CENTER AREA / PUBLIC SPACES



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES



people(SOCIAL)

Goal: Encourage a range of housing opportunities that evolve with the needs of the Village, while maintaining the integrity of the existing neighborhoods.

Objectives:

1. Provide a mixed-use zoning district to encourage a variety of housing.
2. Revise the zoning ordinance to allow accessory dwelling units on single family residential lots.
3. Continue to promote quality traditional single family housing.
4. Focus alternative residential development (per public opinion) on additional rental options, senior housing and small multi-family developments such as townhomes or duplexes.
5. Review existing or new housing and/or market studies as they become available to continuously evolve housing objectives per demands.

Goal: Make improvements to the historic ‘top-of-the-hill’, create and support a walkable community and promote a ‘sense of place’ in all new development.

Objectives:

1. Create design standards for development to guide the look of new development.
2. Revise the existing Zoning Ordinance to include landscape requirements, especially for parking and buffers.
3. Implement a streetscape (paving, trees, landscaping furnishing, signage, etc.) that is creative, innovative, and takes cues from the rich history of the ‘top-of-the-hill’. Coordinate this effort with improved wayfinding and gateways.
4. Seek additional parking opportunities on local roadways and provide sidewalk connections and marked crosswalks (by revising excess pavement, creating on-street parking opportunities, etc.)

Goal: Develop and maintain an efficient, safer, and more accessible multi-modal transportation system.

Objectives:

1. Consider the creation of a pedestrian & bicycle plan for the Village that would address sidewalks, trails, bicycle facilities & public transportation. Consider partnerships with adjacent jurisdictions to provide greater community connectivity and greater funding opportunities.
2. Continue to improve sidewalks and crosswalks along local streets and work with the County on County controlled roads.
3. Improve and provide accessible routes to all Village facilities.
4. Consider noise reducing strategies for US-31 and M-115 to reduce noise in the neighborhoods. Consider a “no j-brake” ordinance in the Village limits.

Goal: Foster and encourage partnership opportunities with adjacent jurisdictions and organizations that would serve to enhance the overall community.

Objectives:

1. Consider sharing and coordinating programming of Village facilities with other entities such as Mills Community House, the Museum, School, local sports leagues, etc.
2. Seek partnership opportunities or programs to provide assistance to property owners for upkeep on their homes (yard clean-up, junk clean-up, home repairs, etc.) to help avoid blight issues.





Goal: Improve community outreach and communication with the Village residents and business owners.

Objectives:

1. Make this Master Plan available on-line.
2. Consider creating a social media page(s) for the Village to provide a place for community dialogue.
3. Assure that all Village documents are available on-line. This includes, but is not limited to; zoning ordinances, permit applications, capitol improvements plan, meeting times and meeting minutes.
4. Create a public outreach and participation policy.
5. Consider a 'new resident/new business owner' welcome package. Welcome to the Village: explain ordinance requirements, Village website, parks and recreation info, local business coupons, etc. to promote friendliness and provide for more transparency. Also consider an annual "Village Updates" news letter mailing.



planet(ENVIRONMENT)

Goal: Protect and enhance the existing natural resources.

Objectives:

1. Improve the existing ordinance by adding a Tree Protection and other Landscape Requirements to require native vegetation and restrict invasive species.
2. Improve the existing ordinance by improving the language for steep slope protection (consider restricting development on slopes over 18%) and removal of existing vegetation. Reconsider the fines for violation.
3. Include a tree replacement requirement in the Zoning Ordinance.
4. Create a policy for annual street tree plantings to start replacing street trees every year. Consider neighborhood outreach to help residents properly maintain existing street trees. Consider a policy to provide street trees as a competition or lottery prize for local businesses as an incentive.

Goal: Improve the overall awareness of the Village Park and Recreation facilities.

Objectives:

1. Create a signage plan for Village Park facilities so that ALL facilities are identified with a coordinated and cohesive sign system with a design that reflects the character of the Village.
2. Consider posting park facility usage rules.
3. Explore recreation and programming partnership opportunities with adjacent communities/jurisdictions and share resources.

Goal: Improve existing and provide new connections to all Park and Recreation facilities.

Objectives:

1. Provide accessible parking with appropriate accessible routes to park amenities with all future improvements.
2. Assure park facilities connect to adjacent sidewalks with all future improvements.
3. Consider coordinating and providing public transportation stops at park facilities.
4. Pursue a trail connection from the Village ("top-of-the-hill") to the Betsie Valley Trail.
5. Pursue the idea of a Village-wide trail system around the Village (see OVERALL VISION, FIGURE 8.0).

Goal: Continue to improve and maintain existing park and recreation facilities.

Objectives:

1. Complete an annual maintenance review of all park facilities to plan for yearly improvement.
2. Create and continue partnerships with community groups and volunteers to help maintain facilities.

Goal: Maintain an on-going park and recreation planning process.

Objectives:

1. Maintain a current Park and Recreation Plan on-file with the MDNR, review/update/resubmit every 5-years as needed.
2. Review park and recreation budget annually to properly plan for maintenance and improvement opportunities.
3. Aggressively seek available recreation grant opportunities.
4. Provide for a continuous way to receive public feedback on Parks and Recreation related issues. Consider adding a comment section on the website.
5. Consider an overall parks master plan, village trail plan or a bicycle and pedestrian plan to provide a more cohesive aesthetic, more detailed long range planning, and more detailed budget planning for park facilities.

Goal: Promote sustainable design and management efforts.

Objectives:

1. Include a requirement for sustainable design and low impact development (LID) practices in the zoning ordinance and/or design standards. Include but not limited to; innovate stormwater techniques, recyclable materials, green roofs, pervious pavements, energy efficient lighting, native landscaping and preservation of existing trees.
2. Seek and promote funding opportunities (grants) for sustainable development practices.
3. Encourage or consider tax incentives for development that follows various current industry benchmarks such as LEED or Sustainable Sites.
4. Consider being involved in the Michigan Green Communities program through the Michigan Municipal League.

A CLOSER LOOK

WAYFINDING & TRAFFIC CALMING

One of the key issues brought up during public comment was that many people were concerned about the speed of traffic in the Village, not only on US-31, but other Village streets as well. Another issue was that people felt the Village lacks an overall identity and has undistinguished borders.

GATEWAYS

- One strategy to help alleviate both problems is to implement a better wayfinding sign system in the Village starting with Gateway Signs and better associated landscape treatments. Gateway signs are the term used for a sign (or public art or combination) that welcomes people into the community. A good wayfinding plan also includes placemaking principles to allow the gateway treatments to showcase the community’s character. Gateway treatments should vary in size and scale depending on the situation. They are usually part of an overall wayfinding system.

TRAFFIC CALMING

- Gateway signs that announce arrival into a community are also a traffic calming strategy. They signal to drivers that they are in a different space, and often cause drivers to slow down subconsciously.
- Street Trees are also used as a traffic calming strategy. Streets lined with trees, especially as close to the road as possible have been know to reduce traffic speeds.
- Another strategy is placing buildings as close to the road as possible and allowing on-street parking. This narrows a driver’s field of vision (much like street trees) and typically causes drivers to slow.





profits(ECONOMIC)



Goal: Encourage and Support local and small business. Encourage innovation, progressive development and redevelopment projects.

Objectives:

1. Create a policy to buy either from Village businesses or other local jurisdictions for as many of the purchases required for the Village as possible and keep tax payer money in the local community.
2. Create a mixed-use zoning district to provide more flexible options for new development or redevelopment projects, and to guide the look and types of development desired by the public from this master plan.
3. Continue to pursue the Redevelopment Ready Community Certification.

Goal: Take advantage of the Village’s location as the center or heart of the County.

Objectives:

1. Improve the gateways into the Village and increase the overall awareness of the Village. Create a overall wayfinding and sign plan for coordinated signage improvements.
2. Pursue a corridor plan for US-31, consider the M-115 corridor as well, to guide the look and types of development desired by the public from this master plan.

Goal: Continue to support planning efforts that will guide future improvements and promote fiscal responsibility of tax payer funds.

Objectives:

1. Planning Commission shall review this master plan annually and report to the Village Council.
2. Work with the Village Council/Village Staff to create a detailed Capitol Improvement Plan so that projects can be well coordinated to minimize costs.
3. Create an initial list of a minimum of 3 priority sites for redevelopment, follow through with RRC process. Maintain an updated list of priority sites that should be redeveloped. Review annually.
4. Create an economic development strategy, that is coordinated with County and Regional strategies, review annually.

Goal: Improve the look and quality of all future development and redevelopment projects in the Village.

Objectives:

1. Create design standards for buildings to guide the look of new development and redevelopment desired by the public from this master plan..
2. Revise the current zoning ordinance and require a landscape component, include tree planting/replacement, parking lot, and buffer requirements. Require a majority of native species and prohibit invasive species.
3. Create typical street cross sections to guide all future road improvements, could be included with corridor planning.

Goal: Continue to make improvements to Village administration, regulation and development review procedures.

Objectives:

1. Continuously seek to streamline the permitting process and make processes and fees as transparent as possible and provide excellent customer service.
2. Continue to improve the zoning code enforcement procedure for violations of the zoning ordinance. Create a Village policy for zoning violation and enforcement procedures.
3. Provide a feedback or comment mechanism for permitting procedures from developers and also from comments from Village residents in general.

4. A revised zoning ordinance should clearly outline the development permitting process with clear step-by-step instructions, flowcharts to show requirements from adjacent and state/federal jurisdictions, per-application conference procedures, and clearly outline required fees.
5. Create a Village policy to recruit and properly train and provide orientation for elected officials, planning commission members and Village staff. Provide for continued education and training.

Goal: Continue to be the progressive Village that was founded and that people still refer to (frequent mention in the public comments). Continuously seek new technologies that would improve efficiency and better the resident’s quality of life.

Objectives:

1. Revise the current zoning ordinance to include sustainable design practices, in particular creating standards for green infrastructure.
2. Seek to improve Village utilities and offer sewer service, consider alternative technologies.
3. Consider offering public Village WI-FI services, particularly in key public areas (“top-of-the-hill” or shopping districts)
4. Identify community champions that would help support development projects.

FUTURE LAND USE

The Michigan Planning Enabling act of 2008 requires the inclusion of a future land use map and zoning plan in the master plan. The future land use map and districts identify a generalized, preferred organization of future land uses in the Village of Benzonia. This will act as an overall framework to guide land use and policy decisions within the Village over the next 15-20 years. It guides the development of a zoning plan and ultimately influences the new zoning ordinance.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP

The Future Land Use Map (FIGURE 8.5) is not intended to be used to identify future land use on a parcel-by-parcel basis, but rather to identify districts that may evolve within the Village. The Future Land Use Map shows the preferred locations for future developments in the Village. It is intended to provide a framework for future site-specific land use or zoning decisions that are brought before the Planning Commission and/or to make changes to the Zoning Ordinance. For example, a parcel currently zoned residential may be shown as mixed use district on the Future Land Use Map; the parcel will remain zoned residential until the property owner requests the zoning change and the Village adopts the zoning request.

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, re-zonings or zoning text amendments may be necessary. **It is important to understand that the Future Land Use Map does not change the existing zoning in an area without going through further steps.** A property owner must continue to 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.

FUTURE GROWTH AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER

The finding of the master plan process clearly show that maintaining a quiet, small town feel is important to the community in regards to all future types of development. The Village has a desire to accommodate a reasonable amount of high quality development while at the same time preserving the small town character that gives the Village its charm. Careful planning for the location and style of any new development will be paramount in the effort to allow for growth while maintaining existing character.





FUTURE GROWTH AND UTILITIES

All new development must be tempered by the ability of community infrastructure to support existing and planned growth. Public utilities including water and electricity, are available in the Village. In addition many areas have access to natural gas - however sewer service is not available. **With the known limiting capacity of the Village’s soils, providing for significant development projects will be challenging without a municipal sewer system or other creative means to deal with septic systems. All future development decisions must take this into consideration.**

When creating the future land use map the Village Planning Commission and consultant carefully reviewed the existing data gathered in the inventory and public feedback phase. Based on the social, economic and environmental characteristics of the Village, eight general categories of land use have been identified to serve existing and future development needs. These categories are listed below:

1. Medium Density Residential - These are areas where the lot sizes would be the largest, for the most part these areas are already zoned for single family residential in the Village. These are areas that are fairly suitable for building homes, but may also contain areas of steep slopes or wet/septic limited soils. These are areas that would be more difficult to accommodate more intense land uses.

- Objectives: These use areas would consist of lot sizes with a minimum of one acre or larger.
- Intended Uses: These area are typically to permit one-single family house (FIGURE 8.1). Additional structures could be permitted depending on the lot size. Additional dwelling unit would be permitted. Because of the small size of the Village, these use areas would also be appropriate to accommodate Planned Unit Developments (PUD).

2. Village Residential - This category is to maintain and build upon the well established character, scale and density of the traditional pattern of the neighborhoods in the original plat of the Village, while allowing for residential uses other than just single-family residential. This should also encourage adaptive re-use (or complete redevelopment if appropriate) of public, institutional or retail/commercial buildings.



FIGURE 8.1 - TYPICAL DEVELOPMENT TYPE APPROPRIATE FOR MEDIUM DENSITY



FIGURE 8.2 - TYPICAL DEVELOPMENT TYPE APPROPRIATE FOR VILLAGE RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

- Objectives: This use area would consist of the smallest lot size allowable, 15,000sf, up to 1 acre.
- Intended Uses: These areas are typically to permit one-single family house, in a compact walkable neighborhood type setting (FIGURE 8.2). This character of development would be similar to the current housing on Bailey or Orchard Streets near Academy Park. Multi-family housing such as duplexes or triplexes, small townhomes, smaller assisted living housing, or carriage home developments could also be allowed. Additional structures could be permitted depending on the lot size and septic limitations. Additional dwelling units would be permitted. Homes should be allowed to sit closer to the street that in currently allowed in the zoning ordinance to create a more walkable-type community character.

3. Village Mixed Use – This land use category is the vision for what the Village of Benzonia could one day become – a vibrant mixed use district with residential, cultural, and recreational uses to go along with both smaller retailers, office spaces and larger commercial business. While the current C-1 zoning classifications has some elements that would be appropriate for this land use, most likely a new zoning classification is needed – one that allows these many different uses by right while establishing strict dimensional requirements to encourage density, walkability, and neighborhood appeal.

- Objectives: Allowing a variety of uses in a compact or higher density setting to promote walkability (FIGURE 8.3). Parking standards should be flexible to allow shared parking and reduce curb cuts. Development standards should be created to encouraged to promote quality development with appropriate materials, landscape treatment, lighting, and signage.
- Intended Uses: A variety of higher density use types is encouraged for these areas. They should include Multi-family, retail, live/work, and office buildings (FIGURE 8.4). Some single-type commercial uses would also be appropriate if sited in a way that promotes a walkable environment, such as facing the street, parking in the rear or sides, shared parking, alley access, etc.

4. General Commercial - These are areas in the Village that are mainly being used as commercial development already. These uses are more vehicular oriented and allow for larger type developments such as grocery stores, fast food retailers and chain retail (like Tractor Supply).

- Objectives: Basically to serve the same purpose as the current C-2 zoning district. However, the zoning ordinance should be updated with design/corridor guidelines established to encourage more appropriate



FIGURE 8.3 - TYPICAL DEVELOPMENT TYPE APPROPRIATE FOR VILLAGE MIXED DISTRICT



FIGURE 8.4 - TYPICAL DEVELOPMENT TYPE APPROPRIATE FOR VILLAGE MIXED DISTRICT

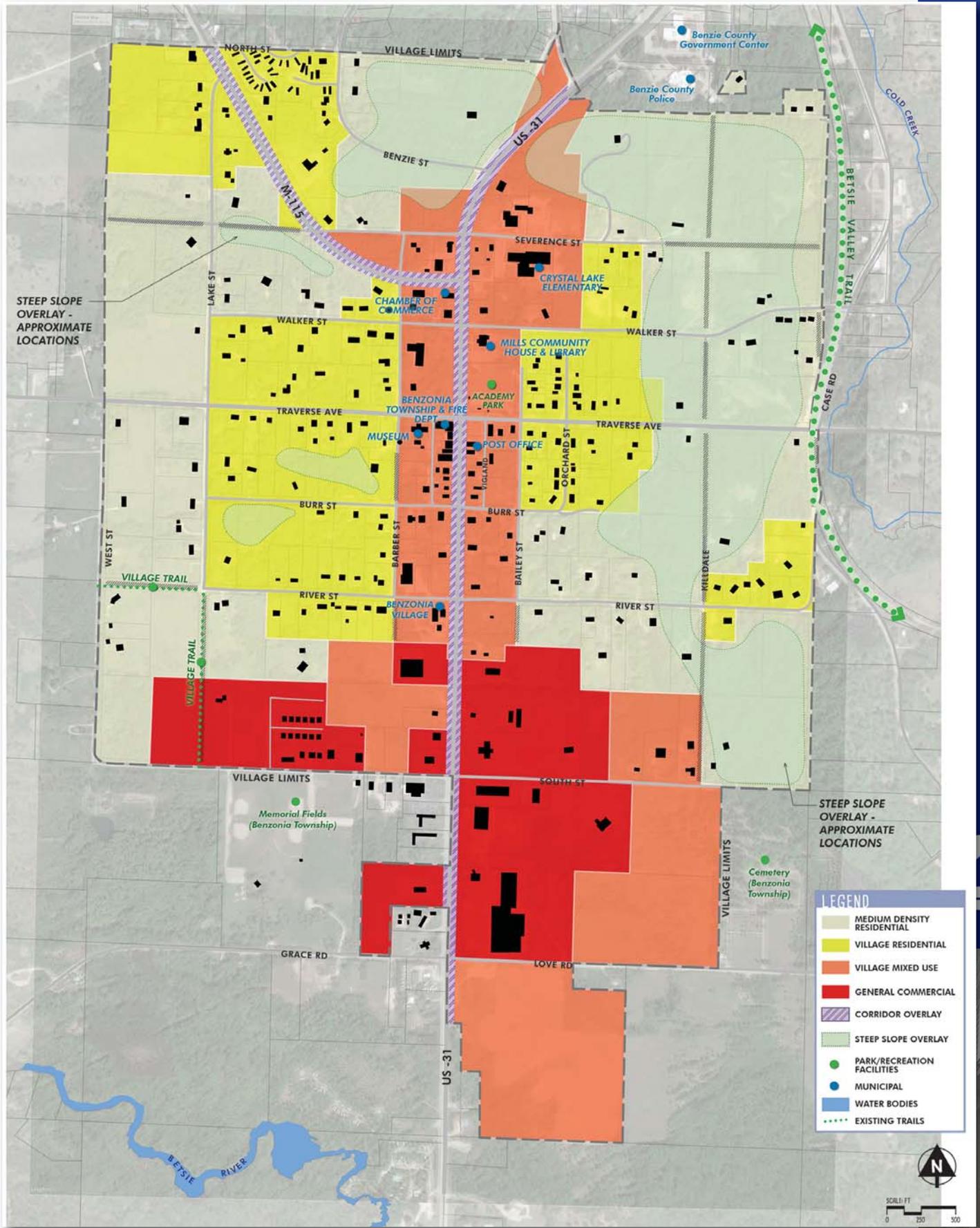


FIGURE 8.5 - FUTURE LAND USE MAP

and flexible setbacks, various density patterns, along with a better overall aesthetics for future development or redevelopments. Should also consider shared parking to reduce curb cuts.

- Intended Uses: Larger type retail and commercial developments such as grocery and associated shopping plazas, small chain stores, local retailers and services, professional offices or fast food establishments (FIGURE 8.6 and 8.7)

6. Recreation and Conservation - These are area that are currently being used for recreation uses, or lands that the Village currently owns that are undeveloped.

- Objectives
- Intended Uses: These areas are to be utilized for both active and passive recreational purposes and can be located in any area of the Village.

7. Public/Semi-Public - These include government and institutional buildings such as Village Office, school, churches and the museum. The designation of public and quasi-public areas and uses on the Future Land Use Map is not intended to represent or suggest a specific zoning district as these uses are intended to be allowed in any zone.

RECOMMENDED OVERLAY ZONES

An overlay zone is a zoning district which is applied over one or more previously established zoning districts, establishing additional standards and criteria for covered properties in addition to those of the underlying zoning district. Communities often use overlay zones to protect special features such as historic buildings, wetlands and steep slopes. Overlay zones can also be used to promote specific development projects, such as mixed-used developments and developments along transit corridors.

In the case of the Village, the future land use map indicates the following overlay zones:

- Corridor Design Overlay - A single corridor design overlay zone may be appropriate for both M-115 and US-31. An overlay zone for these areas should add language and diagrams to provide more aesthetically consistent development along the highways. It should cover things like driveway locations, landscape and sign standards, lighting, parking lot standards and various building regulations to meet the Vision.
- Steep Slope - A common approach to regulate steep slopes through a zoning overlay district. Since steep slopes are often located throughout a municipality, the overlay approach enables their uniform regulation



FIGURE 8.6 - TYPICAL DEVELOPMENT TYPE APPROPRIATE FOR GENERAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT



FIGURE 8.7 - TYPICAL DEVELOPMENT TYPE APPROPRIATE FOR GENERAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT



regardless of the municipality’s base zoning-district provisions. This overlay zone would provide additional protections for properties containing slope in excess of 18%. It is recommended that the existing zoning ordinance be amended or revised entirely to add additional steep slope protections. These protection will need to be carefully considered but may include, tree removal restrictions, additional soil and erosion controls, ridge protections, additional limits on septic systems, or require larger lot sizes.

THE ZONING PLAN

A “zoning plan” is required by the Michigan Planning and Zoning Enabling Acts. Section 33(d) of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, pa 33 of 2008, as amended, requires that the plan prepared under this act serve as the Basis for the zoning plan. The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, pa 110 of 2006, as amended, requires a zoning plan be prepared as the basis for the zoning ordinance. It must be based on an inventory of conditions pertinent to Zoning in the municipality and the purposes for which zoning may be adopted (as described in section 201 of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act). The zoning plan identifies the zoning districts and their purposes, as well as the basic standards proposed to control the height, area, bulk, location, and use of buildings and premises in the Village. These matters are regulated by the specific terms in the zoning ordinance.

The zoning plan is a key implementation tool to achieve the vision of the master plan. In order to realize that Vision, the Village must ensure that ordinances and regulations permit the type and style of development recommended by the master plan.

In addition, to link the zoning ordinance to the Plan, the zoning districts will need to connect to the future land use districts described previously and displayed on the Future Land Use Map. The chart below shows how the existing zoning districts may correspond with the future land use districts and what new zoning districts may need to be created.

FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATION	ZONING DISTRICT
Medium Density Residential	R-1 - Description and standards require updating.
Village Residential	Similar to current R-2 - Description and standards require updating.
Village Mixed Use	Requires New VMU Category. This district is intended to allow a wide range of retail/commercial, institutional, and residential uses which include development standards focusing on building location, walkability, and special parking provisions.
General Commercial	Similar to current C-2, requires updating to create a new single C-1 category. This district is intended to provide orderly and concentrated development of businesses outside the ‘top-of-the-hill’ core.
Recreation and Conservation	These uses would be allowed in all zoning districts.
Public/Semi-Public	These uses would be allowed in all zoning districts.
Corridor Design Overlay Zone	Required new CDO Category. For any district, lots that front US-31 and M-115
Steep Slope Overlay Zone	Requires new SSO Category. For any district, with areas with slopes 18% or greater.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO THE ZONING ORDINANCE

The current Village of Benzonia Zoning Ordinance was adopted in 1997. While the current ordinance has some strengths and good regulations, it is lacking in many areas. It is recommended to create a new ordinance document because of the following reasons.

- It is not generally well organized, does not contain clear permitting, review and violation procedures.
- It consists of many amendments that are not kept together with the original ordinance. This makes staff administration procedures and enforcement of the ordinance difficult.
- It does not address current development trends such as mixed use, complete streets, or green infrastructure practices.
- It does not provide proper environmental protections such as steep slopes, tree protections, landscape dark skies or strong buffer standards.
- It does not address land division, permitting or procedures.

A new ordinance will allow a single clear and concise document that can be used to help implement this Master Plan.

The new zoning ordinance shall:

1. Ensure that it meets new and current enabling legislation.
2. New Zoning District descriptions and dimensional standards with charts/tables and representative images to illustrate development goals.
3. Include housing standards that allow at least three non-traditional housing types, per this Master Plan.
4. Include standards that promotes overall walkability, accessibility and a pedestrian-friendly environment. Also include standards for bicycle facilities, traffic calming, and public realm (streetscape).
5. Ensure new developments are compatible with the Village character and Vision of this Master Plan.
6. Allow for mixed land uses by right (in buildings and in use) per this Master Plan. Mixed-use development must address at minimum; build-to lines, open store fronts, outdoor dining, minimum ground floor transparency and streetscape components.
7. Consolidate and reorganize the current amendments into the overall document.
8. Establish environmental protection including but not limited to stormwater protections, existing tree protections, wetlands and steep slopes.
9. Discourage development in areas with slopes greater than 18 percent and create limited special development controls for construction on slopes between 12 and 18 percent.
10. Clearly define special land use procedures, application and permitting process.
11. Clearly define Planned Unit Development (PUD) procedures, land division, and other similar procedures as needed.
12. Clearly outline Zoning Enforcement (complaint, violation, and penalty/infraction process)
13. Establish adequate buffering between different uses to minimize the negative impact on neighboring residents and businesses. Utilize charts, representative images or diagrams to illustrate development goals.
14. Address lighting (dark sky) and noise standards.
15. Provide for signage regulations with representative images or diagrams to illustrate development goals.
16. Provide landscape regulations that address tree removal, tree protection, landscape standards and native species recommendations and prohibit invasive species.
17. Promote sustainable practices and incorporate green infrastructure concepts (low-impact development).
18. Limit the number of access drives along major corridors for individual residential or commercial developments, encourage shared access drives and shared/flexible parking standards when possible.
19. Direct commercial development to lands that have the capacity to support such development and are adequately served by existing public roads and utilities.
20. Discourage the development of additional storage units in the Village or encourage other more appropriate commercial/light industrial uses that would also tend to create jobs and not take away from the overall natural character and aesthetic of the Village as described in this Master Plan.



PLACEMAKING

In order to move forward with improvements to the Village of Benzonia the decision makers of the Village need to understand the idea and the value of placemaking. Like the term ‘sustainable’, ‘placemaking’ is also a word that has been thrown around in recent years. Often times the term can be defined and used in the wrong way, which then undermines the ability of the process to help communities imagine and create and better future.

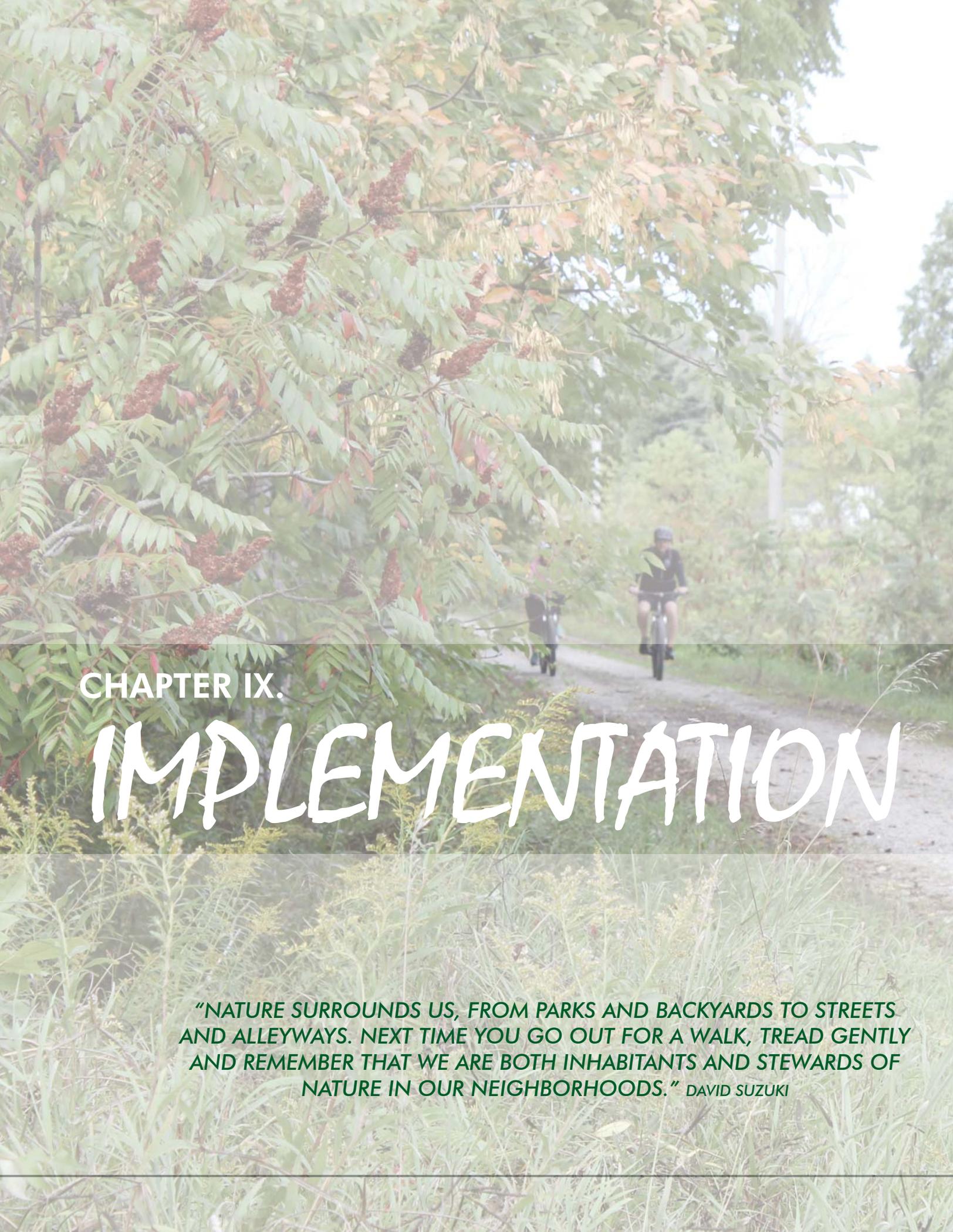
At its center placemaking means community based planning that focuses on a community’s own unique assets. It is creating places that draw inspiration from these assets to create spaces that people WANT to spend time, live, work and play. It is creating quality spaces that reflect the character and history of the community in the form of architecture, design, art, landscape or the like.

Further resources on placemaking can be found from the:

- MSU Land Policy Institute (https://www.canr.msu.edu/landpolicy/program/miplace_partnership_initiative/).
- The Michigan Municipal League (MML) also has a wealth of information on placemaking as well as examples of success stories from around the state. (<http://placemaking.mml.org/21st-century-communities/>)

The MML has identified the **EIGHT ASSETS** that Michigan’s communities need to grow and strengthen. The following is taken directly from their research from their website and is a good reference to help understand the basics of placemaking. Research shows that these eight assets are essential to a community’s livelihood:

1. **PHYSICAL DESIGN & WALKABILITY:** There are positive economic advantages to walkable development
 - Property values tend to increase.
 - Local business sales often increase.
 - There is an increased potential for development and investment projects.
2. **GREEN INITIATIVES**
 - Sustainable development can enhance the economic well-being of communities.
 - Environmental health improves in neighborhoods that focus on green development.
 - Green infrastructure can reduce energy costs and overall infrastructure costs.
3. **CULTURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:** Arts and culture are essential components of a thriving, knowledge-based economy.
4. **ENTREPRENEURSHIP:** Strategies that solely focus on seeking out large manufacturers and big box retailers overlook the positive impact that entrepreneurs and small businesses have on local communities.
5. **DIVERSITY:** By allowing actively inclusive design in public space lays a foundation for the kind of civic life that build a sense of attachment and belonging for everyone.
6. **MESSAGING & TECHNOLOGY**
 - Technology opens lines of communication with residents and promotes civic engagement.
 - Emerging technologies attract new businesses and can revitalize local economies.
 - Technology can be used to improve productivity and streamline daily government operations.
7. **TRANSIT:** More pedestrian-friendly streets increases economic activity and encourages development investments.
8. **EDUCATION:** Building stronger partnerships between schools, the community, nonprofits and social services has strong financial, social and educational benefits.



CHAPTER IX.

IMPLEMENTATION

"NATURE SURROUNDS US, FROM PARKS AND BACKYARDS TO STREETS AND ALLEYWAYS. NEXT TIME YOU GO OUT FOR A WALK, TREAD GENTLY AND REMEMBER THAT WE ARE BOTH INHABITANTS AND STEWARDS OF NATURE IN OUR NEIGHBORHOODS." DAVID SUZUKI



REDEVELOPMENT READY COMMUNITY

In order to help the Village move forward with the RRC program and work towards certification, this Master Plan aims to help the Village meet a number of the required criteria and recommendations from the formal evaluation from the MEDC. The MEDC breaks their recommendation into 6 strategy area or best practices. The following is a summary of how this plan relates these areas - they will be also identified as an “RRC” item in the Action Plan:

Best Practice 1.1-The Plans: The Village elected to complete a Master Plan as a part of this best practice. As described in previous chapters the plan has provided multiple types of public participation opportunities. The master plan will contain an action plan that can be evaluated annually to monitor progress, it is found in this chapter. A corridor plan has not been included as a part of this master plan. A capitol improvement plan should be created at the conclusion of this plan to help meet this best practice.

Best Practice 1.2-Public Participation: This plan has demonstrated that the Village is committed to going beyond basic methods of public participation. A formalized plan or policy should also be created and added to Village Policy Book, create Village Policy book if needed.

Best Practice 2.1-Zoning Regulations: The Village Zoning Ordinance will have to be revised to align with this Master Plan. The recommendations from the MEDC evaluation have all been addressed in the recommended changes to the zoning ordinance as provided in this plan.

Best Practice 3.1- Development Review Policy and Procedures: The revised Village Ordinance and associated permit applications will address these recommendations.

Best Practice 3.2- Guide to Development: These recommendation can be addressed in a couple ways. The first is to assure that all current development related materials are up to date and available on-line in the ‘Zoning’ tab on the Village website. A development guide should then be created to clearly outline the procedure and the resources available for developers or homeowners. The fee schedule should be updated and reviewed yearly.

Best Practice 4.1- Recruitment and Orientation: This best practice is to assure that board and commission members are as best prepared as they possible can be in order to make the best decisions for the Village community. This is an administration type recommendation and is not addressed in this master plan but should be reviewed and handled by Village Staff.

Best Practice 4.2 - Education and Training: This best practice helps encourage Village staff and officials receive proper training and are up to date with the latest knowledge so that they can make the best decisions regarding the Village of Benzonia. Recommend one joint meeting per year to evaluate annual goals and perform reviews in a single setting.

Best Practice 5.1 - Redevelopment Ready Sites: This master plan process worked to meet the recommendations of this best practice. The list of sites that were identified by the community during the public input process, stakeholder and Planning Commission reviews are noted on Figure 8.1 , Overall Vision Plan. Village staff will need to continue to work with MEDC to pick the most priority site and create at least one site packet to actively market the site(s) per the best practice recommendations.

Best Practice 6.1- Economic Development Strategy: An economic development strategy was not a part of this master plan process and will need to be created as a stand alone document. It’s purpose is to have a strategy in place that will help efforts to attract jobs, residents and visitor’s to the Village. This master plan can be used as a resource in the development.

Best Practice 6.2 - Marketing and Promotion: This strategy will need to be developed per the



recommendations provided by the MEDC in the evaluation. This will tie closely to marketing the Redevelopment ready site previously identified as well as a general strategy to help attract business, consumers and real estate development. Making some improvements to the Village website and increasing social media presence will also play a part. This will deal with developing a brand for the community, which can also be appropriate to coordinate with the development of the Village's wayfinding and signage strategy.

SUSTAINABLE BEST PRACTICES

The general goal of sustainable development is to meet the needs of the present while ensuring that future generations have the same or better opportunities. By designing for energy, water, and resource efficiency, buildings and sites improve in performance with enhanced comfort and lower operating costs.

The following is a **GENERAL** guide for sustainable considerations that should be taken into account during site and building development. These best practices should be referenced and/or required where applicable in the revised zoning ordinance or in the creation of any future design standards or operating policies for the Village.

A. Protect and Enhance the Site

- protect ecologically sensitive sites
- minimize the development footprint (refer to low impact development section)
- integrate buildings with site topography
- site homes and developments in a way that celebrates natural habitats

B. Improve Energy Efficiency

- Incorporate passive solar design strategies (proper orientation of structures, placement of windows, etc.)
- Use proper insulating techniques for the building envelope
- Design for efficient use of space (i.e. bigger isn't always better)
- Install high-performance windows and place to take advantage of natural light and cross ventilation
- consider active solar or wind systems for energy or water heating

C. Use Environmentally Responsible Building Materials

- Select materials that are appropriate and durable for harsh winter climates
- Select products that support local manufactures and local economies
- Select materials with recycled content or that are recyclable
- Avoid materials that unduly deplete natural resources
- Avoid materials that generate excess pollution during manufacturing

D. Create A Safe Indoor Environment

- Avoid materials with high VOC (volatile organic compounds) such as some carpets, adhesives, paints, etc.
- Provide for proper ventilation in all buildings
- Maximize the control of indoor environments with proper window placement, lighting, and temperature controls

E. Provide Water Efficient Water Usage

- Use low-flow plumbing fixtures
- Incorporate efficient hot-water delivery systems
- consider gray water usage, provide for water storage for landscape use
- Incorporate water efficient landscaping

F. Reduce Generation of Solid Waste

- Provide for both construction and home waste recycling
- Purchase building materials so as to minimize waste
- Utilize recycled materials in new construction



G. Create a Healthy Living Environment

- encourage home or community gardening
- incorporate walking trails, especially nature trails with educational opportunities.
- incorporate alternative forms of transportation (walking, biking, bus, etc.)

LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT - PROTECTING OUR WATER RESOURCES

In order to protect our vital and important natural water resources (including drinking water) in the region it should be required for all new developments to incorporate low impact development practices in the construction of any projects. These are also known as GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE or STORMWATER BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (BMP’s). The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments created a “Low Impact Development Manual for Michigan” in 2008. This is a tremendous resource for Michigan communities to help with the implementation of these practices in regulations, policies and the built environment.

The benefits to a community from the successful implementation of BMP’s are numerous and far reaching - just a few of the benefits that may be of most value to the Village include:

COMMUNITY	DEVELOPERS	ENVIRONMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces municipal infrastructure and utility maintenance costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces land clearing and grading costs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protects/restores the water quality of rivers and lakes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replenishes groundwater drinking supply. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potentially reduces infrastructure costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces energy consumption.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces salt usage and snow removal on paved surfaces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces stormwater management construction costs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserves trees and natural vegetation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides environmental education opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases marketability leading to faster sales. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves air quality.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protects and enhances sensitive habitat. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potentially increases lot yields/amount of develop-able land. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserves ecological and biological systems.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves quality of life for residents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes projects more appealing for public support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhances carbon sequestration through preservation and planting of vegetation.



STREETSCAPE UTILIZES GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PRACTICES (BIORETENTION AND POROUS PAVEMENTS) TO REDUCE AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF STORMWATER RUNOFF - PROTECTING NATURAL RESOURCES.

Projects in the Village will have a unique set of challenges to overcome when dealing with stormwater due to the known drainage issues with soils in the area. The following are just some of the BMPs and techniques that would be suitable to incorporate into development projects in the Village, however creativity and ingenuity should be continuously encouraged in all development projects.

Some Nonstructural BMPs are:

- Cluster development
- Minimize soil compaction
- Minimize total disturbed area
- Protect natural flow pathways
- Protect sensitive areas
- Reduce impervious surfaces
- Stormwater disconnection.

Some Structural BMPs are:

- Bioretention (similar to rain gardens)
- Planter boxes or Tree Wells.
- Depressed Tree/Planter Islands in parking lots
- Vegetated Swales
- Infiltration Trenches
- Pervious Pavements
- Green Roofs
- Rainwater Collection/Reuse
- Native Vegetation Requirements

The MEDC requires the inclusion of at least two Green Infrastructure standards in the revised zoning ordinance. As mentioned above, a great reference for updating the ordinance document will be the “Low Impact Development Manual for Michigan”, published by SEMCOG (Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, 2008). All other state and local stormwater regulations must be referenced for more technical information when updating the ordinance as well.

In addition, there are several well known and accepted sustainable design rating programs for the development of building and site plans. Developers should be encouraged to utilize these programs (or at least follow their criteria even if they don’t become fully certified) for all new projects. The Village should consider an incentive program or reduced permitting fees or time lines for projects that use one of these metrics and become certified projects. Projects that use these rating systems bring an additional level of recognition and marketing to the community.



STREET WITH POROUS PAVEMENT AND PLANTERS



DEPRESSED TREE ISLAND IN PARKING LOT



STORMWATER DIRECTED TO BIORETENTION AREAS



LEED or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, is administered by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC). It is the most widely used green building rating system in the world. Developers can use this rating system when designing and constructing virtually all building, community and home project types. LEED provides a framework to create healthy, highly efficient and cost-saving green buildings. Refer to www.usgbc.org for more detail.

Sustainable SITES Initiative, Administered by Green Business Certification Inc. (GBCI), SITES offers a comprehensive rating system designed to distinguish sustainable landscapes, measure their performance and elevate their value. SITES certification is available for a wide range of development projects, with or without buildings. Refer to www.sustainable-sites.org for more detail.

The National Green Building Standard™ The National Green Building Standard™ provides independent, third-party verification that a home, apartment building, or land development is designed and built to achieve high performance in six key areas: Site Design, Resource Efficiency, Water Efficiency, Energy Efficiency, Indoor Environmental Quality, and Building Operation & Maintenance. Refer to www.nahb.org for more detail.

ENERGY STAR certified homes are designed and constructed to be significantly more energy efficient than those built to code while lowering homeowner utility bills and providing superior comfort, quality, and durability. Refer to www.energystar.gov for more detail.

The Living Building Challenge™ Is a building certification program, advocacy tool and philosophy that defines the most advanced measure of sustainability in the built environment possible today. Refer to <http://living-future.org> for more detail.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Capital Improvement Plan is the document within the Village Budget that prioritizes high-cost public improvements such as streets, sewers, buildings, and parks. The schedule is based on the priorities for various needs and desires of the community, and coordinated with the Village's ability to pay for them. The capital improvement plan is a part of a dynamic planning process, which may change based on circumstances and availability of funding sources.

Capital improvement projects generally refer to the construction, expansion, or renovation of physical facilities that are relatively large, expensive, and permanent in nature. These projects can have a significant effect on the extent and direction of development depending on the type of capital improvement. Statutory provisions require Planning Commission involvement in the development of the Capital Improvement Plan.

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM/ACTION PLAN

The action items are not necessarily listed in order of priority. The items were given a priority of either A, B, C in order to gauge which may be best tackled first.

The following time frame standards were used in developing this action plan.

- Immediate: These are tasks that should begin as soon as the master plan is adopted and try to be completed within a year.
- Short: These are actions that should be completed in the next 2-3 years
- Medium: These action items should be accomplished in about 5 years time.
- Long: Items that should be completed within 10 years (or more).
- Continuing: These are items that will need to be reviewed on a yearly basis.

Responsibility is shown to help indicate what parties may either lead the action item or the best combination

of players to help accomplish the action item. The responsible party listed is not set in stone, but a guide as to who might best be suited to move that particular task through to completion, it may change over time.

Finally there is a “WHY” category to understand what the action item will accomplish. A mark of “RRC” means it is needed to help meet the Redevelopment Ready Community (RRC) requirements for certification. If it is marked with a ♦, it means it was an idea from the design charrette and public input process.

SOCIAL				
ACTION ITEM	PRIORITY	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY	WHY?
1. Provide this master plan on-line. Assure all other current Village Documents, Policies, Plans and Forms are available on-line.	A	Immediate - Continuing	VS/ZA	RRC
2. Create a formalized and proactive Public Participation Plan with methods for sharing results. Add to/or create Village Policies.	A	Immediate	VS	RRC
3. Establish expectations for board and commission members, establish orientation packets for new members.	B	Immediate	VS/PC	RRC
4. Joint Meeting with Village Council and Planning Commission, education/training review and creation of annual Planning Commission report per MPEA.	A	Immediate-Continuing	VS/VC/PC/ZA	RRC
5. Develop a Village marketing strategy.	B	Short	VS/PC	RRC
6. Develop a new resident info packet with area info and promote local businesses.	B	Short	VS/PC	
7. Work to get crosswalks painted on all intersections with sidewalks, local streets too.	B	Short	VS	♦
8. Create a plan to prioritize sidewalks, accessible routes, and crosswalk improvements and required maintenance. (Could coordinate with pedestrian/trails plan or be a stand alone Village Policy)	B	Short - Continuing	PC/VS	♦
9. Seek out partnership opportunities and create a program or policy to provide assistance to property owners to upkeep their property to avoid blight issues.	B	Short - Continuing	PC/VS	
10. Develop a wayfinding plan for the Village, ID gateways and coordinate with Village marketing/branding strategy.	B	Short	PC/VS	♦
11. Explore community partnerships to promote and support local business	B	Short	PC/VS	
12. Continue to explore housing opportunities, focus on an affordable housing project and rental housing possibilities.	A	Short	PC/VS	♦
13. Work with MDOT/County to explore adding bicycle routes and signage.	B	Medium	PC/VS	
14. Work to get a senior housing or assisted living facility in the Village limits.	A	Medium-Long	PC/VS/VC	♦



15. Search for development opportunities for the vacant parcel south of Shop-N-Save, pursue housing opportunities.	B	Medium-Long	PC/VS	
16. Explore improvements to Village Office, coordinate with street and future sewer improvements, and with Park property across street.	C	Long	PC/VS	◆

ENVIRONMENT				
ACTION ITEM	PRIORITY	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY	WHY?
1. Included standards for green infrastructure in the revised zoning ordinance.	A	Immediate	PC/VS/ZA	RRC
2. Include environmental standards and protections per this Vision in the revised zoning ordinance	A	Immediate	PC/ZA	◆
3. Include steep slope overlay in revised zoning ordinance	A	Immediate	PC/ZA	◆
4. Work to continue the ice rink, coordinate volunteers/partnerships, plan for future	A	Immediate - Continuing	VS	◆
5. Complete a pedestrian/trails plan for the Village to prioritize trail opportunities. (Could coordinate with sidewalk/crosswalk plan)	B	Short	PC	◆
6. Explore funding options and create a trail connection from the Top-of-the-Hill to the Betsie Valley Trail.	A	Short	PC/VS	◆
7. Improve park signage, especially identification/entry signs, potential coordination with wayfinding plan.	A	Short	PC/VS	◆
8. Start a street tree or tree replacement program, plant X amount of trees/year. Could work and partner with local business or groups, award/lottery programs, etc.	B	Short - Medium	PC/VS	
9. Explore options and partnerships for the creation of a sledding hill in the Village limits	B	Medium	PC/VS	◆
10. Consider creating 'Friends of' type support groups for park facilities to help provide maintenance and upkeep support	C	Short - Medium	PC/VS	
11. Explore creating a master plan for Academy Park to coordinate future improvements for east/west and help secure funding for improvements.	B	Medium	PC	
12. Look at creating a Central Public Space or 'Town Square' at the Traverse/MI Ave location. (Refer to Figure 8.0) Coordinate with Academy Park and streetscape improvements.	B	Long	PC	◆
13. Look at improving park facilities in Village forested parcels (near Benzie Street), nature trails or bike trails, etc.	C	Medium	PC	◆
14. Look at alternate pedestrian crossing opportunities over US-31, pedestrian bridge Vision from Public Input.	C	Long	PC	◆

15. Update the recreation plan portion of this master plan per the MDNR requirements to stay eligible for funding, minimum every 5 years.	A	Medium - Continuing	PC with consultant	
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ECONOMIC				
ACTION ITEM	PRIORITY	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY	WHY?
1. Continue to pursue options and funding for Village sewer service.	A	Immediate-Continuing	VS/VC	
2. Revise the Zoning Ordinance to align with this master plan and provide as one document	A	Immediate	PC/ZA with VS/VC	RRC ◆
3. Create a Capitol Improvement Plan	A	Immediate	VS with PC/ZA/VC	RRC
4. Include a Corridor Overlay with the revised zoning ordinance to guide look of development along the highways.	A	Immediate	PC with VS/VC	◆
5. Revise the plan review process in the Updated Ordinance to meet RRC, provide a flow chart to align with County/State, etc.	B	Immediate	PC/ZA with VS/VC	RRC
6. Update the Village Fee Schedule, make available on-line. REVIEW YEARLY.	A	Continuing	VS/ZA with VC	RRC
7. Chose a priority development site to create at least one site info packet and work with the MEDC to actively market.	A	Short	VS with ZA/PC	RRC
8. Continue development of streetscape plan for MI Avenue to include coordinated lighting and street furnishings and street trees. Include sustainable best practices.	A	Short	VS with consultant	◆
9. Explore the idea of creating Corridor Plans for US-31 and M-115 corridors.	B	Short	PC/VS	◆
10. Complete the RRC process and become certified.	A	Immediate - Short	VS	RRC
11. When Township/Fire hall relocates, ensure the building on that corner is redeveloped in a way that meets this Vision. Use as a catalyst project to recreate & enhance the historic character of the Village.	A	Short	PC/VS/ with ZA/PC and consultant(s)	◆
12. Explore funding and options for sidewalks along Traverse Ave, provide crosswalks	A	Medium	PC/VS	◆
13. Explore funding and options for sidewalks along South Street to connect business, safe crossings and connect to park/trail.	B	Medium	PC/VS	◆
14. Explore options and funding to improve the sidewalk connection into Beulah, poor accessibility currently.	B	Medium	PC/VS	
15. Improve pavement on Barber St/Traverse Avenue corner, opportunity to improve public parking.	C	Medium	VS	
16. Explore programs to provide incentives to developers for implementing green infrastructure standards (tax incentives, fee incentives, density bonuses, etc.)	B	Short	PC/VS	



17. Explore programs to help provide economic incentives to ex. local businesses and draw potential new business development	B	Short	PC/VS	
18. Work with MEDC or other partners to develop the vacant parcel (dirt pile) near South street/Save-A-Lot/Shop-N-Save plaza. Potential mixed use or park spaces, etc.	B	Medium	PC/VS	◆
19. Work with MEDC or other partners to seek redevelopment of the old high school property.	A	Medium	PC/VS	
20. Look at ways to improve (aesthetics and functionality) the alley connections near the Top-of-the-hill, especially behind the retail businesses.	C	Long	PC/VS	

VS = Village Staff, VC = Village Council, PC = Planning Commission, ZA = Zoning Administrator, MPEA = Michigan Planning and Enabling Act

RRC = Required to meet the Redevelopment Ready Community Best Practice

◆ = These items are from the Overall Vision Diagram and were suggested as a part of the public participation process.

WHERE TO GO FROM HERE

The Master Plan should not become a static document. The Planning Commission should evaluate and update portions of the Plan on a periodic basis, at minimum every 5 years. The Master Plan should also continue to be coordinated with the Village’s Recreation Master Plan to provide proper, long range planning for recreation activities and improvements and remain eligible for funding.

As indicated in the above action item plan there are some items that are listed as “immediate” items. The following are several tasks that will be most important to start on first:

1. Creation and adoption of an updated and simplified new ordinance document with a new zoning plan, should be one of the first priority projects for the Village after the completion of this master plan. Carefully consider the Vision and desires expressed from the public process when formulating the new ordinances.
2. Another priority project that should be tackled as soon as possible is an updated or new Capitol Improvement Plan.
3. Continue the process and become a certified Redevelopment Ready Community.

After these initial projects are completed the Planning Commission and Village staff and officials should work to methodically complete items off this list and review the progress yearly. This action list will be ever evolving and will likely change and shift as it is reviewed and various projects are completed over time. This should be expected and is normal in order to meet the needs of the community and achieve the Vision.

FUNDING

The Planning Commission and Village Staff should work together and continuously research the many available funding sources. Once approved this plan will make park and recreation projects eligible for MDNR funding. The MEDC will also assist with various funding mechanisms through the RRC program, as well as other programs. In addition, numerous other state and federal grant programs exist through agencies like MI Dept. of Transportation (MDOT) and loan programs from the The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development Agency. Often sustainable projects, especially those with a water quality improvement aspect, are eligible for funding through a variety of state and federal grant programs.

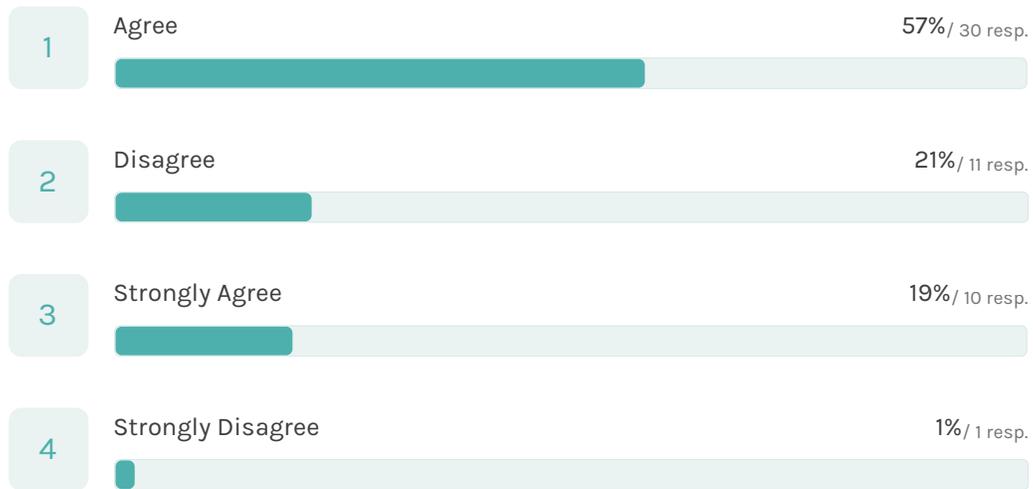


APPENDIX

A photograph of a paved path lined with trees in autumn. The path is covered with fallen brown leaves. The trees have yellow and orange foliage. The word 'APPENDIX' is overlaid in white, stylized, handwritten-style text across the upper middle of the image. In the background, there are blue recycling bins and a building partially visible through the trees.

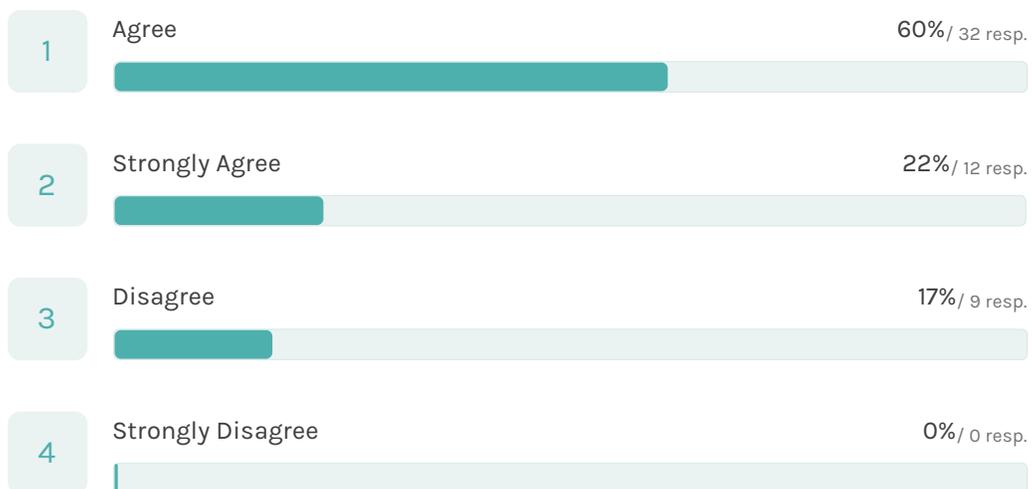
Q 4. In your opinion, should the Village of Benzonia grow in population in the coming years?

52 out of 55 answered



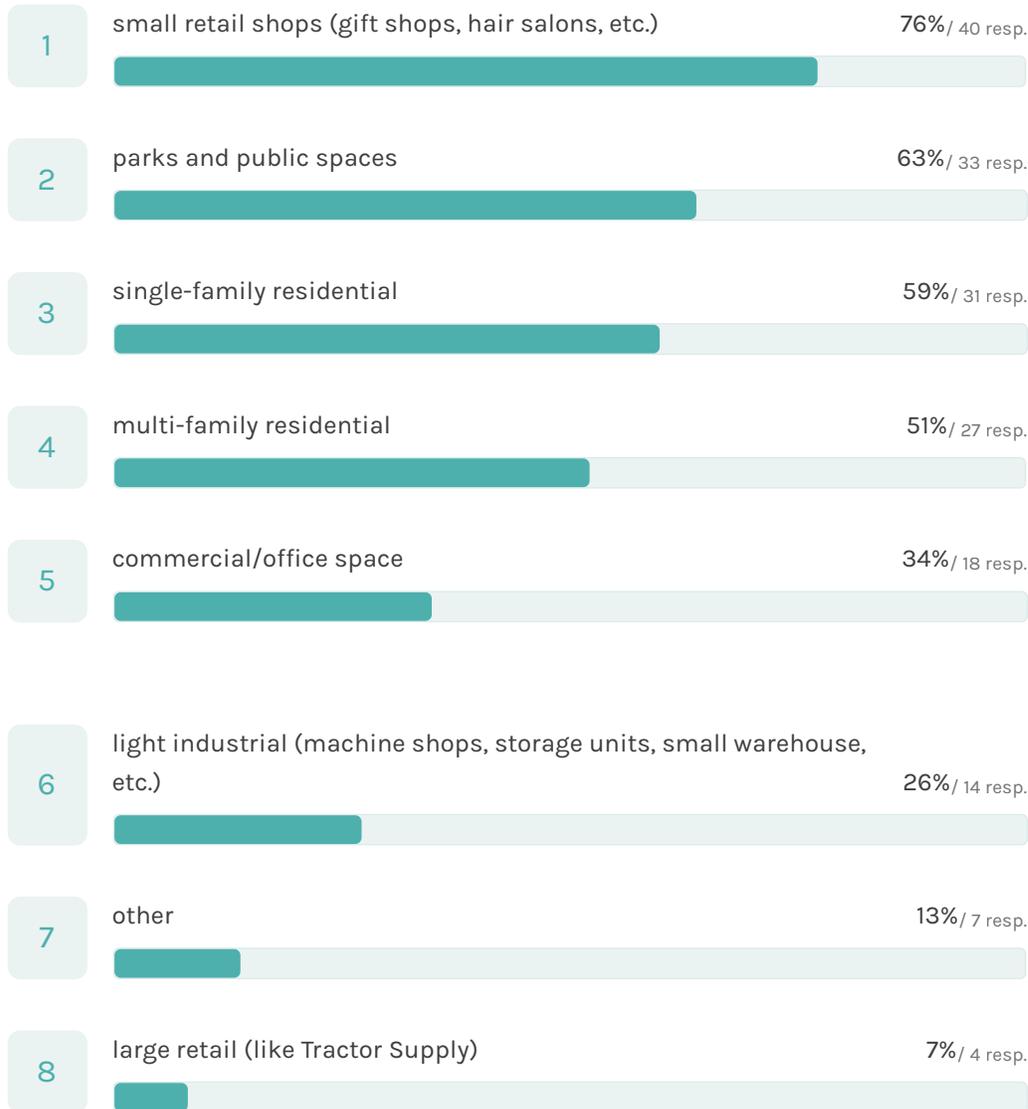
Q 5. In your opinion, should the Village of Benzonia have more development in the coming years?

53 out of 55 answered



Q 6. 6. If you said yes above, what types of development would you like to see?

52 out of 55 answered



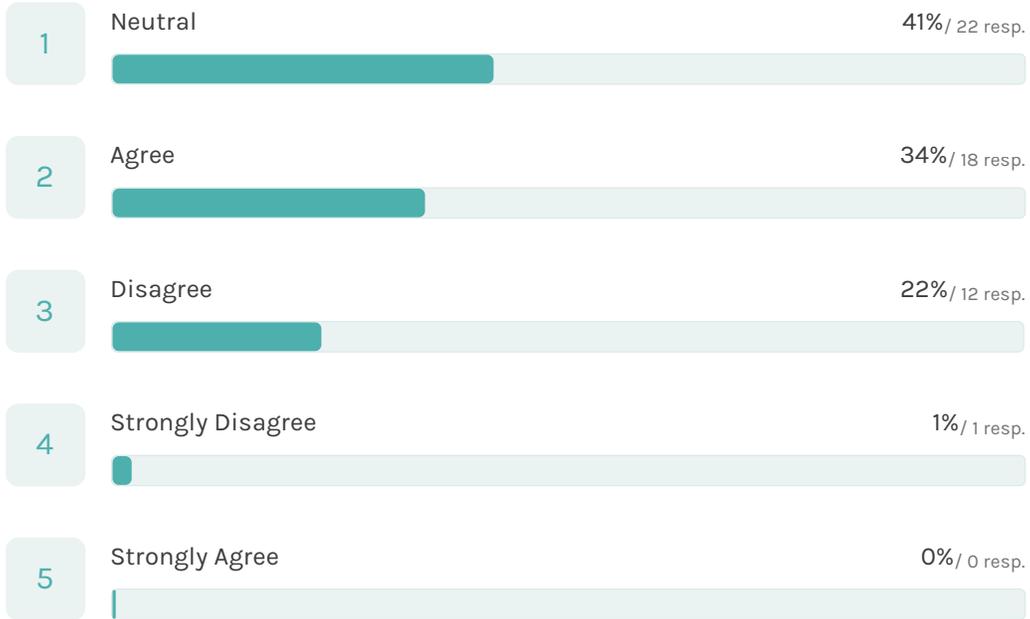
Q 7. If you said 'other' in Question 6 above, please list your ideas.

- The aquatic center
- Where would you put housing in the village limits?
- Not without putting in sewers
- no multifamily residential
- did not say "other"
- Restaurants!
- Outside performance area, event venues

- Benzonia needs more affordable housing.
- more food establishments
- Whatever the local economy needs to thrive and support year round residents, and families.
- More restaurants
- It's tough because it's just on 31. I would like to see more small shops than big stores/chains. The best thing I forgot to mention is the Dog Park! Excellent!
- Did not say other.
- Very small manufacturing operations.

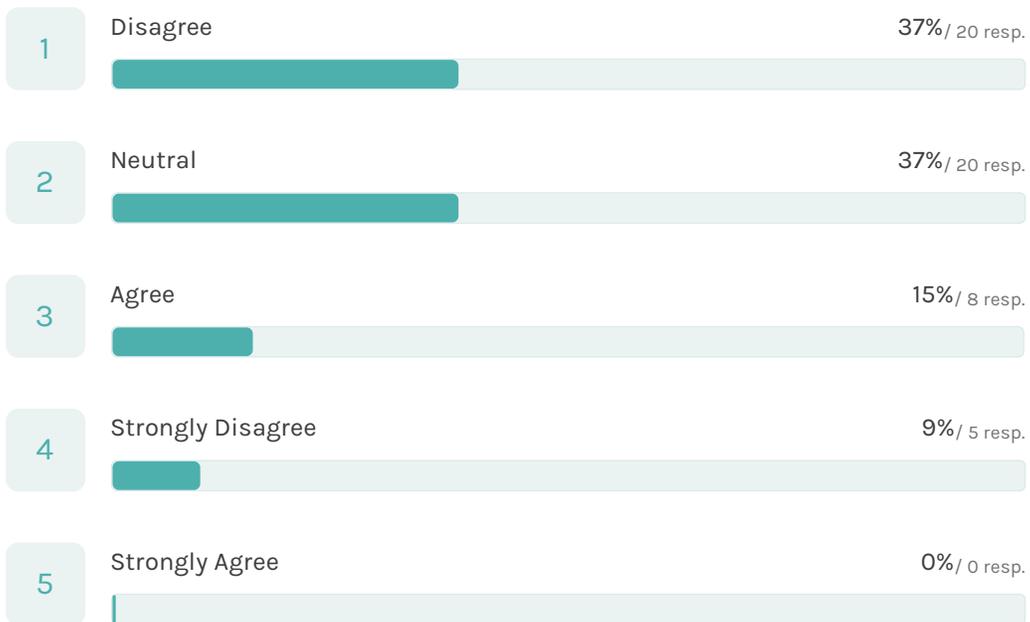
Q 8. Overall, are you satisfied with the look of residential housing in the Village of Benzonia?

53 out of 55 answered



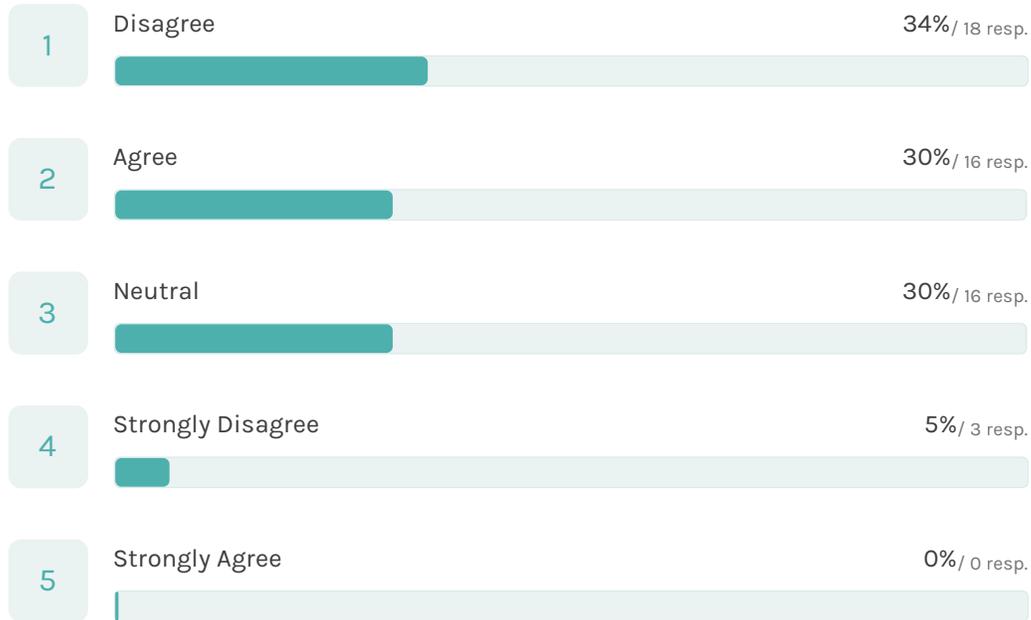
Q 9. Overall, are you satisfied with the look of commercial development in the Village of Benzonia?

53 out of 55 answered



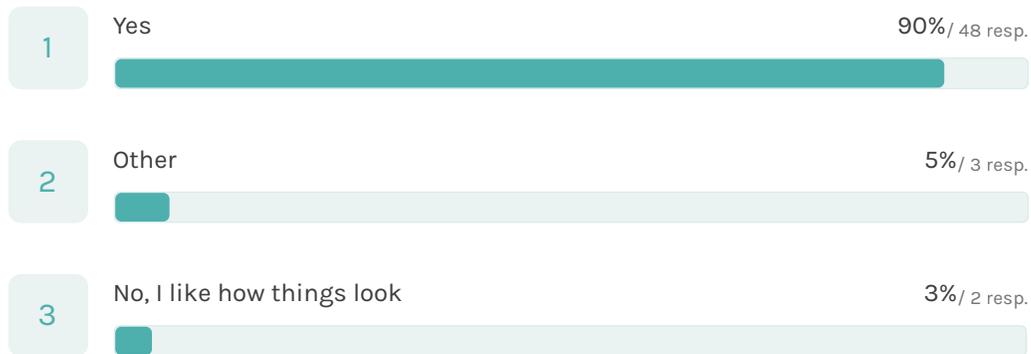
Q 10. Overall, are you satisfied with the overall look of the Village of Benzonia (streets, signs, buildings, houses, etc.)

53 out of 55 answered



Q 11. Would you support additional guidelines or overlay zones that would help guide the look of future development or renovations to existing properties, to align with an overall vision?

53 out of 55 answered



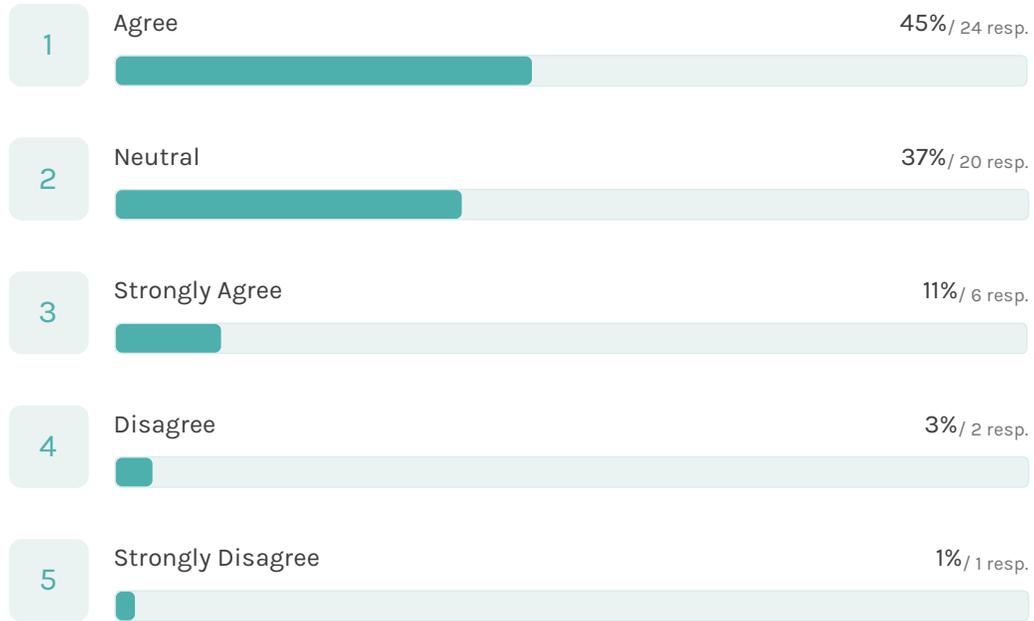
Q 12. If you said 'other' in Question 11 above, please explain.

- K.i.s.s.!
- There are some areas that need a little more attention, and we would be in favor of guidelines to help those areas improve.
- Yes, within reason, don't want to hurt small business

- More zoning means more enforcement needed. A entity can plan plan plan, but... let's make what we have work and make changes as new challenges arise.
- If the goal is to make it more of a village; then zoning rules to help that need to be developed.

Q 13. Overall, are you satisfied with the quality of life in the Village of Benzonia?

53 out of 55 answered



VILLAGE LAND USE AND RULES

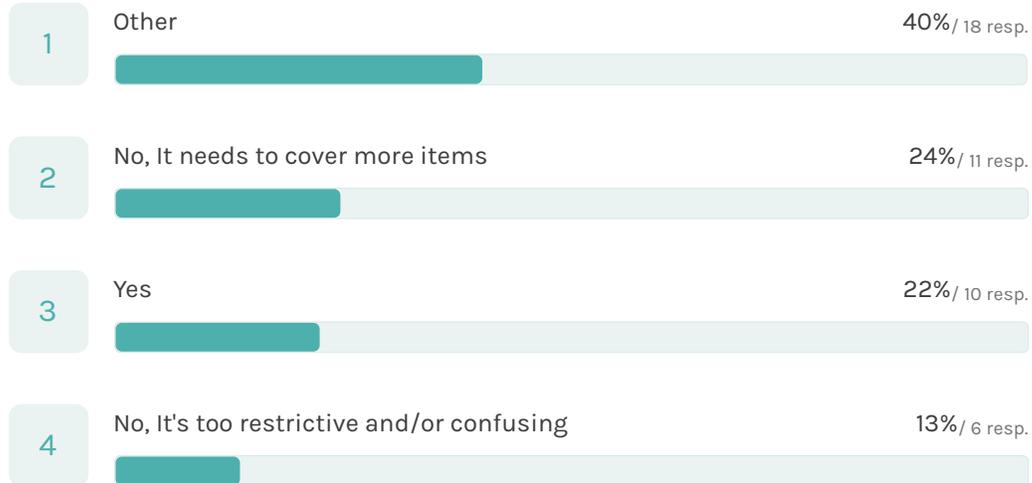
Q 14. 5. Are you aware that the Village of Benzonia has a Zoning Ordinance?

54 out of 55 answered



Q 15. If so, are you satisfied with the contents of the Zoning Ordinance?

45 out of 55 answered

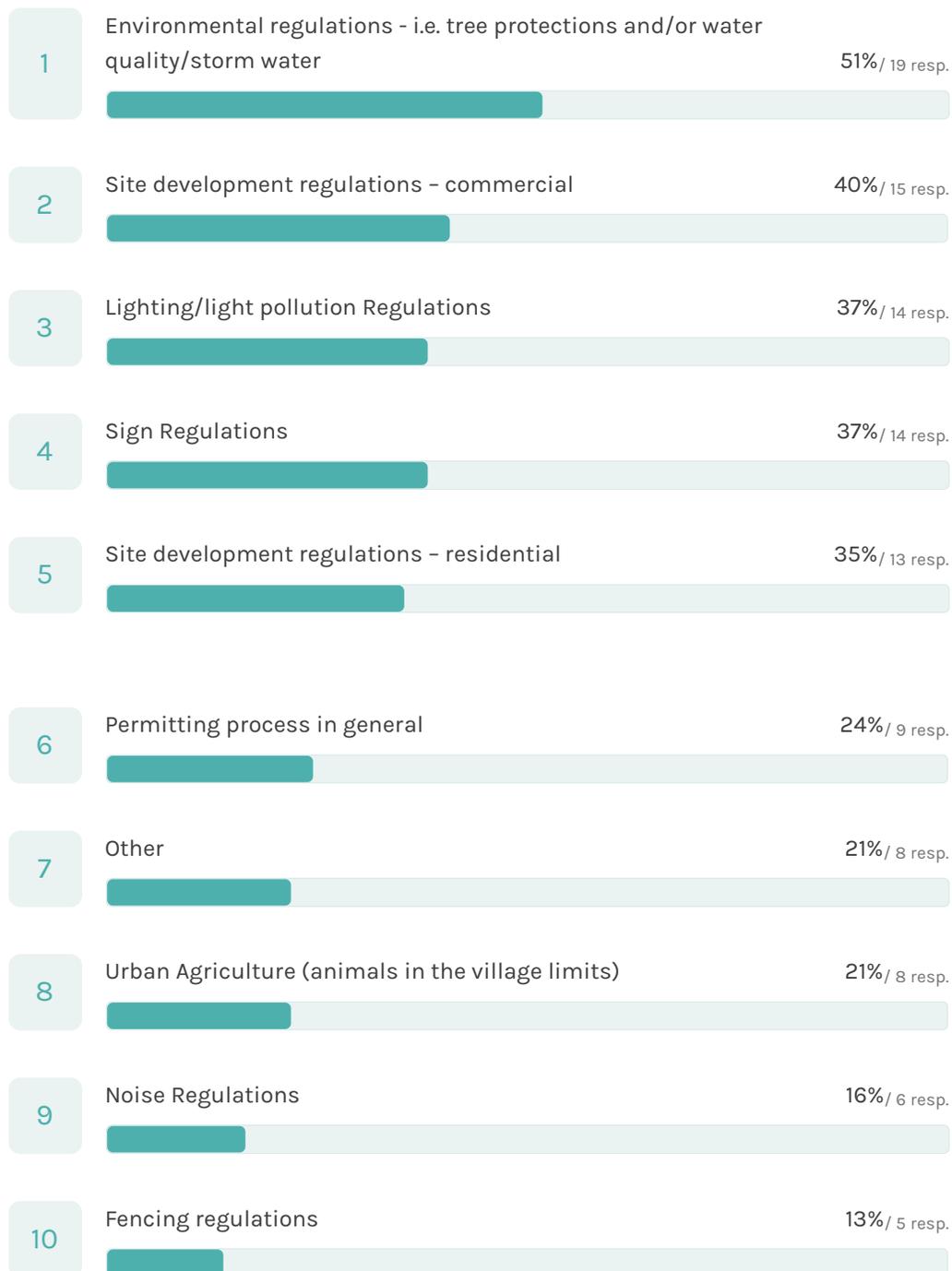


Q 16. If you said 'other' in Question 15 above, please explain.

- Not aware
- Needs to be reviewed, possibly updated.
- Unfamiliar, can not make informed decision
- Nothing is Enforced
- If there is a Zoning Ordinance, then it should be enforced.
- not sure
- NA
- I dont live in the Village
- Neutral
- I don't know the contents of the zoning ordinance well enough to know whether it is too restrictive or not.
- People should be able to use their property how they see fit.
- Haven't read the current Zoning/Master Plan
- Not in the Village of Benzonia but the village of BEULAH so not familiar, honestly I don't understand why there are 2 villages
- I have not read it and cannot speak to it.
- no opinion
- Not familiar
- I am aware that a zoning requirement exists but have no idea what it entails.
- I don't know exactly what is in the ordinance.

Q 17. If you think the zoning code is not adequate, what areas should be improved?

37 out of 55 answered



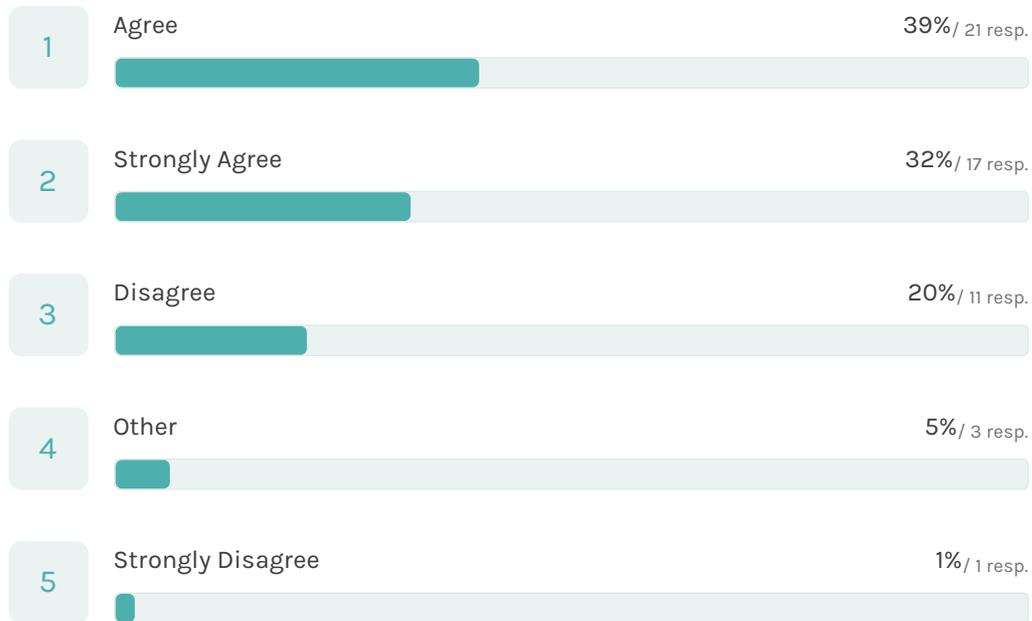
Q 18. If you said 'other' in Question 17 above, please explain.

- Uninformed
- remove dead stumps
- Not a resident so not familiar but it seems

- there must not be standards to maintain property
- Not being an active visitor to both village and planning commission meetings, I do not know what is being discussed
 - blight

Q 19. Do you feel like Blight (junk, unsightly buildings, etc.) is an issue in the Village of Benzonia?

53 out of 55 answered

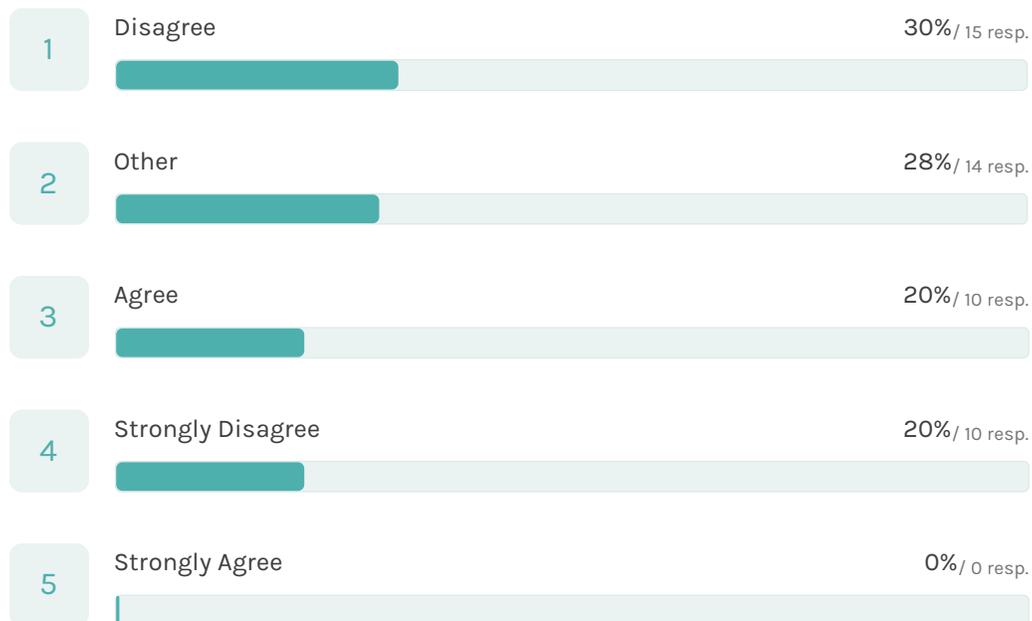


Q 20. If you said 'other' in Question 19 above, please explain.

- resale store next to roadhouse qualifies as blight, junk and unsightly
- did not say "other"
- The old high school!
- N/a
- It's not necessarily better or worse than surrounding areas. Thank you though for having clean up days. Our adjoining township refuses to provide us with that service.
- There seems to be some blight in every village and city. There are always people who don't maintain their property.
- Just in a few spots

Q 21. Overall, are you satisfied with code enforcement in the Village?

49 out of 55 answered



Q 22. If you said 'other' in Question 21 above, please explain.

- Not familiar
- Urban farming, on-going garage sales
- Uniformed
- did not
- crosswalks
- NA
- Dont live in Village
- Neutral
- Im sure you are doing the best you can
- N/a
- Don't live in the village so I am unaware
- Not a resident so can't answer
- Neutral. No opinion for lack of more info on the local happenings.
- unaware
- i am not sure
- Don't know.
- Don't know
- Not familiar with any code enforcement that has taken place.
- I have no knowledge in this area.
- There are eyesores that have been sitting there for years and nothing is ever done.

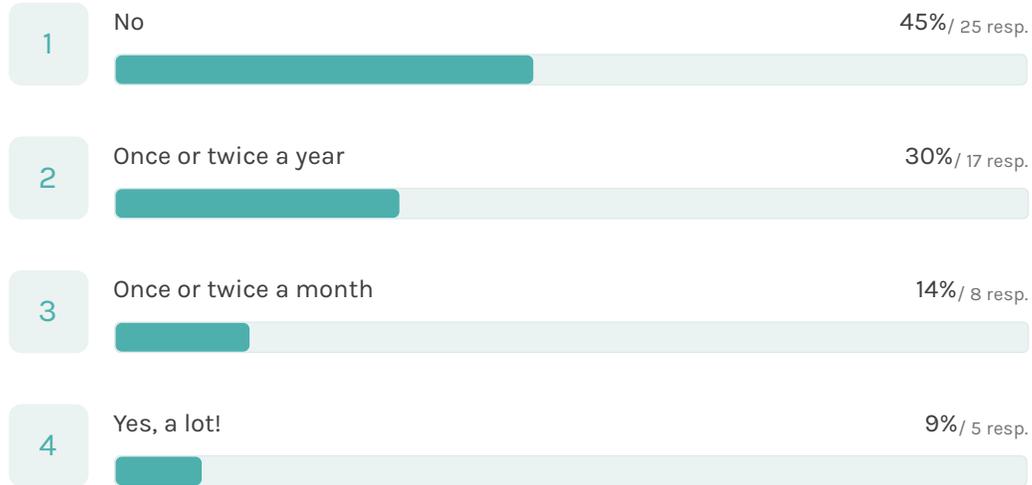
Q 23. Are there any specific activities in the Village that you feel should or could be addressed better in the Zoning Ordinance?

- Alternative energy development and regulating short-term rentals.
- First get a zoning ordinance , then enforce it
- Parking, blight, upkeep of homes in general
- Retail having outside displays that interfere with pedestrian passage on sidewalks.
- traffic using local streets as a cut-through
- Blight
- Parking. Especially near the Road House
- As I stated earlier, entertainment and event venues
- Residence clean up improve street signs and lighting
- Building maintenance
- Fireworks
- The junk in this county is awful and it is an eyesore and lowers the value of the area. Glen Arbor doesn't look trashy like it does in many places here. The blight ordinance is never addressed. I have no idea why they even passed it.
- Tree protection. There are a lot of nice treed areas in the village, not sure there is much protection from developers wishing to remove trees
- It's been awhile, but the whole Al Brown thing was pretty bad. For years huge dirt pile just sat there. Permits not pulled... But awhile ago.

VILLAGE PARKS AND RECREATION

Q 24. Do you use the recreation facilities at Academy Park (East side: baseball, tennis, playground...)?

55 out of 55 answered



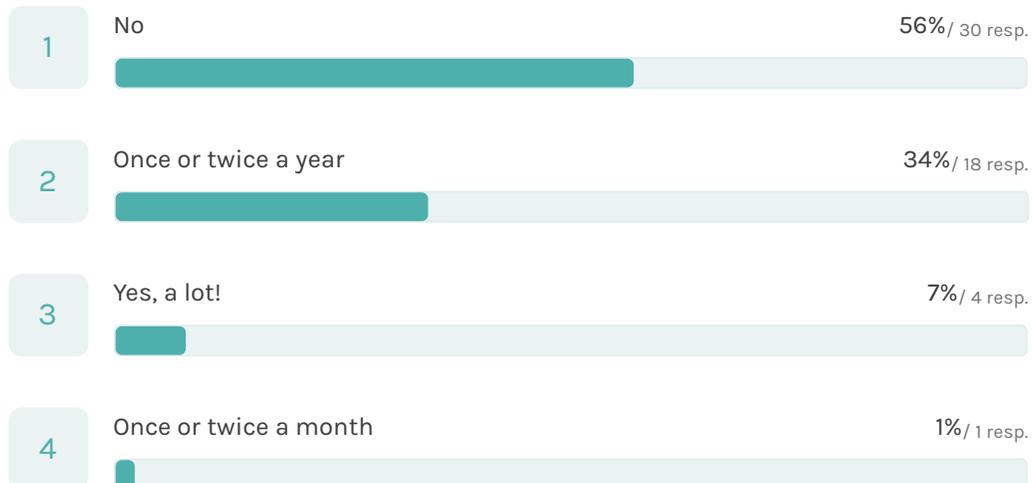
Q 25. Did you know that you can use the picnic area at Academy Park on the west side of US-31?

54 out of 55 answered



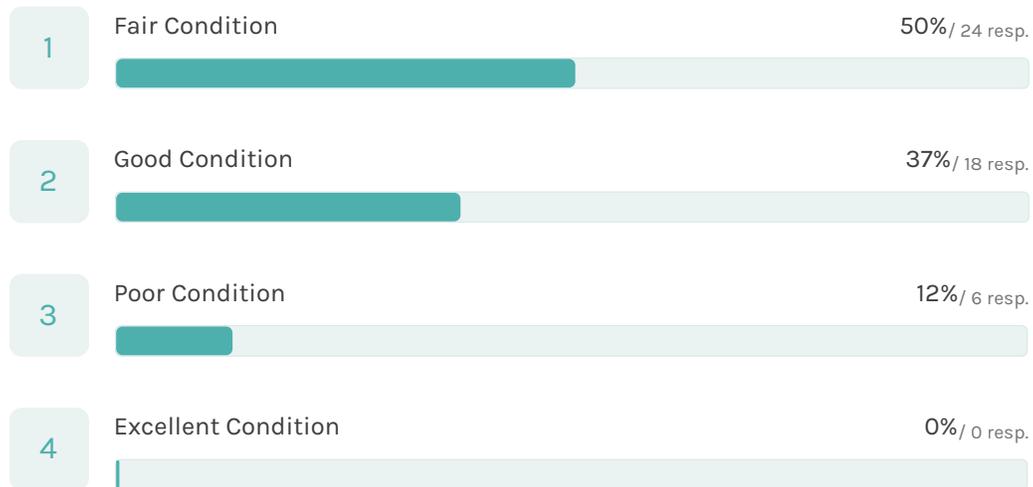
Q 26. Do you utilize either of the informal trails near Lake and River Streets?

53 out of 55 answered



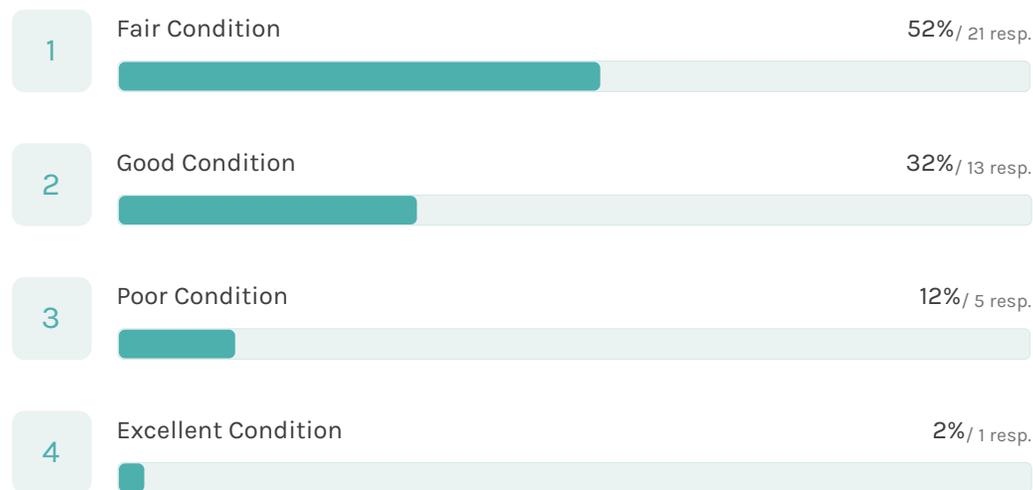
Q 27. Do you feel like Academy Park is in:

48 out of 55 answered



Q 28. Do you feel like the Village trail from River Street to South Street is in:

40 out of 55 answered



Q 29. If you do not use the recreation facilities in the Village please explain why you do NOT?

- Not accessible.
- Just don't
- Not inviting, poor condition
- Do not have children.

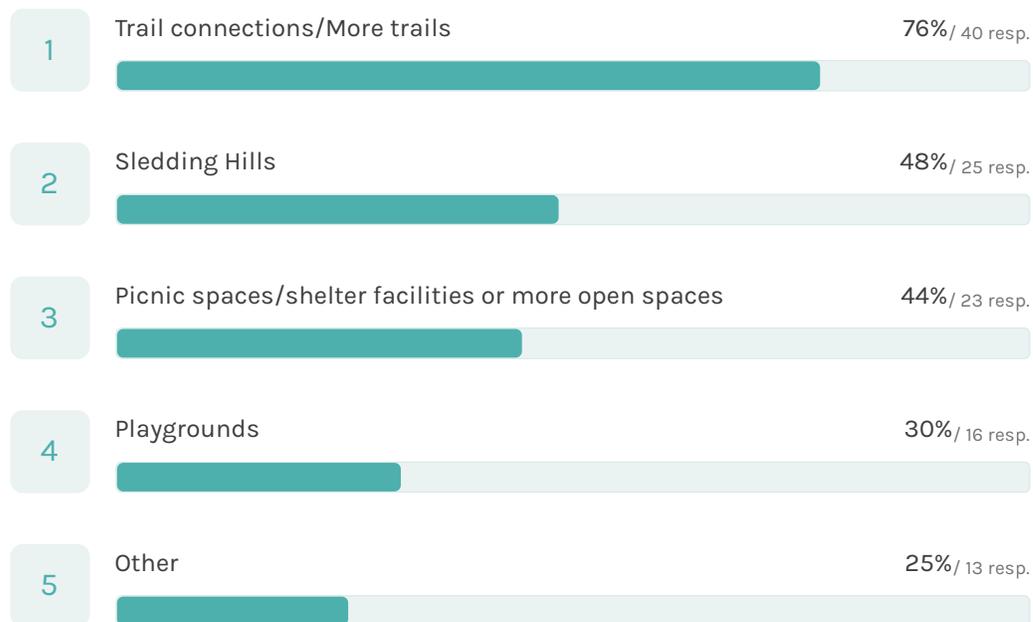
- Mostly directed to the young adults and children
- Too old.
- Didn't know the village trails existed until today
- basketball courts not marked and rims are double rims
- Not in good condition. No signage.

Q 29. continued....

- I do not use the Academy park facilities due to a lack of safe crosswalks for access. An over highway trail would be ideal to cross summer camp students
- didn't know about the trails
- Didn't know they were there! And We've lived in the village for 16+ years!
- I live in Frankfort near Crystal Lake + most of my recreation takes place there.
- I don't live in the village.
- Use other areas
- We tend to go to the beaches and trails
- Did not know there was a trail there, and not enough at the park
- Busy... busy with living and working and surviving as a year round resident. No time for play off the farm.
- too old
- only work in area, not lunch time friendly
- I had no idea there is a trail to use. How would a person know??!
- Inconvenient access
- Wasn't aware of them.
- Not promoted enough to be in my thoughts
- I only use memorial park. It is clean and updated.
- There's better places to go.

Q 30. What other types of recreation facilities would you like to see in the village?

52 out of 55 answered



Q 31. If you said 'other' in Question 30 above, please explain.

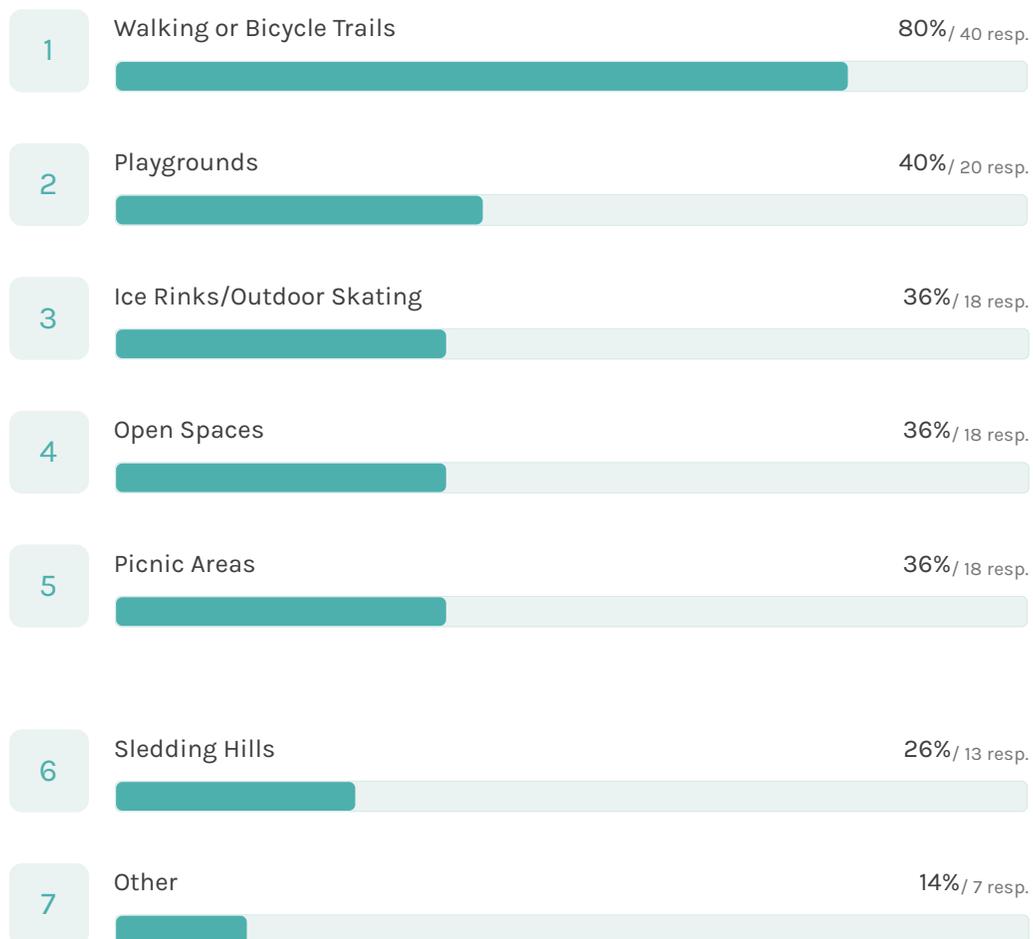
- A Rec center with some activities for adults, yoga, bridge and crafts
- Ice skating rink
- Updated tennis courts, splash pad
- playground at academy park west
- There is a great public sled hill in Belleville MI, this would be a great guide.
- ice skating
- Community center for kids would be nice
- We need a connector from Benzonia to the state lands in Weldon, other than m115 bridge
- sidewalks, trails, trails that go around the entire village and connect to sidewalks. Like an expressway around the village for walkers

and bikers.

- I would like there to be a trail connecting the top of the hill down to the Betsie Trail somewhere...so you can come down into Beulah without walking along 31.
- Indoor olympic sized swimming pool for lap swimming; swimming lessons, aqua aerobic classes, arthritis swim exercise classes.
- Maybe a community center where local residents with I.D. Can have a have a year round safe spot for kids without fighting with Karen from Pennsylvania for a parking spot?
- ice skating rink, winter activities
- Would love to see the ice skating rink stay

Q 32. What types of recreation facilities are most important for members of your household?

50 out of 55 answered



Q 33. If you said 'other' in Question 32 above, please explain.

- Rank high to low- f,b,a,e,c,d
- Walking or bicycle trails most important
- Playground most important
- walking or bicycle trails most important
- sled hill most important
- walking trails most important
- The ice rink is cool, but definitely a lot of work. If there were a way to keep it, awesome, but also understand that it may be difficult.
- An indoor pool area for play,exercise,physical therapy/rehabilitation.

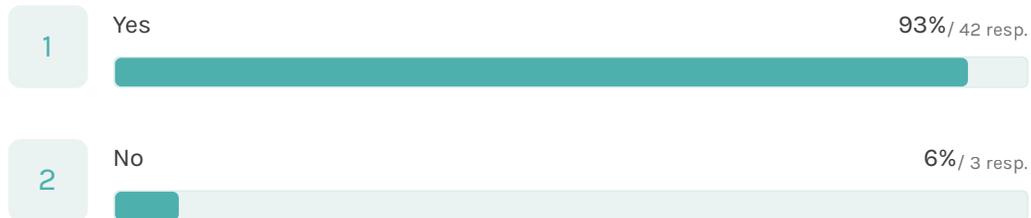
Q 34. Would you support the development of additional recreation facilities?

50 out of 55 answered



Q 35. Would you support the acquisition of property to plan and develop future recreation facilities?

45 out of 55 answered



Q 36. Do you have any specific concerns with the existing recreation facilities offered in the Village?

- Connectivity and walkability
- Only after we better care for what we have
- They could be refreshed and expanded
- uninviting. dated. sparse.
- crosswalk access needed across Traverse Ave to Academy park west
- The updated park equipment (climbing wall & round-about) was a fabulous idea! A few more items would be welcome as well! The park gets a lot of use, and draws children (and adults) to the park and library.
- accessibility
- Basketball court is unsafe I feel
- see previous comments...
- They are not patrolled enough, drug use is prominent and I won't take my daughter because I fear for her safety and what we may find there
- They are not well marked, need better signs to ID what people can use.

Q 37. What would you recommend to improve the parks or community facilities in the Village?

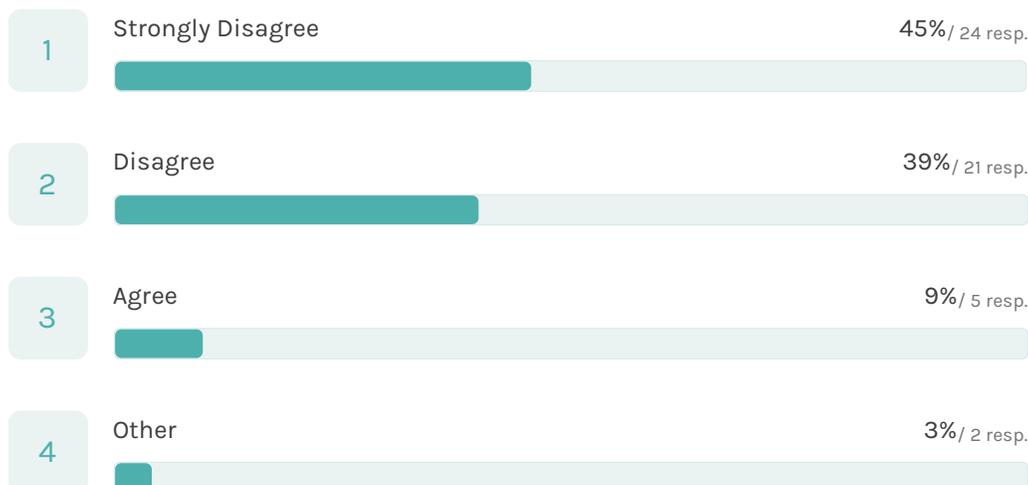
- Hard surface access.
- Update them
- Safer sidewalks
- Better access, signage. Village trails have no signage or dedicated parking
- walking tracks, splash pad, public restroom,

- WiFi hotspots
- Signage, update equipment, maintain the parks
- swings, additional play structures, bathrooms in academy park west
- More trees in Academy Park
- In addition to additional park equipment, possibly more benches. On a side note, if the school bond passes, perhaps the village could purchase some of the school's playground equipment?
- Trails or sidewalks/cross walks
- Better seating/staging area for ice rink
- Provide flush toilet restrooms.
- Update appearance of east park.
- MMore
- More playground equipment , Update outdated unsafe play ground equipment
- Perhaps planned events in the park so more folks are aware
- Correct the drainage issue w of dog park
- water features, gardens, trees
- Updated parks.
- The dog park is very well taken care of; thank you!
- update
- Promotion and highlight in a big way Benzonia's national resources
- Indoor swimming pool complex
- A face lift and added amenities.
- Clean them up and patrol them
- better sign systems, improve the look overall
- Flowers, plants, trees!!!

VILLAGE TRANSPORTATION

Q 38. Do you feel safe walking and/or using a bicycle along the US-31 (Michigan Ave) Corridor?

53 out of 55 answered



Q 39. If you said 'other' in Question 38 above, please explain.

- I don't walk along 31..
- Drivers speed through the area and it's never safe! Can we please put up a "This is your speed" sign? Or encourage the Sheriff's Dept. to crack down on speeders on US 31?
- Lots of traffic
- Only where there is sidewalk along back away from the road. Some of the sidewalks are in disrepair.

Q 40. Are their specific concerns you have walking or riding a bicycle near US-31 (Michigan Ave)?

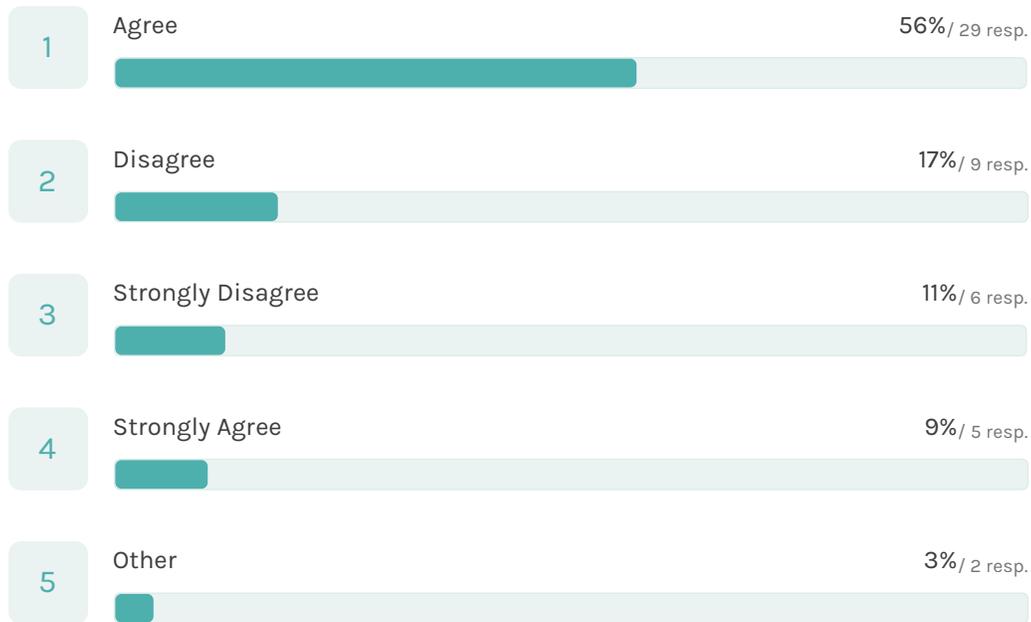
- People crossing to go to the Road House.
- Not safe
- Summer traffic goes too fast
- Death
- Lack of walking area.
- No sidewalks, speed of cars and trucks
- Traffic does not yield to pedestrians
- No sidewalks
- Crossing us 31
- Mostly the traffic speed, some deterioration that makes lanes narrow
- dangerous
- No sidewalks or sidewalks are in very poor condition. Traffic lanes are barely wide enough for cars, forget about riding a bicycle.
- I have seen so many accidents in my lifetime at US 31 and Traverse Ave
- no bike lanes, no sidewalks, or not cleared in winter
- The speed of drivers!... Did I already mention that? Also, perhaps, also a lack of sidewalks past River St.
- No sidewalk or bike paths. Traffic!
- hard to cross west to east and back
- Crossing the road
- Speed and volume of traffic
- Have to walk on shoulder. Erratic drivers. No cross walks.
- Condition of pavement
- There is no separate bike lane and cars are too fast. Most traffic goes above 35 mph at the top of the hill.
- There is to much traffic on US 31. Bicyclers should use the trail.

Q 40. continued....

- Unsafe roads not enough shoulder
- I always see what looks to be mentally challenged people near the post office and some want to talk. Some want to yell. It's just a little off putting.
- Speeders
- Too much traffic and not enough room for bikers, walkers
- You can't ride on the sidewalk and it's not safe on 31
- Distracted drivers
- too dangerous
- crosswalks and sidewalks, bad shoulders
- Would never ride a bike on Michigan ave.
- Ah, ya. The traffic.
- speed of traffic
- Not enough shoulder; traffic moves too fast
- Traffic
- No adequate crossing or traffic barriers
- It would be great if there were a bike path off the road like they now have along M22 near the Sleeping Bear Dunes.
- I like the sidewalks that are away from the road. They road is so busy especially in the middle of the summer.
- First off, the road is horrible! Never know when a car is going to break down. And most bicyclists don't follow the rules. And then get mad t motorists. US 31 is in grave need of repairs and is extremely unsafe. And there multiple spots of heavy traffic and people just randomly run across the road. Like by the roadhouse. It's so dangerous!
- yes, very fast traffic, do NOT like walking my kids by us-31 at all.

Q 41. Do you feel safe walking and/or using a bicycle along other Village streets?

51 out of 55 answered

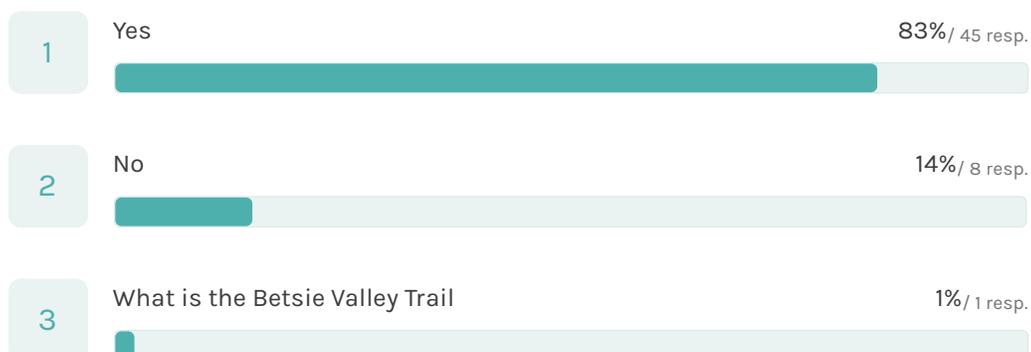


Q 42. If you said 'other' in Question 41 above, please explain.

- I don't ride a bike.
- River Road coming into town, cars don't slow down to 25, need more signage!
- I didn't say other but for someone with a damaged left leg the horrible sidewalks are an issue. Just getting to township to vote
- Some streets, not main ones. Not River Road, need sidewalk there...

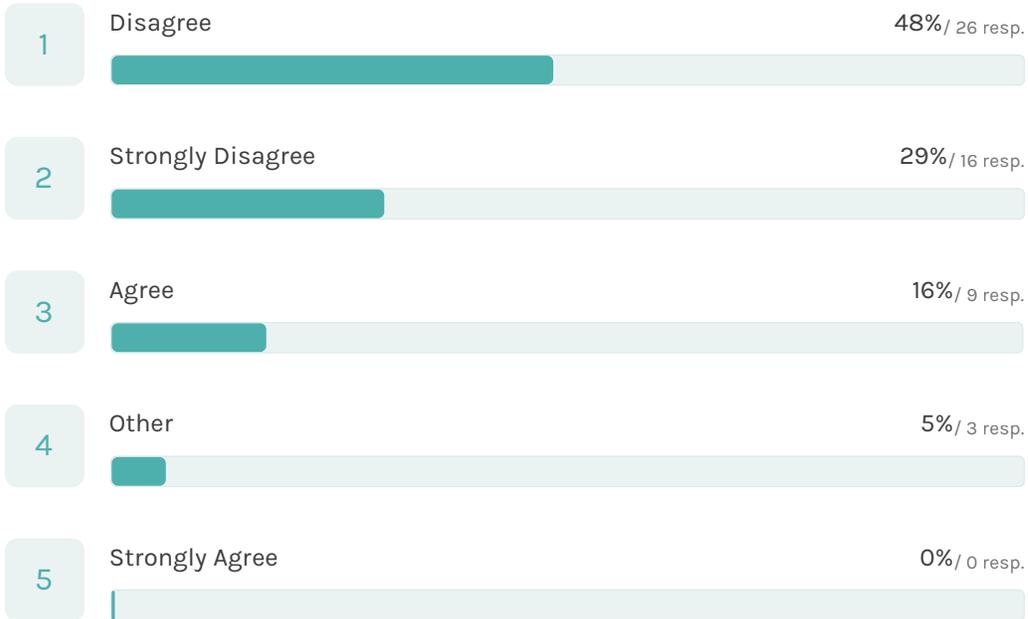
Q 43. Do you or your family ever use portions of the Betsie Valley Trail?

54 out of 55 answered



Q 44. Do you feel like the sidewalks provided are adequate for walking around the Village?

54 out of 55 answered

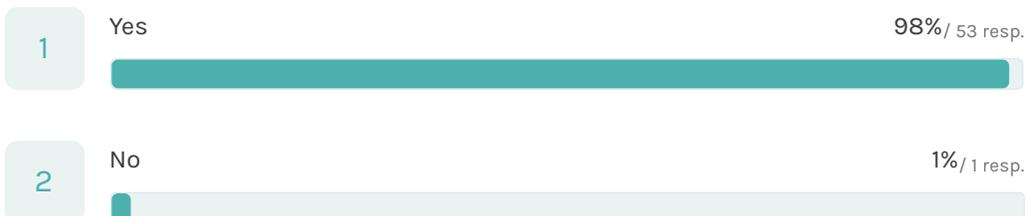


Q 45. If you said 'other' in Question 44 above, please explain.

- where are the sidewalks?
- did not say 'other'
- Could use more sidewalks.
- They need to extend all the way to the honor bank and shop nsave
- Not familiar with this
- Many need repair and there could be more added to continue the ones there.

Q 46. Should the Village consider creating more sidewalks or improving existing ones to help create a more 'walkable' community?

54 out of 55 answered



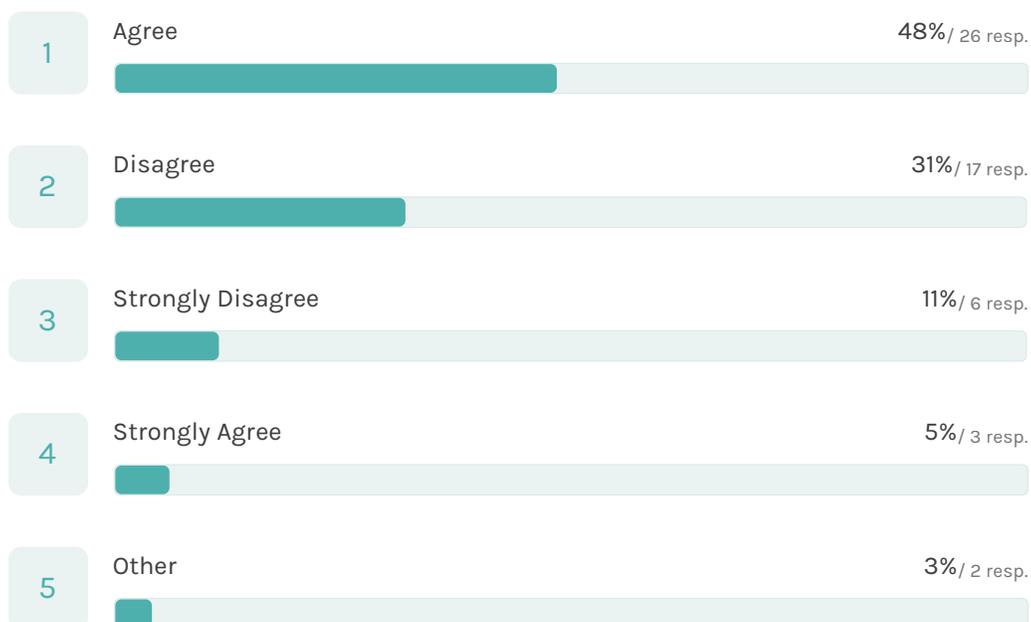
Q 47. If you said 'Yes' in question 46, where in your opinion should they start improving or creating more sidewalks?

- Stapleton's to Shop-N-Save.
- Along us-31, then all east/west feeder streets
- Along Us 31, then Traverse Ave/Homestead/River Road (main arteries)
- Start where Benzonia begins and don't stop.
- South of River St. towards Wesco.
- Along US 31
- Along US 31 then east & west streets.
- parallel with 31
- Walker Street and all around top of the hill.
- Sidewalks should be created on any existing side street that doesn't already have them.
- All around stores parking shops then residential
- On hwy 31 between Shop and Save and post office
- From post office to shop and save
- Along US 31
- Perhaps taking foot traffic off the shoulders of M115/31 I see many folks walking likely to work that way and it appears to be rather dangerous
- Improvement to current for start and shoveling in winter!

- See answer to 44
- along us31, south st, traverse ave
- Updating Michigan ave.
- I'm not sure; down River Rd a bit (Traverse Ave).
- streets close to 31
- Anywhere the public would frequent (retail etc) should be linked.
- Along the beach area
- Going along us31 down the hill to Shop N Save and also down to Beulah.
- By roadhouse and post office
- Us-31, hopefully they will be adequate. Also, what about south street, to the business and the park, there needs to be a better us-31 crossing there. Also River Road, and the entrance to the school.
- The whole village and up South Street so from shop n save up South Street down to Beulah

Q 48. Do you like the look of the streets in the Village?

54 out of 55 answered



Q 49. If you said 'other' in Question 48 above, please explain.

- Some streets
- Rough roads
- Some homes are junky looking.

Q 50. Do you have any other specific concerns with vehicular traffic or non-motorized traffic on Village Streets?

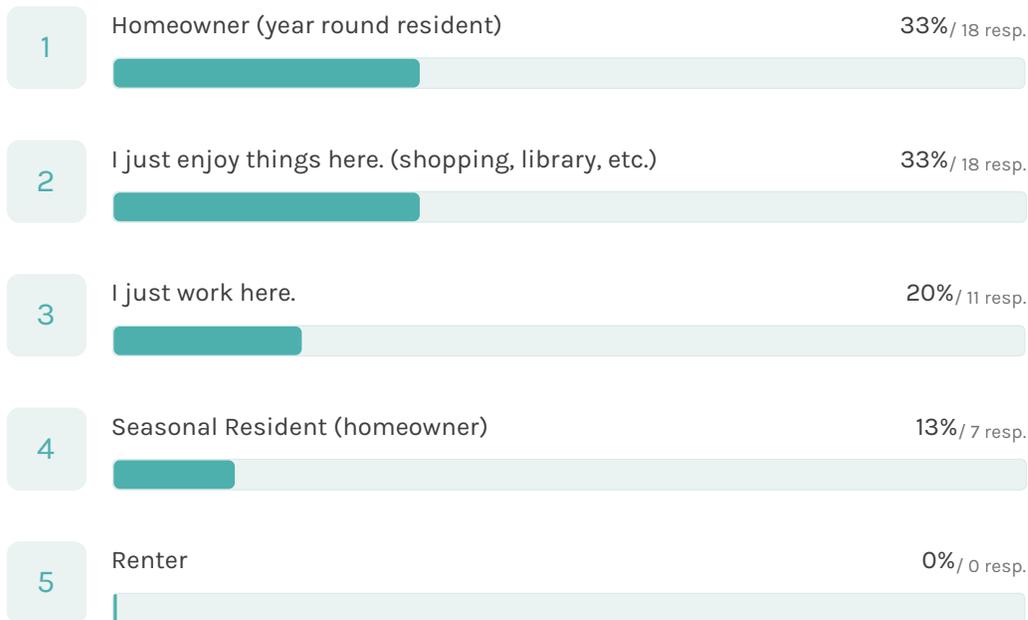
- Crossing 31 at River Street is almost impossible at certain times of the day.
- Traffic speed, ignoring stop sign
- Connecting to the Betsie valley Trail
- Hill by post office is bad. Needs to be reduced.
- Speeding/racing autos, careless bikers
- non residents use village streets to cut through and avoid stop light!
- make intersection at 31/Traverse Ave safer, must stop for pedestrian signs?
- The speed of drivers! I can't tell you how many times drivers have put me and my family in danger because they are speeding... especially in the summer months. Let's make this safe for all to enjoy!

- Just a little speeding on Hwy31
- Speed limits are not enforced
- 31 is a mess, sidewalks are terrible, you have busy couple of businesses and inadequate parking
- Some streets have faster traffic than they should, perhaps better signs to announce you are in the 'Village Limits' and to signal to drive slower in Village? Also, hard to ride bikes and get to the Betsie Valley Trail, we always drive to a trailhead....

LIVING AND WORKING IN THE VILLAGE

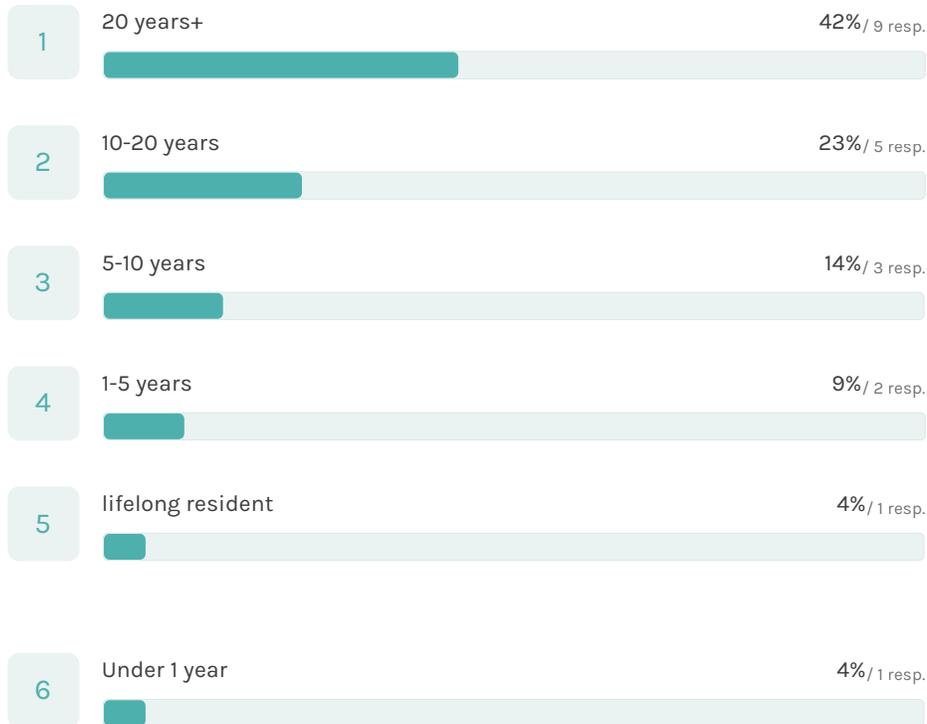
Q 51. What is your relationship with the Village?

54 out of 55 answered



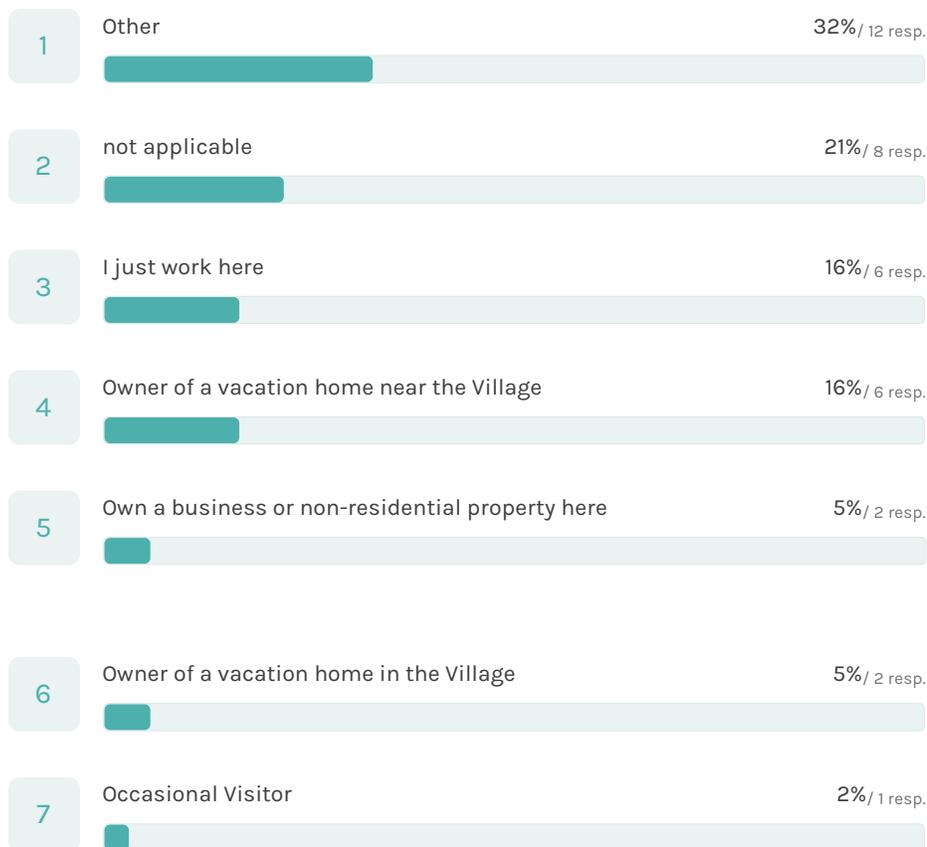
Q 52. If you are a **Village Resident**, how long have you lived or worked in the Village of Benzonia?

21 out of 55 answered



Q 53. If you are a **seasonal or non-resident** what is your role in the Village community?

37 out of 55 answered



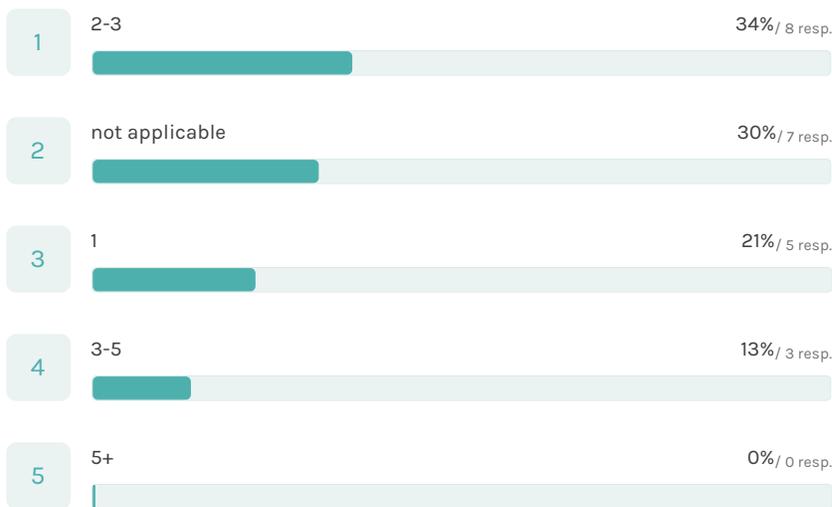
Q 54. If you said 'other' in Question 53 above, please explain.

- Own home near village
- Own permanent residence near village.
- Children at Crystal Lake Elementary
- Own a home nearby
- Own a residence near by
- I live in Frankfort so Benzonia is in my world
- We live in the township, but shop in the village and frequent the library and Mills Community House.

- We are previous owners of a home that we renovated. We used it as a second home.
- Owner of a home near the village
- Full time resident
- Live in Beulah barely
- I live nearby
- I lived in Benzonia for over a year. But now work & live in Beulah. Of course use the resources of Benzonia all the time, i.e., Shop N Save, Honor Bank, Dog Park, Roadhouse.
- I own a home in Benzonia Twp. and am a year around resident.

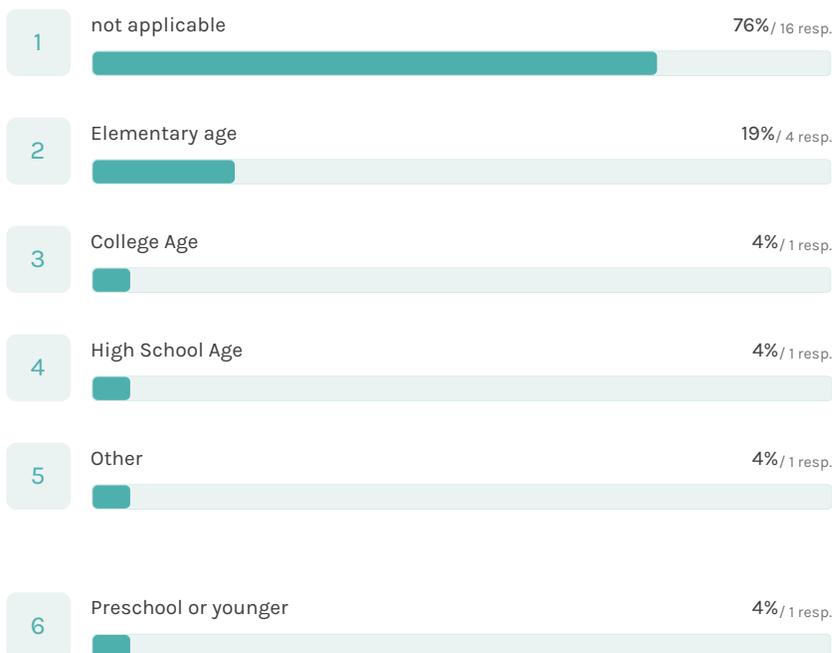
Q 55. For **Residents of the Village**, how many people, including yourself, live at home with you?

23 out of 55 answered



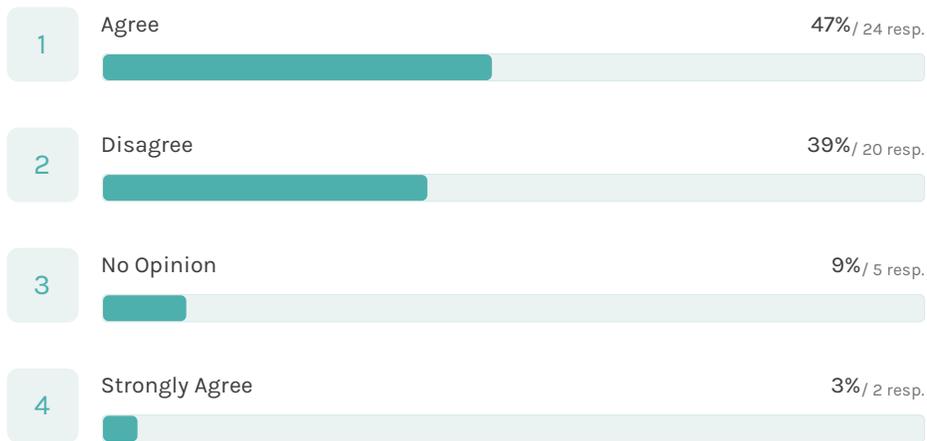
Q 56. For **Residents of the Village**, if you have children in your home, are they?

21 out of 55 answered



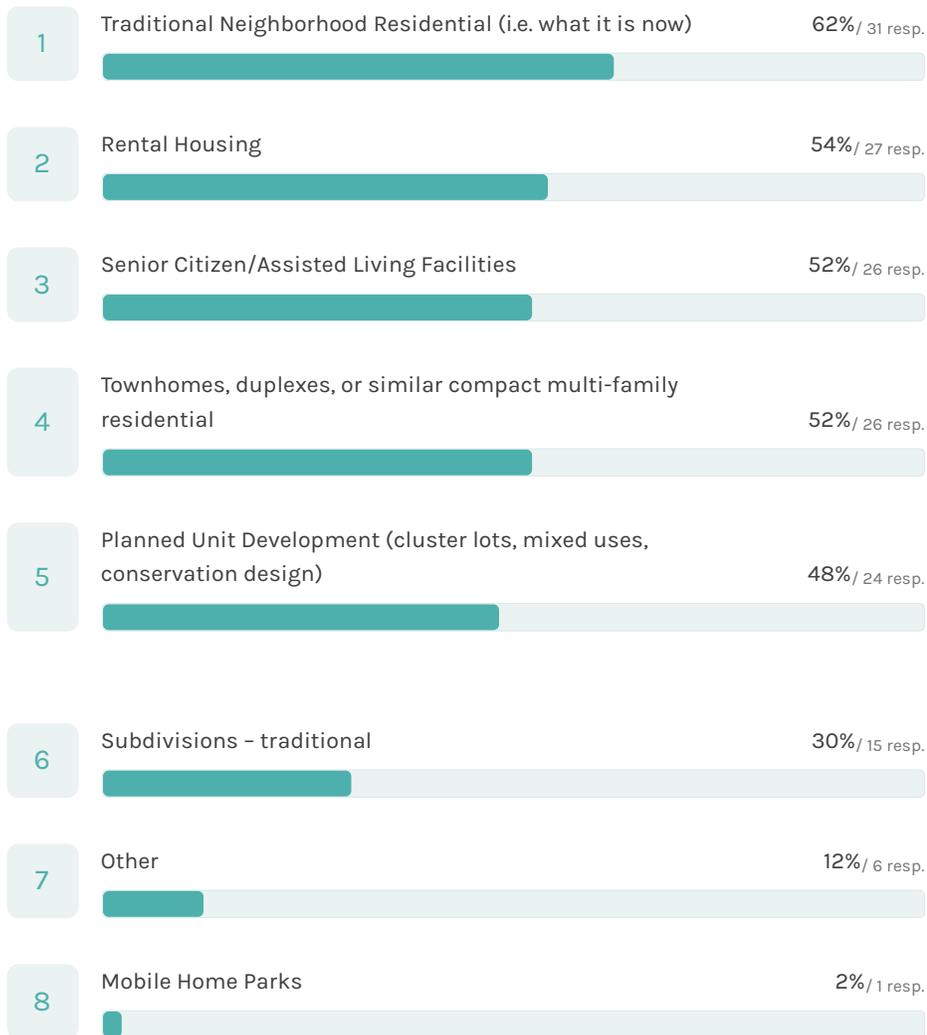
Q 57. In general, are you satisfied with the appearance and condition of homes in Benzonia Village?

51 out of 55 answered



Q 58. Should the Village plan for any of the following housing choices?

50 out of 55 answered



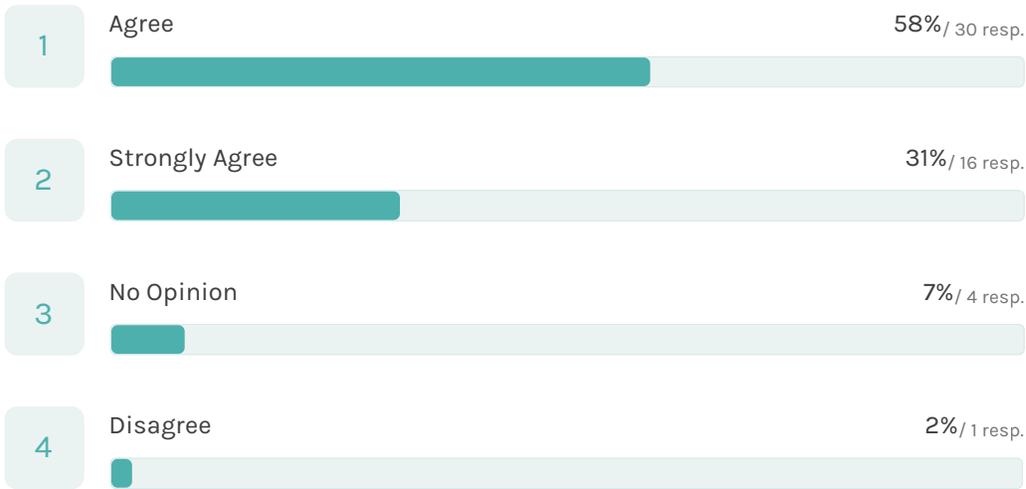
Q 59. If you said 'other' in Question 58 above, please explain.

- Not without putting in adequate utility infrastructures, eg. sewers
- No Rental Housing, No Mobile Home Parks, No Planned Unit Developments
- As grand traverse county becomes more expensive there will be an influx of folks moving down 31. Current residents are getting older. Its going to be a challenge to balance the needs of both

- Be the first in Benzie County to offer something for the affordable Tiny House folks!
- When you make the eyes attractive and encourage visitors and move ins, you should be ready to accommodate their needs
- accessory dwelling units

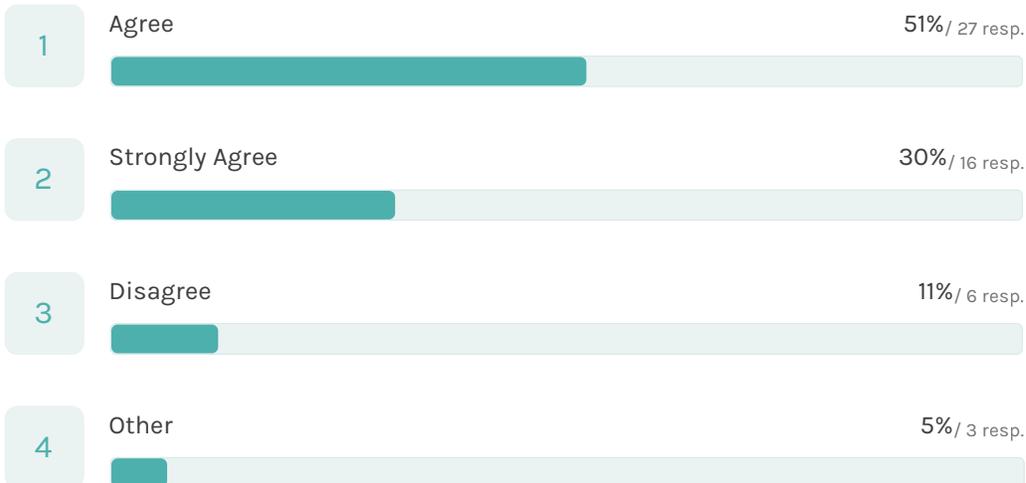
Q 60. Is improving the quality of housing available in the Village important to you?

51 out of 55 answered



Q 61. Should the Village encourage the development of more Affordable Housing options?

52 out of 55 answered

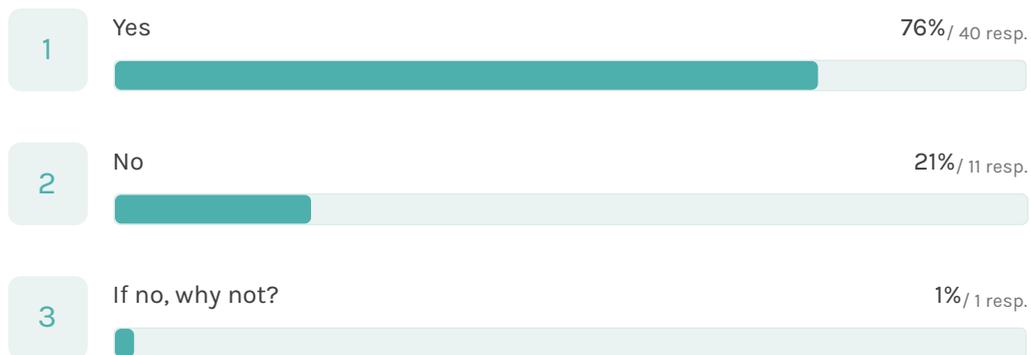


Q 62. If you said 'other' in Question 61 above, please explain.

- Depends on location
- Depends, the current habitat houses are real eyesores
- All counties in Northern Michigan should be asking this question, not just Benzonia.
- Brings more income to everyone
- Neutural

Q 63. If you or your family member were looking for housing, would you consider living in the Village?

52 out of 55 answered



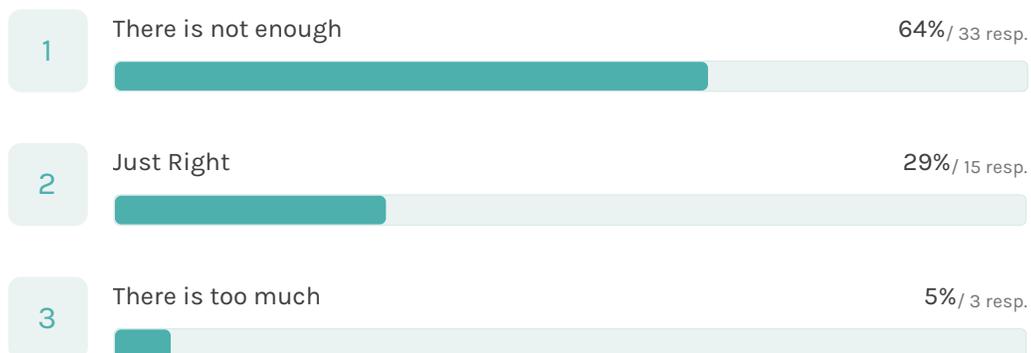
Q 64. If you said 'other' in Question 63 above, please explain.

- Quality of housing appears poor
- Too busy, like space.
- would need to be more accessible year round
- Houses too close
- Just like living in the country
- Would look in Frankfort instead
- I prefer waterfront living

- Not where I want to be
- Nothing of interest is available
- It's so expensive and if my daughter and I weren't living with my dad we couldn't afford it. It's horrible trying to live here!

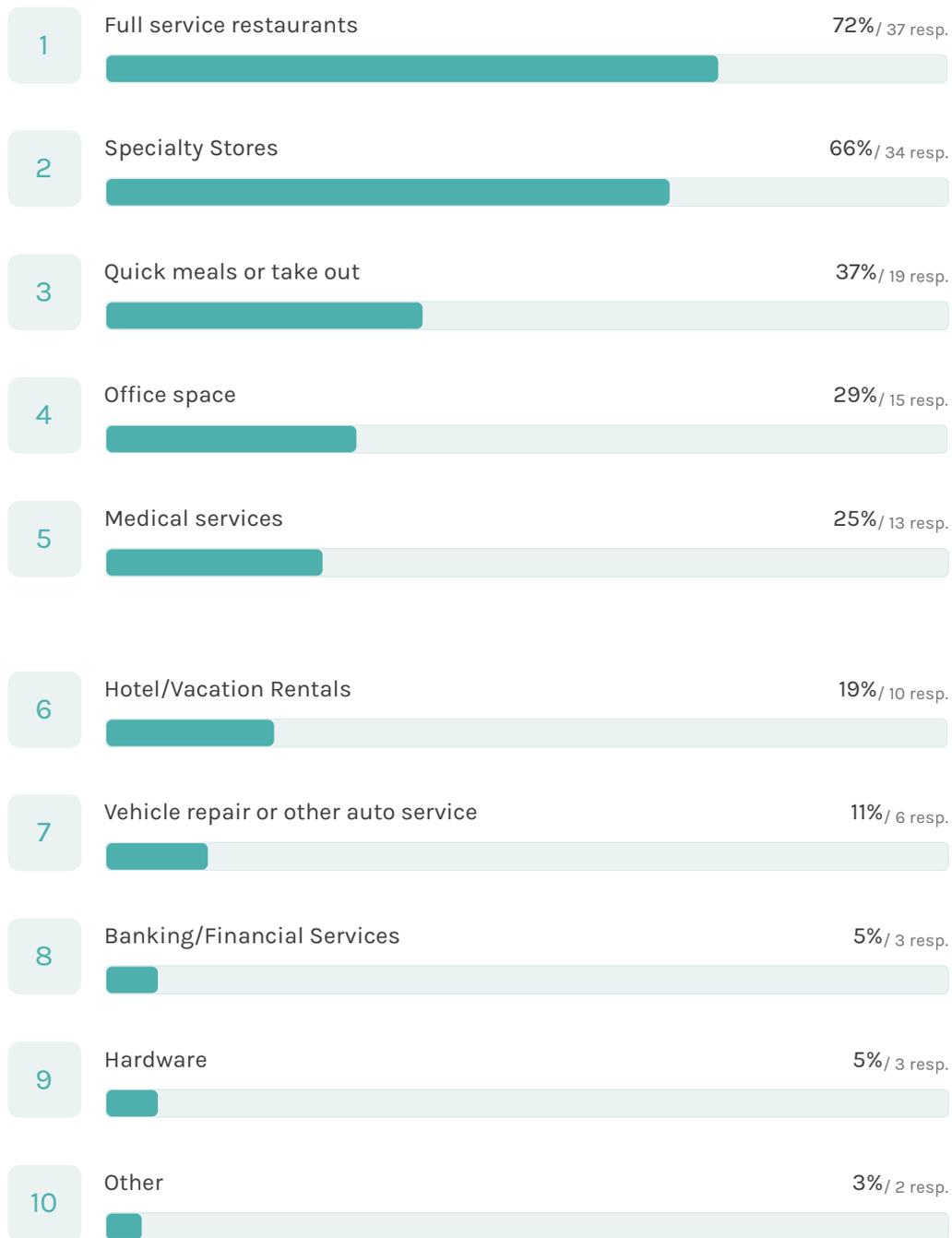
Q 65. Are you satisfied with the amount of retail & commercial space available in the Village?

51 out of 55 answered



Q 66. The Village needs more of the following types of commercial or retail:

51 out of 55 answered

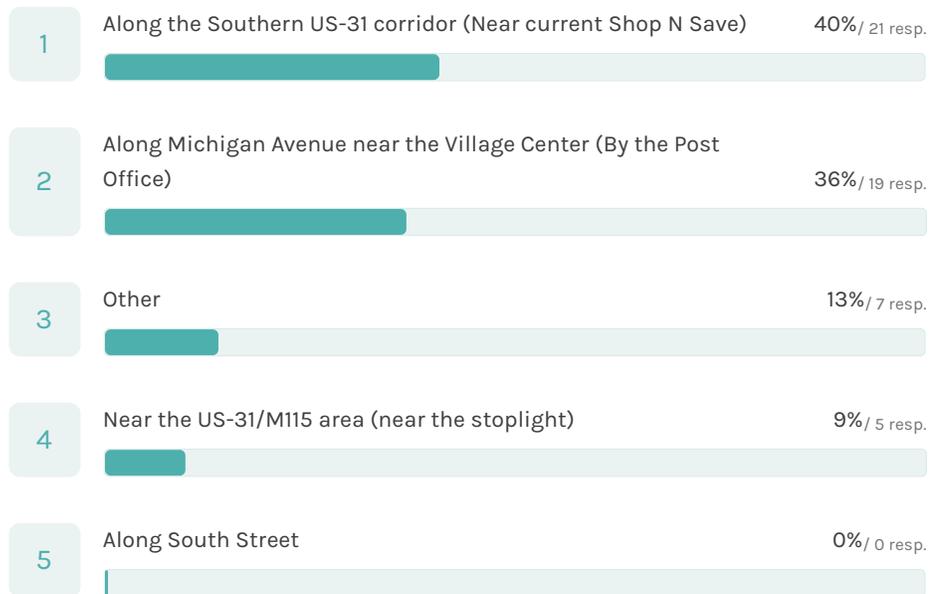


Q 67. If you said 'other' in Question 66 above, please explain.

- Small engine/appliance repair
- More small retail and light commercial/ industrial.

Q 68. Where MOST would you like to see future retail/commercial areas improved in the Village?

52 out of 55 answered



Q 69. If you said 'other' in Question 68 above, please explain.

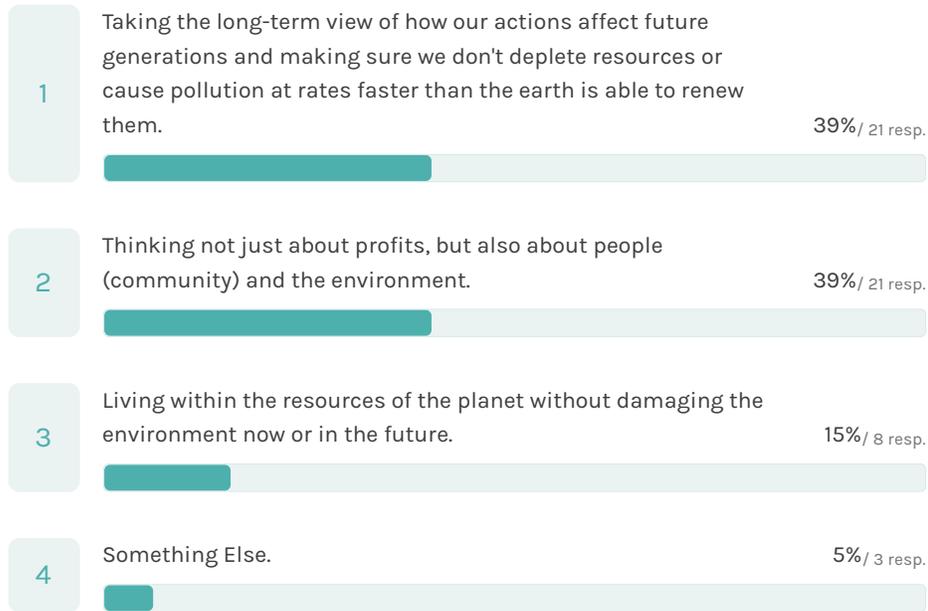
- Also near M-115
- Behind and adjacent to shop n save
- A and b
- Prioritized - A, B, then D
- Current "resale" shops (i.e. Jerry's & next door to The Roadhouse) do not look aesthetically

pleasing. Perhaps restrictions on signage and "junk" sitting out front would help?

- a and c
- All of the above
- b, c, d
- a, b, and c
- I would prioritize B, C, D and A

Q 70. What statement about sustainability mean the most to you?

53 out of 55 answered

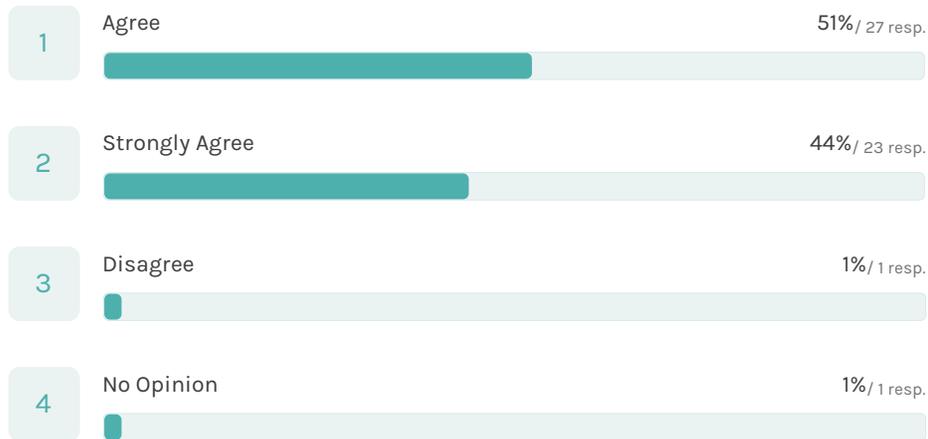


Q 71. If you said 'other' in Question 70 above, please explain.

- A and c
- did not say 'something else'
- all of the above
- a and b

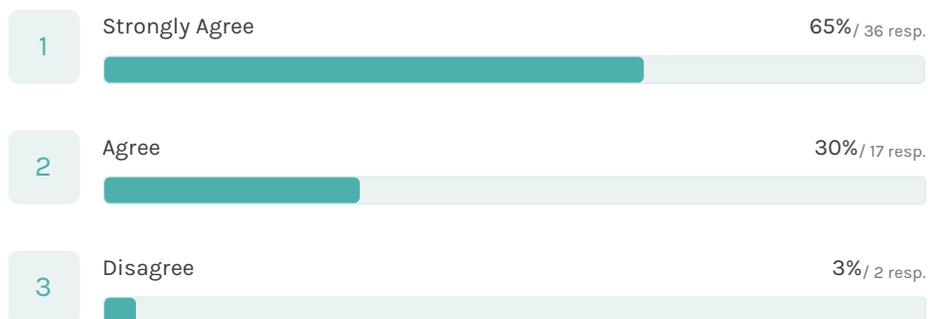
Q 72. Is sustainable development important and should it be guided and promoted by the Village?

52 out of 55 answered



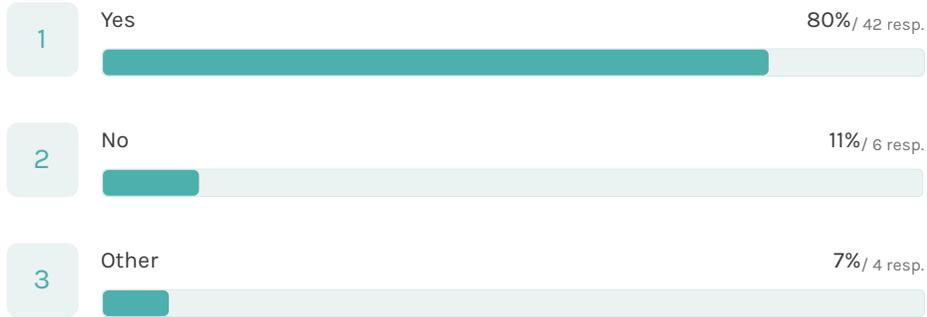
Q 73. Is historic preservation important?

55 out of 55 answered



Q 74. Some sites in Benzonia are challenging to develop due to steep slopes and site drainage. Would you support an overlay zone or similar for allowing mixed-use development or other special development uses as long as any new development is in line with the Vision and Goals established in this master plan?

52 out of 55 answered



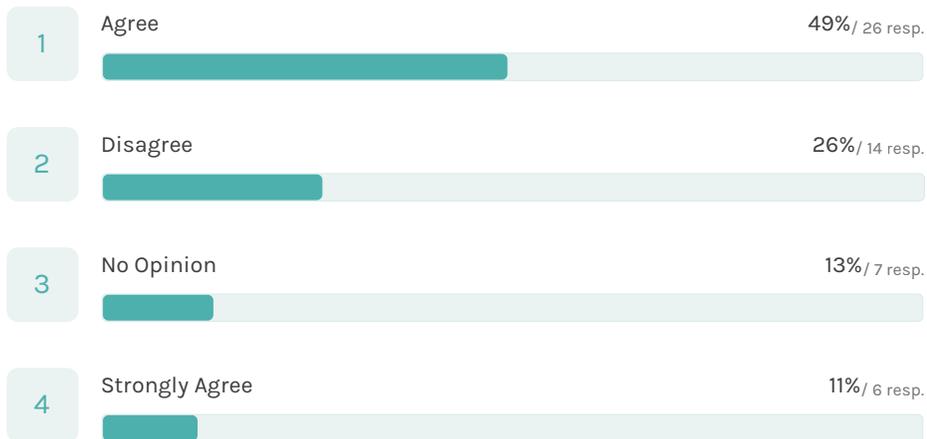
Q 75. If you said 'other' in Question 74 above, please explain.

- Yes if it is adequately regulated no slope development along lines similar to those of the crystal lake watershed association zoning overlay rules in place around crystal lake.

- This should be a site by site issue
- Depends on the location.
- Dont live in Village
- Must protect land from erosion and residents from property damage

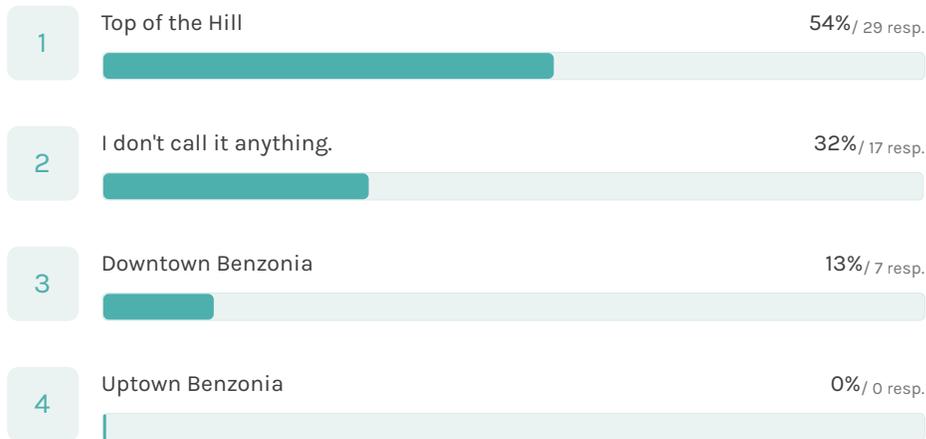
Q 76. Currently there is no zoning for Light Industrial areas in the Village, should this be considered?

53 out of 55 answered



Q 77. LASTLY - What do you call the original or historic portion of the Village of Benzonia (the US-31/Michigan Ave area near Mills Community House and Academy Park, approximately Walker Street to Burr Street?)

53 out of 55 answered



Q 78. OK THIS IS LASTLY - What SHOULD the historic center of the Village be called? Please give us your best ideas!

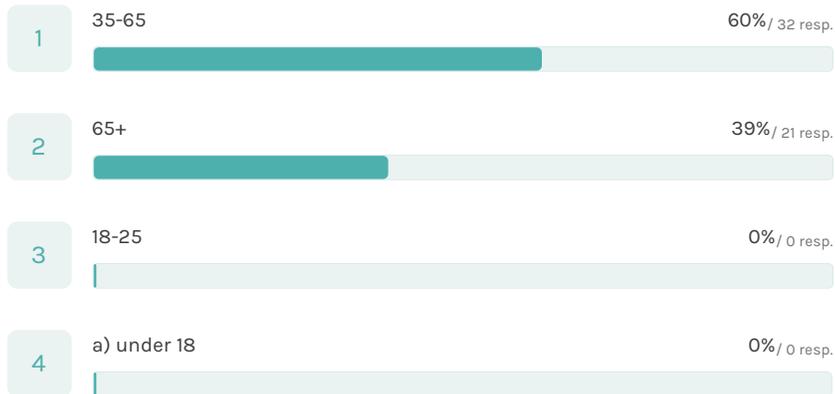
- Old Town
- What's wrong with 'top of the hill'?
- Or Uptown Benzonia
- The Village
- Town Center
- Park Center? I'll leave this to the professionals. You're just that, and you're killing it with this survey!! Good job!!
- The heart of Benzonia
- Top of the Hill
- Central Benzonia, Historic Center,
- Top of the Hill. Historic District. Town Center.
- Benzonia Historical District

- The historic district
- Historic Benzonia
- Old town
- Post office district is how we refer...
- Historic Benzonia
- Top of the Hill; Hilltop?
- the zone!
- Benzonia Center
- If it became something it would need a name depending on what its identity became.
- Village of Benzonia Historic Distric
- Village Center, Top of the Hill
- Old town benzonia

DEMOGRAPHICS

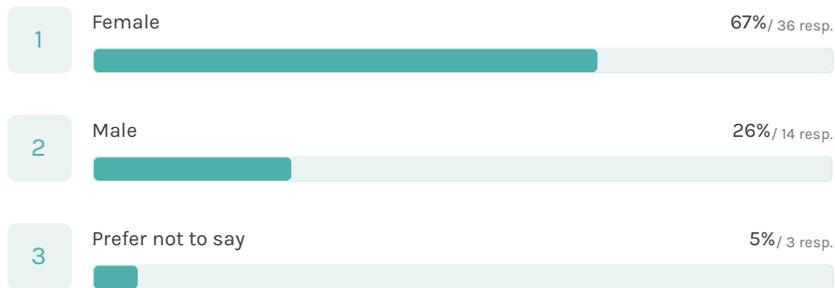
Q 79. 17. What is your age?

53 out of 55 answered



Q 80. Gender?

53 out of 55 answered



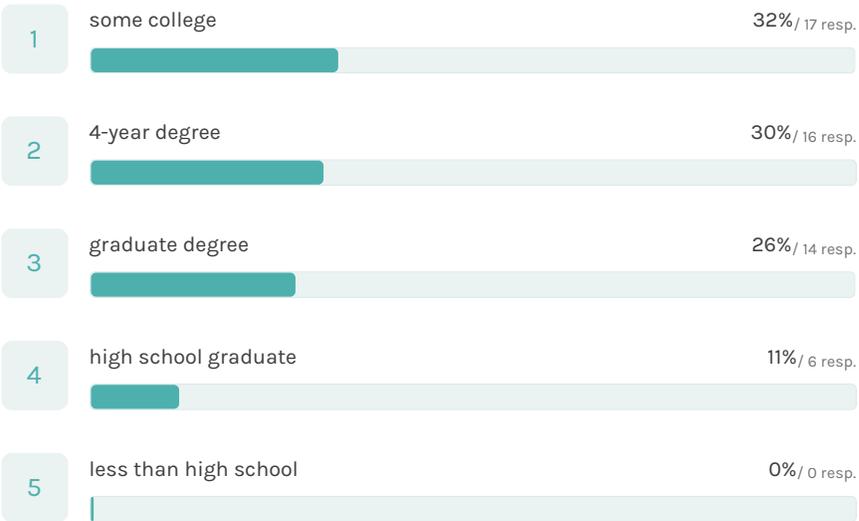
Q 81. Employment Status?

53 out of 55 answered



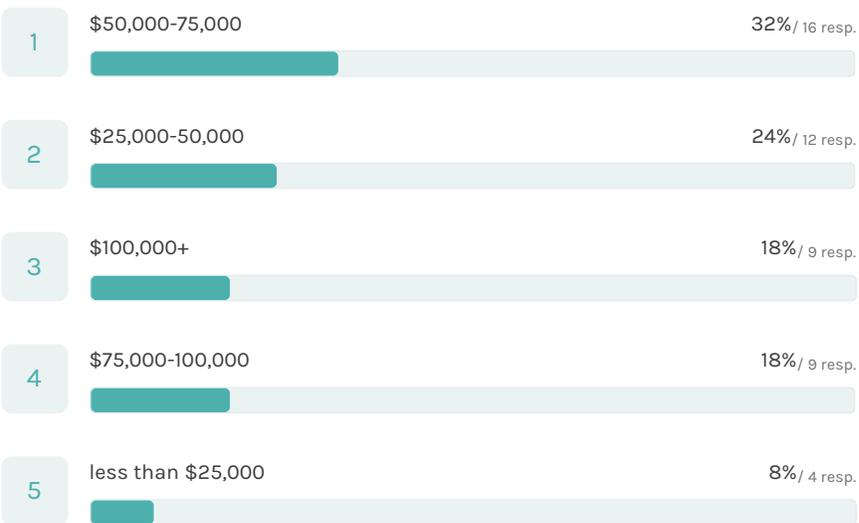
Q 82. Education Level?

53 out of 55 answered



Q 83. What is your household income before taxes?

50 out of 55 answered



PROJECT NOTIFICATIONS LIST

NOTIFICATIONS SENT

1. Notice Of Intent To Plan
2. Draft Plan Available For Review (63 Day Notice For Final Comments)
3. Notice For Final Public Hearing

Entity Name	Contact	Mailing Address	City	State	ZIP
Required					
Benzie County/Planning Commission	Dawn Olney	448 Court Place 600 E. Front Street, Ste 108, PO	Beulah	MI	49617
Networks Northwest	Matt McCauley	BOX 506	Traverse City	MI	49685
Benzonia Township	Diana Heller	1020 Michigan Ave	Benzonia	MI	49616
Village of Benzonia	Rhonda Nye	P.O. Box 223	Benzonia	MI	49616
Village of Beulah	Laura Spencer	PO Box 326	Beulah	MI	49617
Benzie Bus	Mr. William Kennis	14150 US-31	Beulah	MI	49617
Benzie County Road Commission	Mr. Matthew Skeels	PO Box 68	Honor	MI	49640
DTE Energy		101 S Washington Square,	Lansing	MI	48933
Consumers Energy		1 Energy Plaza Dr	Jackson	MI	49201
Courtesy					
Benzie County Central Schools	Mr. Matt Olson	9300 Homestead Road	Benzonia	MI	49616
Michigan Dept of Natural Resources	Hampton Hogson	3730 Mill Road	Grawn	MI	49637
Crystal Lake Watershed	CLWA	P.O. Box 89	Beulah	MI	49617
Manistee County	Jill M. Nowak	415 Third Street 8527 E. Government Center Dr.	Manistee	MI	49660
Leelanau County	Michelle L. Crocker	Suite 103	Suttons Bay	MI	49682
BATA	Kelly Dunham	115 Hall St.	Traverse City	MI	49684
Manistee County Transportation	Mr. Richard Strevey, Manager	180 Memorial Drive,	Manistee	MI	49660
Wexford County	Alaina Nyman	PO Box 490	Cadillac	MI	49601
Crystal Lake Township	Sue Sullivan	PO Box 2129	Frankfort	MI	49635
Lake Township	Dorothy Blank	5153 Scenic Hwy	Honor	MI	46940
Homestead Township	Mary Geetings	PO Box 315	Honor	MI	49640
Weldon Township	Fran Griffin	14730 Thompson Ave	Thompsonville	MI	49683
Gilmore Township	Shannon Spencley	PO Box 247	Elberta	MI	49628
Joyfield Township	Dolores Putney	PO Box 256	Benzonia	MI	49616
Platte Township	Alison Michalak	11935 Fowler Road	Honor	MI	49640
Blaine Township	Melanie Taylor	4760 Herring Grove Rd	Arcadia	MI	49613
City of Frankfort	Kimberly Kidder	City Offices, Main Street	Frankfort	MI	49635
Village of Honor	Deb Reed	PO Box 95	Honor	MI	49635
Village of Thompsonville	Village Clerk	14714 Lincoln Ave	Thompsonville	MI	49650
Zoning Administrator	Sara Kirk	1166 Lake Street	Benzonia	MI	49616

**PUBLIC MEETING #1
MILLS COMMUNITY HOUSE, JULY 23, 2019**

**NEWS PAPER ADVERTISEMENT
(RECORD PATRIOT)**

The Pioneer Group
115 N. Michigan Big Rapids MI 49307
Phone: (231) 796-4831
Fax: (231) 796-1152



VILLAGE OF BENZONIA
~~BENZONIA TOWNSHIP~~
~~PO BOX 224~~
~~BENZONIA, MI 49616~~

Class Liner Ad #00805019 Summary:

Ad Description: MASTER PLAN 2020
Size: 1.00 x 1.73
Salesperson: Denise Favreau

Publication Cost \$24.40
Adjustments \$0.00
Net Cost \$24.40
Prepaid Amount \$0.00
Amount Due \$24.40

VILLAGE OF BENZONIA
Master Plan 2020
PLEASE JOIN US!
Public Meeting: Visioning
Workshop and
Design Charrette
TUESDAY, JULY 23
Mills Community House
Third Floor
891 Michigan Avenue
Benzonia
OPEN HOUSE 5-6PM
PRESENTATION 6PM
DESIGN CHARRETTE 6:30ish

**HARD COPY FLYER AND
WEBSITE/SOCIAL MEDIA AI**

VILLAGE OF BENZONIA -
MASTER PLAN 2020

PUBLIC MEETING
VISIONING WORKSHOP & DESIGN CHARRETTE

WE WANT YOUR....

Thoughts **IDEAS** CONCERNS
STORIES COMMENTS KNOWLEDGE
INSIGHTS Worries

DO YOU LIVE IN THE VILLAGE? Work In The Village? SHOP IN THE VILLAGE?

TUESDAY - JULY 23RD
MILLS COMMUNITY HOUSE
★ THIRD FLOOR ★ 891 MICHIGAN AVENUE - BENZONIA

OPEN HOUSE 5-6pm
NO PRESSURE, LOOK @ PROJECT MAPS & PROGRESS, COMMENT, PARTICIPATE IN VISIONING EXERCISES, COME & GO WHEN YOU WANT...
BUT PLEASE STAY FOR THE...

PRESENTATION @ 6pm
THEN PARTICIPATE IN OUR WORKSHOP, WE'RE BREAKING OUT TRACE PAPER AND MARKERS & COLORED PENCILS AND....

DESIGN CHARRETTE 6:30ish

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
231.882.9981 OR EMAIL: S.KIRK@SRPDESIGNSTUDIO.COM

**PUBLIC MEETING #1
MILLS COMMUNITY HOUSE, JULY 23, 2019**

VISIONING BOARD SUMMARY

One Word Challenge -

small
historic
child care-less
quaint
community
safe
peaceful
home
noise
scattered

Opportunities -

improve walkability
lots of open space
PUD's
place making
Added from discussion (possible relocation of township firehall, could keep firehall in another location in the Village and then redevelop (tear down) the current Township/Firehall to create a more appropriate historic like building with mixed-use potential)

Constraints -

no sewers
no pedestrian SAFE crossings or access over/under US-31
Lack of utilities, i.e. sewers, hampers outside developers (commercial particularly) looking to develop in the Village
Jobs
Lack of water
No sewer system
\$
Housing

Economic Charette Plan Summary

- Retail and Housing South of Love Road
- Looking at Traffic Circulation and new roads through shopping center area (Shop-N-Save)
- Tiny House PUD near south street
- Low Income Housing near River Street/Case Road
- Utility Ideas: Sewer System, Underground Electric
- Improving Historic Commercial District
- Elder Housing (potential for Crystal Lake School)
- High Density Housing near old High school or Community Center
- Park with walking loop trails on steep slopes along Walker Street
- Park space near Benzie Street/US-31(?)

Social Charrette Plan Summary

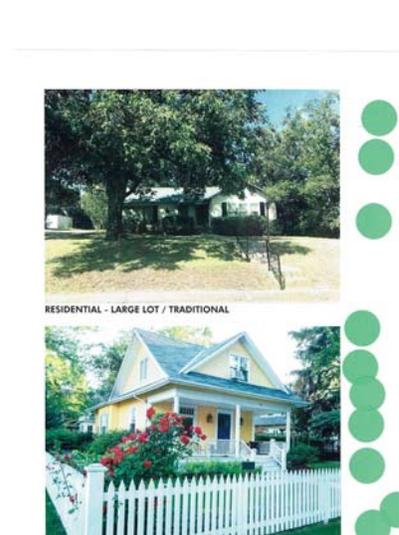
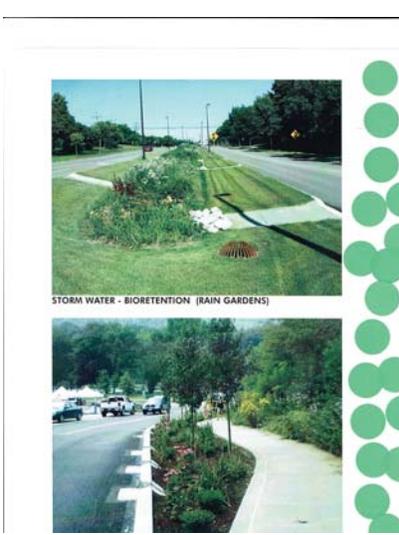
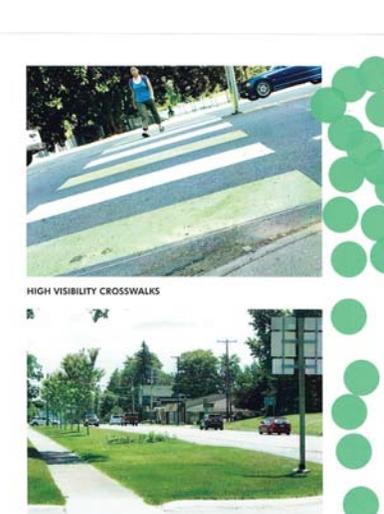
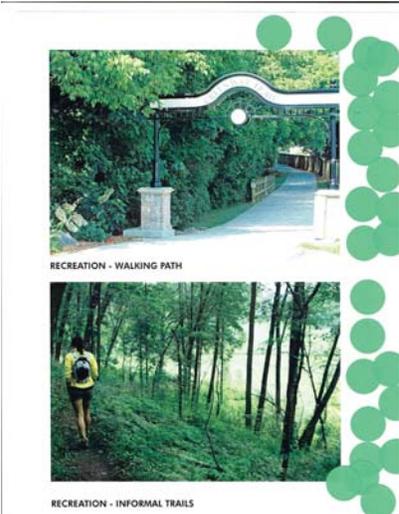
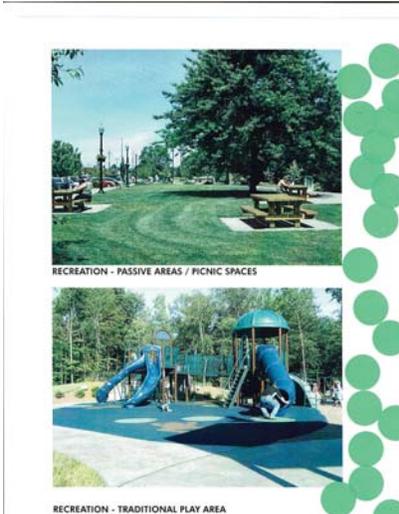
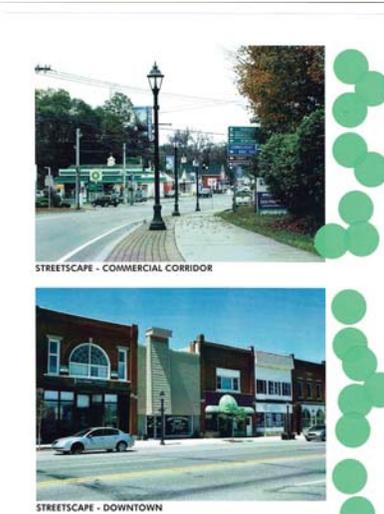
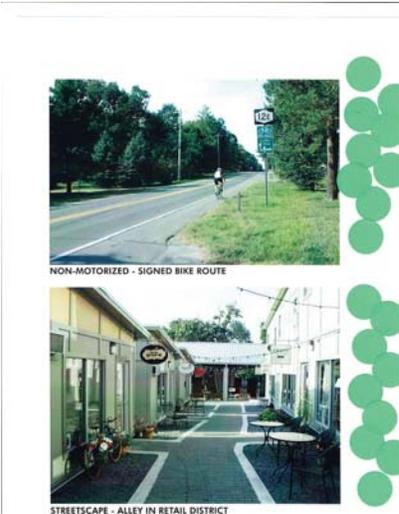
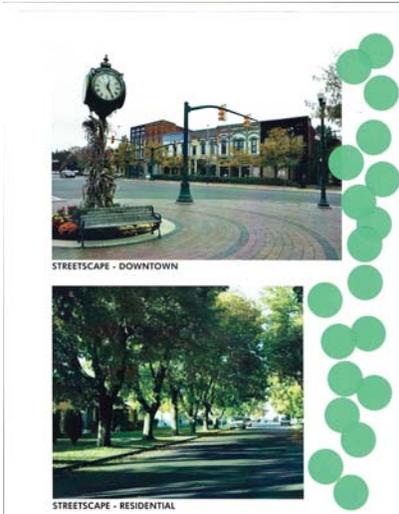
- Potential for housing developments south of Love Road
- Idea of coordinating pedestrian improvements with the MDOT project and sidewalk/crossing improvements
- Idea of starting with sidewalk improvements on more major street, like Traverse Ave/River Road, South Street, maybe River Road
- Sidewalk and trails east side of South Street
- Potential for affordable housing near Lake/River Road parcel
- Idea of potential housing development if Crystal Lake Elementary is eventually moved.
- Idea of creating a Public Space and Event space near the historic center or near Academy Park.
- Improving the Historic Commercial Section
- Providing better connections across US-31 for public space area (physical and visual)
- Items noted during discussion: Pedestrian Overpass over US-31, Connections and overall excitement about improving sidewalks and better walking opportunities

Environmental Charrette Plan Summary

- Items noted during discussion: Place for water (potential for a splashpad), idea of the potential aquatic center in the Village.
- Overall idea of creating more walking trails and having more crosswalks marked.
- Creating a loop trail around the whole village, like a trail expressway to connect neighborhoods, commercial areas, parks, etc..
- Improving the sidewalk along US-31
- Potential for a small park near the Lake Street Trails
- Potential for a park space with walking trails on steep slopes on Walker Street
- Improving sidewalks and trail connection near the school/Severance Street
- Bringing back the old sledding hill near the east end of Severance Street
- Improving the existing foot trails in the Village property (woods) near Benzie Street
- Adding Play structure or play equipment (swings) in Academy Park West
- Trail connection from Barber Street through the water tower area (where the streets don't connect)
- Also idea of underground electric for future developments

VISUAL PREFERENCE EXERCISE SUMMARY -

Images with the most likes (green dots) to images with the most dislikes (red dots)





RECREATION - COMMUNITY SLEDDING HILL



RECREATION - OUTDOOR EXERCISE



RECREATION - LOCAL HIKING TRAILS



RECREATION - PICNIC SHELTERS / SPACES FOR RENT



RECREATION - NATURAL PLAY AREA



SIGNAGE - INTERPRETIVE & WAYFINDING SIGNS



STREETSCAPE - CROSSWALKS



COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR - OFFICE BUILDING



STREETSCAPE - CROSSWALKS



RESIDENTIAL - ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT (living space above garage)



STREETSCAPE - DOWNTOWN



PUBLIC ART - SCULPTURES



VILLAGE STREET



STREETSCAPE - COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR



PUBLIC ART - SCULPTURES & WINTER LIGHTING



STREETSCAPE - COORDINATED FURNISHINGS



RESIDENTIAL - DUPLEX



LIGHT INDUSTRIAL



RETAIL - DOWNTOWN/HIGHWAY



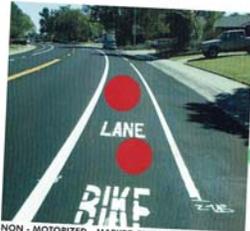
SIGNAGE - MONUMENT SIGN, HALO LIT



SIGNAGE - WAYFINDING



STREETScape - ALLEY IMPROVEMENTS



NON - MOTORIZED - MARKED BIKE LANE



STORM WATER - BIORETENTION COMMERCIAL CENTER



RETAIL - DOWNTOWN



COMMERCIAL - HIGHWAY CORRIDOR



RESIDENTIAL - ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT/CARRIAGE HOUSE
(separate from main structure)



RESIDENTIAL - ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT
(above garage either attached or detached to main house)



RESIDENTIAL - SMALL LOT (LOW INCOME)



RESIDENTIAL - TRIPLEX UNITS



COMMERCIAL - HIGHWAY CORRIDOR



COMMERCIAL - HIGHWAY CORRIDOR



RECREATION - ICE SKATING RINK



RECREATION - FIRE PIT/GRILL/PAVE



PUBLIC SPACES - MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS



PUBLIC SPACES - POCKET PARK



RETAIL - NEIGHBORHOOD INFILL DEVELOPMENT



COMMERCIAL - HIGHWAY CORRIDOR



PUBLIC ART



COMMERCIAL - SELF STORAGE FACILITIES



SIGNAGE - MULTI BUSINESS, INTERNALLY LIT



HIGHWAY - COMMERCIAL/RETAIL CORRIDOR



COMMERCIAL - HIGHWAY CORRIDOR



SIGNAGE - SINGLE BUSINESS, INTERNALLY LIT



COMMERCIAL - SELF STORAGE FACILITIES



COMMERCIAL - MULTI TENNANT BUILDINGS

Village of Benzonia - Master Plan 2020
Public Meeting: Visioning Workshop & Design Charrette
Sign-In Sheet, July 23, 2019

Name	Address/Contact Information (if desired)
1. Michelly Leines	mleines1@gmail.com
2. Steve Stephens	Lynn Stephens
3. SARA KIRK	srpdesignstudio@gmail.com
4. Katie Gottardo	katiegottardo@yahoo.com
5. ROGER DEWEY	ANCHOR5147@CHARTER.NET
6. Mary O'Connor	6912 Walker St.
7. Bev Patti Argine	P.O. Box 234 Benzonia.
8. Désirée + Matt Olson	desireeolson@gmail.com
9. ROXANE MINER	882-5326 6867 WALKER ST.
10. Shane Iverson	912 Orchard St. 231-651-9201
11. Chris Mekas	7117 South St 231-651-0154
12. Rhonda Nye	6515 South St 231-510-8804
13. Joan Cooper	6720 Burr St. Benzonia 517-819-7607 8240 W. St. for Nuy, Lansing
14. Amalia fernand	Nature Explorers 6962 Burr St amaliaceteste@gmail.com
15. Carol Bantekap	7656 Pomeroy Kd. carol@granbenzie.org
16. Barb Mont	Benzie Area Historical Society
17. Rich Gottardo	gottardorichard@gmail.com
18. Toni Flynn	930 ORCHARD
19. Tim Flynn	" "
20. Cathy French (Bob French)	811 Lake
21.	
22.	
23.	
24.	
25.	

**PUBLIC MEETING #2
MILLS COMMUNITY HOUSE, NOVEMBER 14, 2019**

**NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENT
(RECORD PATRIOT)**

BENZONIA, VILLAGE OF
PO BOX 223
BENZONIA, MI 49616

Class Liner Ad #00822657 Summary:

Ad Description: MASTER PLAN 2020
Size: 1.00 x 2.23
Salesperson: Denise Favreau

Publication Cost \$30.50
Adjustments \$0.00
Net Cost \$30.50
Prepaid Amount \$0.00
Amount Due \$30.50

Publication Run Date Cost
53 Benzie County Record Patriot
Insertion 11/6/19 \$30.50

VILLAGE OF BENZONIA,
Master Plan 2020
PLEASE JOIN US!
Public Meeting: Final Draft
Master Plan Review
Thursday, November 14
Mills Community House
Upper Level,
891 Michigan Avenue,
Benzonia
OPEN HOUSE 6-6:30PM
PRESENTATION 6:30PM
Planning Commission Meeting
7 pm
Facility is ADA accessible.
Draft Plan available online.
www.villageofbenzonia.com
Nov. 6, 2019

**HARD COPY FLYER AND
WEBSITE/SOCIAL MEDIA AD**

VILLAGE OF BENZONIA -
MASTER PLAN 2020

**FINAL DRAFT
MASTER PLAN REVIEW**

OPEN HOUSE & REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

SHARE YOUR FEEDBACK, CONCERNS AND IDEAS. REVIEW THE
VISION PLAN, GOALS, AND FUTURE LAND USE PLAN FOR THE
VILLAGE OF BENZONIA

THURSDAY - NOV. 14th
MILLS COMMUNITY HOUSE
★ SECOND FLOOR ★ 891 MICHIGAN AVENUE - BENZONIA

Facility is ADA accessible - elevator available.

OPEN HOUSE 6-6:30pm
NO PRESSURE, LOOK @ PROJECT MAPS & PROGRESS, ASK QUESTIONS, REVIEW DRAFT REPORT, COME & GO WHEN YOU WANT...
BUT PLEASE STAY FOR THE...

PRESENTATION @ 6:30pm
REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
@ 7:00 pm

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
231.882.9981 OR EMAIL: S.KIRK@SRPDESIGNSTUDIO.COM




**PUBLIC MEETING #2
MILLS COMMUNITY HOUSE, NOVEMBER 14, 2019**

**Village of Benzonia - Master Plan 2020
Public Meeting: Final Draft Master Plan Review
Sign-In Sheet - November 14, 2019**

Name	Address/Contact Information (if desired)
1. Robert French	811 Lake Benzonia
2. Desiree Olson	
3. Joe Bishop	976 Orchard St Apt 2
4. Shane Iverson	917 Orchard St
5. Steve Stephens	7579 Crystal Dr. Bentah
6. Cathy French	811 Lake Benzonia
7. Michelle Leiner	6897 River St
8. SARA KIRK	
9. Rhonda Nye	
10. Tim Flynn	930 ORCHARD
11. TONI FLYNN	"
12. \$	
13.	
14.	

PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY

BEFORE MEETING COMMENTS ON BOARDS:

- Idea that the residential 'outdoor burning' section needs to be updated in the ordinance. Should be allowed in residential lots with appropriate rules.
- There should be some kind way to notify residents, especially new renters, of the zoning ordinance and other Village rules. Concern that people don't know about rules and other ways the Village operates. Perhaps a welcome to the Village packet, newsletter or an information packet for landlords that they can share with renters?

AFTER PRESENTATION:

- Would like to see a goal and a priority project in the implementation plan for a way to prioritize village path/trails to best organize future improvements and organize funding. i.e. working on a non-motorized transportation plan should be a short term project.
- Want to see guidelines for development and improvements along US-31. There was discussion that the street improvements should match the character of the Village, especially new street lamps and also assure they are dark sky compliant.

**FINAL PUBLIC HEARING - PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
VILLAGE OF BENZONIA, JANUARY 23, 2020**

MOTION FOR THE FINAL PUBLIC HEARING AT THE DECEMBER 19, 2019 PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING (after 63 day public comment period and before adoption by Village Council)

(RECORD PATRIOT)

**VILLAGE OF BENZONIA PLANNING COMMISSION
MASTER PLAN AND RECREATION PLAN
** PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE **
VILLAGE OF BENZONIA OFFICE, 1276 MICHIGAN AVENUE.**

The Village Planning Commission will hold a Public Hearing on the draft Master Plan including the Park and Recreation Plan at 6:30 pm. on January 16, 2020 at the Village Office, 1276 Michigan Avenue. The Planning Commission regular meeting will immediately follow the Public Hearing.

All interested parties are invited to attend the hearing and comment on the draft Master Plan including the Park and Recreation Plan. The plan can be viewed or obtained on-line on the Village of Benzonia website at www.villageofbenzonia.com

A complete copy of the proposed updated draft Master Plan including the Park and Recreation Plan and associated maps may be viewed at the Village Office, 1276 Michigan Avenue or at the Benzonia Public Library.

Opinions or comments may be given at the hearing or written to the attention of the Planning Commission, PO Box 223, Benzonia, MI 49616. For addition information, contact Planning Consultant Sara Kirk, SRP Design Studio, llc at s.kirk@srpdesignstudio.com

NOTES:

- *Motion required to hold public hearing for the Master Plan including the Park and Recreation Plan as required after the 63 day review period as noted above for January 16, 2020. The public hearing shall be advertised in the local paper not less than 15 days before. A notice of the public hearing was included in the draft plans that were distributed November 7, 2019.*
- *Due to advertising schedule conflict with the local paper the meeting date was changed to January 23rd (all other details remained the same) in order to comply with the 15 day min. notice.*

**FINAL PUBLIC HEARING - PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
VILLAGE OF BENZONIA, JANUARY 23, 2020**

ADVERTISEMENT FOR LOCAL PAPER (*RECORD PATRIOT*): NOTE CHANGED TO JANUARY 8TH EDITION, THEREFORE PUBLIC HEARING WAS MOVED BACK TO JANUARY 23, ADDITIONAL NOTIFICATIONS LETTER SENT, SEE NEXT PAGE.

**VILLAGE OF BENZONIA
PLANNING COMMISSION
MASTER PLAN AND
RECREATION PLAN
PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE
VILLAGE OF BENZONIA
OFFICE,
1276 MICHIGAN AVENUE**

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Opinions or comments may be given at the hearing or written to the attention of the Planning Commission, PO Box 223, Benzonia, MI 49616. For additional information, contact Planning Consultant Sara Kirk, SRP Design Studio, llc at s.kirk@srpdesignstudio.com
Jan 8, 2020

**ADVERTISEMENT FOR ADDITIONAL LOCAL
PAPER & DIGITAL CALANDER (*BETSI E CURRENT*)**

Thursday, January 23
Village of Benzonia: Public Hearing on the draft Master Plan and Park & Recreation Plan. Village Office at 1276 Michigan Avenue. 6:30pm.

**FINAL PUBLIC HEARING - PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
VILLAGE OF BENZONIA, JANUARY 23, 2020**

FINAL NOTIFICATION LETTER SENT TO THE NOTIFICATIONS LIST

Village of Benzonia Planning Commission
Village of Benzonia
1276 Michigan Ave
Benzonia, Michigan 49616-0223

January 6, 2020

RE: Draft Village of Benzonia Master Plan Update

To Whom It May Concern:

The Village Planning Commission will hold a Public Hearing on the draft Master Plan including the Park and Recreation Plan at 6:30 pm. on January 23, 2020 at the Village Office, 1276 Michigan Avenue. The Planning Commission regular meeting will immediately follow the Public Hearing. All interested parties are invited to attend the hearing and comment on the draft Master Plan including the Park and Recreation Plan. The plan can be viewed or obtained on-line on the Village of Benzonia website at www.villageofbenzonia.com

A complete copy of the proposed updated draft Master Plan including the Park and Recreation Plan and associated maps may be viewed at the Village Office, 1276 Michigan Avenue or at the Benzonia Public Library. Opinions or comments may be given at the hearing or written to the attention of the Planning Commission, PO Box 223, Benzonia, MI 49616. For addition information, contact Planning Consultant Sara Kirk, SRP Design Studio, llc at s.kirk@srpdesignstudio.com

Parties that require a hard copy will be mailed a final draft shortly after plan adoption. For all others, plans may be ordered for printing from the Village of Benzonia, if desired.

Sincerely,



Shane Iverson
Recording Secretary
Planning Commission
Village of Benzonia

POST COMPLETION SELF CERTIFICATION REPORT (GRANT #RP18-0119 PG 1)



Michigan Department of Natural Resources - Grants Management

PUBLIC OUTDOOR RECREATION GRANT POST-COMPLETION SELF-CERTIFICATION REPORT

*This information required under authority of Part 19, PA 451 of 1994, as amended;
the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, 78 Stat. 897 (1964); and Part 715, of PA 451 of 1994, as amended.*

GRANT TYPE: MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND CLEAN MICHIGAN INITIATIVE
 (Please select one) LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND RECREATION PASSPORT BOND FUND
Village of Benzonia

GRANTEE:

RP18-0119

PROJECT NUMBER:

PROJECT TYPE: Park Improvements

PROJECT TITLE: Academy Park Improvements

pathway, benches, fence, paved parking, pavilion, picnic tables, play equip, signage, tennis court.

PROJECT SCOPE:

To Be Completed By Local Government Agency (GRANTEE)

Name of Agency (Grantee) Village of Benzonia	Contact Person Rhonda Nye	Title Clerk
Address PO Box 223, 1276 Michigan Ave	Telephone (231) 882-9981	
City, State, ZIP Benzonia	Email benzonia9981@att.net	

SITE DEVELOPMENT

Any change(s) in the facility type, site layout, or recreation activities provided?
 If yes, please describe change(s). Yes No

Has any portion of the project site been converted to a use other than outdoor recreation? If yes, please describe what portion and describe use. (This would include cell towers and any non-recreation buildings.) Yes No

Are any of the facilities obsolete? If yes, please explain. Yes No

SITE QUALITY

Is there a park entry sign which identifies the property or facility as a public recreation area?
 If yes, please provide a photograph of the sign. If no, please explain. Yes No
Refer to page 52 of the master plan for photograph of current park sign and in comment section.

Are the facilities and the site being properly maintained? If no, please explain. Yes No

Is vandalism a problem at this site? If yes, explain the measures being taken to prevent or minimize vandalism. Yes No

POST COMPLETION SELF CERTIFICATION REPORT (GRANT #RP18-0119 PG 2)

POST COMPLETION SELF-CERTIFICATION REPORT - CONT'D

Is maintenance scheduled on a regular basis? If yes, give schedule. If no, please explain. Yes No
Checked daily (M-F) and completed on an as needed basis.

GENERAL

Is a Program Recognition plaque permanently displayed at the site? If yes, please provide a photograph. (Not required for Bond Fund Grants) Yes No N/A

Is any segment of the general public restricted from using the site or facilities? (i.e. resident only, league only, boaters only, etc.) If yes, please explain. Yes No

Is a fee charged for use of the site or facilities? If yes, please provide fee structure. Yes No

What are the hours and seasons for availability of the site?

4 season park, Hours posted by sign from 6am-11pm.

COMMENTS (ATTACH SEPARATE SHEET IF MORE SPACE IS NEEDED)

These park improvements for this grant are still in progress as of this ~~grant~~ application and are schedule for completion in the spring of 2020. Program recognition plaque to be installed Spring 2020.



CERTIFICATION

I do hereby certify that I am duly elected, appointed and/or authorized by the Grantee named above and that the information and answers provided herein are true and accurate to the best of my personal knowledge, information and belief.

RHONDA NYE
Please print

Rhonda Nye 01/23/2020
Grantee Authorized Signature Date

Tonneha S. Flynn
Please print

Tonneha S Flynn 01/23/2020
Witness Signature Date

Send completed report to: **POST COMPLETION GRANT INSPECTION REPORTS
GRANTS MANAGEMENT
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
PO BOX 30425
LANSING MI 48909-7925**

POST COMPLETION SELF CERTIFICATION REPORT (GRANT #26-00816 PG 1)



Michigan Department of Natural Resources - Grants Management

PUBLIC OUTDOOR RECREATION GRANT POST-COMPLETION SELF-CERTIFICATION REPORT

*This information required under authority of Part 19, PA 451 of 1994, as amended;
the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, 78 Stat. 897 (1964); and Part 715, of PA 451 of 1994, as amended.*

GRANT TYPE: MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND CLEAN MICHIGAN INITIATIVE
(Please select one) LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND RECREATION PASSPORT BOND FUND

Village of Benzonia - Benzie County

GRANTEE: _____

PROJECT NUMBER: 26-00816

PROJECT TYPE: Park Improvements

PROJECT TITLE: Kiwanis Park

Basketball and shuffleboard equipment, Fencing of shuffleboard/horseshoe area, Horseshoe pits

PROJECT SCOPE: (4), Lighting of shuffleboard/horseshoe area

TO BE COMPLETED BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCY (GRANTEE)

Name of Agency (Grantee) Village of Benzonia	Contact Person Rhonda Nye	Title Clerk
Address PO Box 223, 1276 Michigan Ave	Telephone (231) 882-9981	
City, State, ZIP Benzonia	Email benzonia9981@att.net	

SITE DEVELOPMENT

Any change(s) in the facility type, site layout, or recreation activities provided? Yes No
If yes, please describe change(s).

These items have been removed from the park for lack of interest.

Has any portion of the project site been converted to a use other than outdoor recreation? If yes, please describe what portion and describe use. (This would include cell towers and any non-recreation buildings.) Yes No

Are any of the facilities obsolete? If yes, please explain. Yes No

These items have been removed from the park for lack of interest.

SITE QUALITY

Is there a park entry sign which identifies the property or facility as a public recreation area? Yes No
If yes, please provide a photograph of the sign. If no, please explain.

Refer to page 52 of the master plan for photograph of current park sign, not related to these elements.

Are the facilities and the site being properly maintained? If no, please explain. Yes No

Is vandalism a problem at this site? If yes, explain the measures being taken to prevent or minimize vandalism. Yes No

POST COMPLETION SELF CERTIFICATION REPORT (GRANT #26-00816 PG 2)

POST COMPLETION SELF-CERTIFICATION REPORT - CONT'D

Is maintenance scheduled on a regular basis? If yes, give schedule. If no, please explain. Yes No
Checked daily (M-F) and completed on an as needed basis.

GENERAL

Is a Program Recognition plaque permanently displayed at the site? If yes, please provide a photograph. (Not required for Bond Fund Grants) Yes No N/A

Is any segment of the general public restricted from using the site or facilities? (i.e. resident only, league only, boaters only, etc.) If yes, please explain. Yes No

Is a fee charged for use of the site or facilities? If yes, please provide fee structure. Yes No

What are the hours and seasons for availability of the site?
4 season park, Hours posted by sign from 6am-11pm.

COMMENTS (ATTACH SEPARATE SHEET IF MORE SPACE IS NEEDED)

This is the current 'Academy Park' today. These elements were removed a long time ago (unsure of exact date), grant history from DNR states that a letter had been to J. Powers indicating this.

CERTIFICATION

I do hereby certify that I am duly elected, appointed and/or authorized by the Grantee named above and that the information and answers provided herein are true and accurate to the best of my personal knowledge, information and belief.

<u>RHONDA NYE</u> Please print	<u><i>Rhonda Nye</i></u> Grantee Authorized Signature	<u>01/23/2020</u> Date
<u>Tonnetta S. Flynn</u> Please print	<u><i>Tonnetta S Flynn</i></u> Witness Signature	<u>01/23/2020</u> Date

Send completed report to: **POST COMPLETION GRANT INSPECTION REPORTS
 GRANTS MANAGEMENT
 MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
 PO BOX 30425
 LANSING MI 48909-7925**

POST COMPLETION SELF CERTIFICATION REPORT (GRANT #26-01023 F4 PG 1)



Michigan Department of Natural Resources - Grants Management

PUBLIC OUTDOOR RECREATION GRANT POST-COMPLETION SELF-CERTIFICATION REPORT

*This information required under authority of Part 19, PA 451 of 1994, as amended;
the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, 78 Stat. 897 (1964); and Part 715, of PA 451 of 1994, as amended.*

GRANT TYPE: MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND CLEAN MICHIGAN INITIATIVE
 (Please select one) LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND RECREATION PASSPORT BOND FUND
 Village of Benzonia - Benzie County

GRANTEE: _____

PROJECT NUMBER: 26-01023 F4

PROJECT TYPE: Park Improvements

PROJECT TITLE: Kiwanis Park Tennis Court

Overhead wire relocation

PROJECT SCOPE: Tennis courts (2)

To Be Completed By Local Government Agency (GRANTEE)

Name of Agency (Grantee) Village of Benzonia	Contact Person Rhonda Nye	Title Clerk
Address PO Box 223, 1276 Michigan Ave	Telephone (231) 882-9981	
City, State, ZIP Benzonia	Email benzonia9981@att.net	

SITE DEVELOPMENT

Any change(s) in the facility type, site layout, or recreation activities provided?
 If yes, please describe change(s). Yes No

Has any portion of the project site been converted to a use other than outdoor recreation? If yes, please
 describe what portion and describe use. (This would include cell towers and any non-recreation buildings.) Yes No

Are any of the facilities obsolete? If yes, please explain. Yes No

SITE QUALITY

Is there a park entry sign which identifies the property or facility as a public recreation area?
 If yes, please provide a photograph of the sign. If no, please explain. Yes No
Refer to page 52 of the master plan for photograph of current park sign.

Are the facilities and the site being properly maintained? If no, please explain. Yes No

Is vandalism a problem at this site? If yes, explain the measures being taken to prevent or minimize vandalism. Yes No

POST COMPLETION SELF CERTIFICATION REPORT (GRANT #26-01023 F4 PG 2)

POST COMPLETION SELF-CERTIFICATION REPORT - CONT'D

Is maintenance scheduled on a regular basis? If yes, give schedule. If no, please explain. Yes No
Checked daily (M-F) and completed on an as needed basis.

GENERAL

Is a Program Recognition plaque permanently displayed at the site? If yes, please provide a photograph. (Not required for Bond Fund Grants) Yes No N/A

Is any segment of the general public restricted from using the site or facilities? (i.e. resident only, league only, boaters only, etc.) If yes, please explain. Yes No

Is a fee charged for use of the site or facilities? If yes, please provide fee structure. Yes No

What are the hours and seasons for availability of the site?

4 season park, Hours posted by sign from 6am-11pm.

COMMENTS (ATTACH SEPARATE SHEET IF MORE SPACE IS NEEDED)

Tennis Courts still in use, current park sign and likely original LWCF recognition plaque from 1977 on tennis court fence.



CERTIFICATION

I do hereby certify that I am duly elected, appointed and/or authorized by the Grantee named above and that the information and answers provided herein are true and accurate to the best of my personal knowledge, information and belief.

RHONDA NYE
Please print

Rhonda Nye 01/23/2020
Grantee Authorized Signature Date

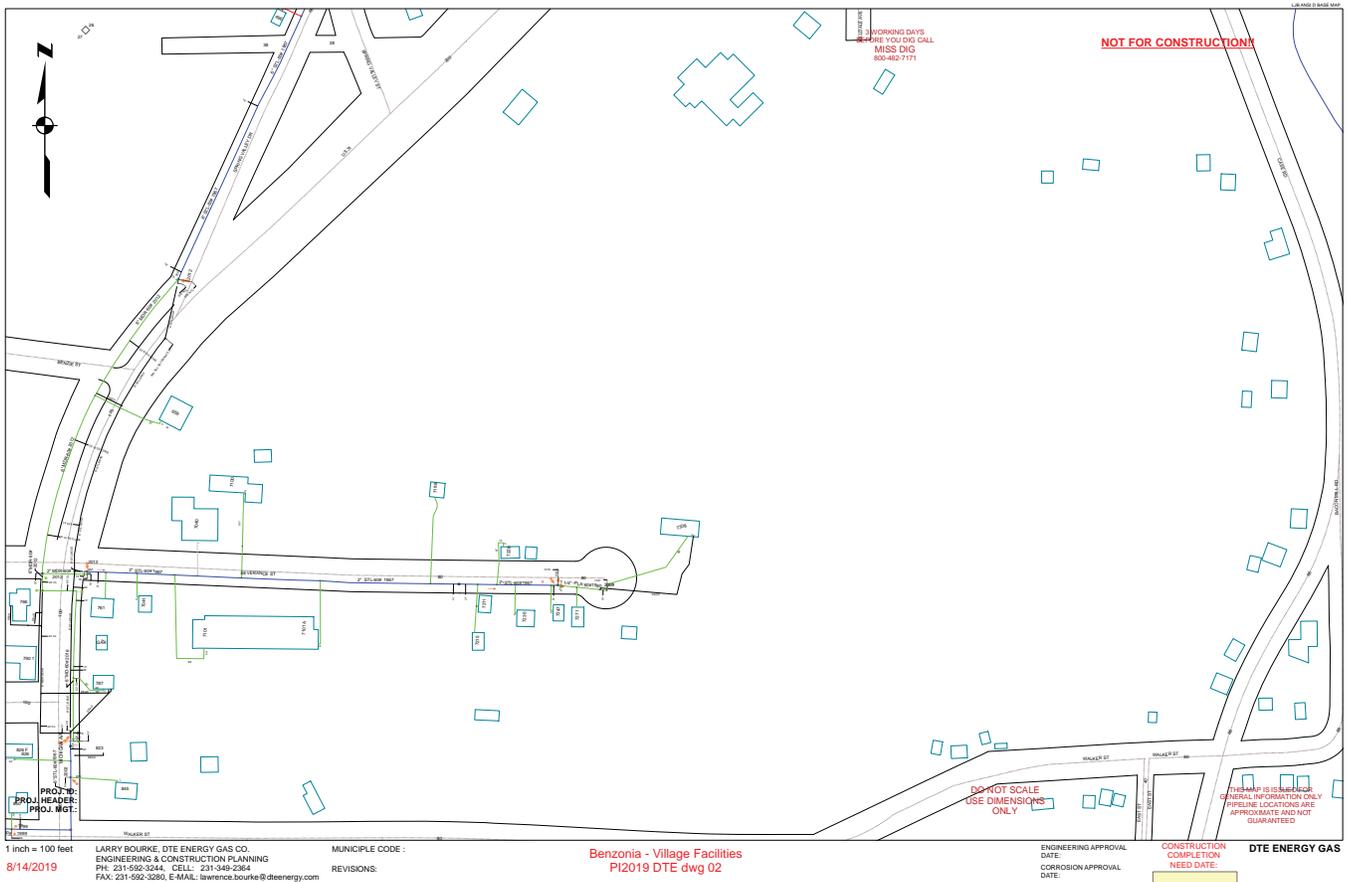
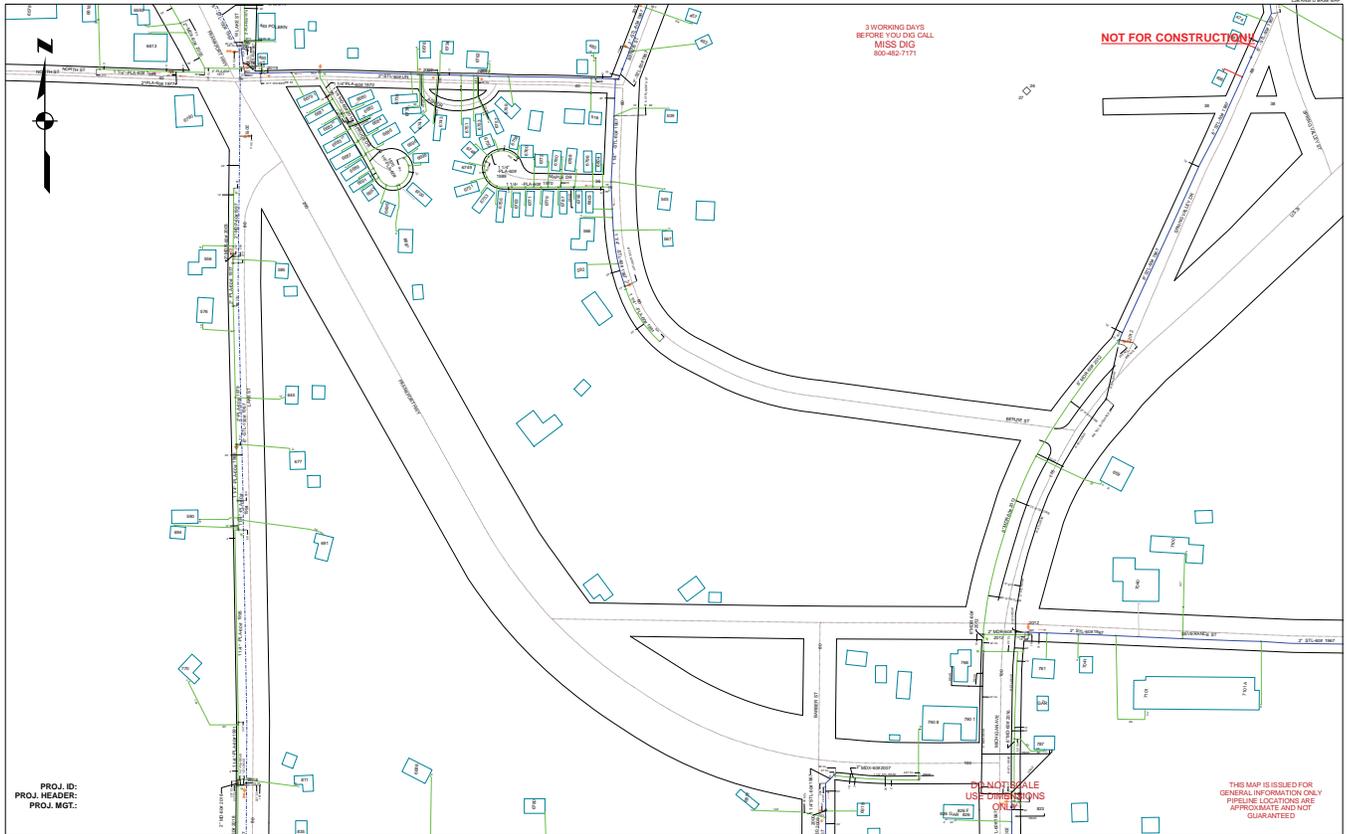
Bonnetta S. Flynn
Please print

Bonnetta S. Flynn 01/23/2020
Witness Signature Date

Send completed report to: **POST COMPLETION GRANT INSPECTION REPORTS
GRANTS MANAGEMENT
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
PO BOX 30425
LANSING MI 48909-7925**

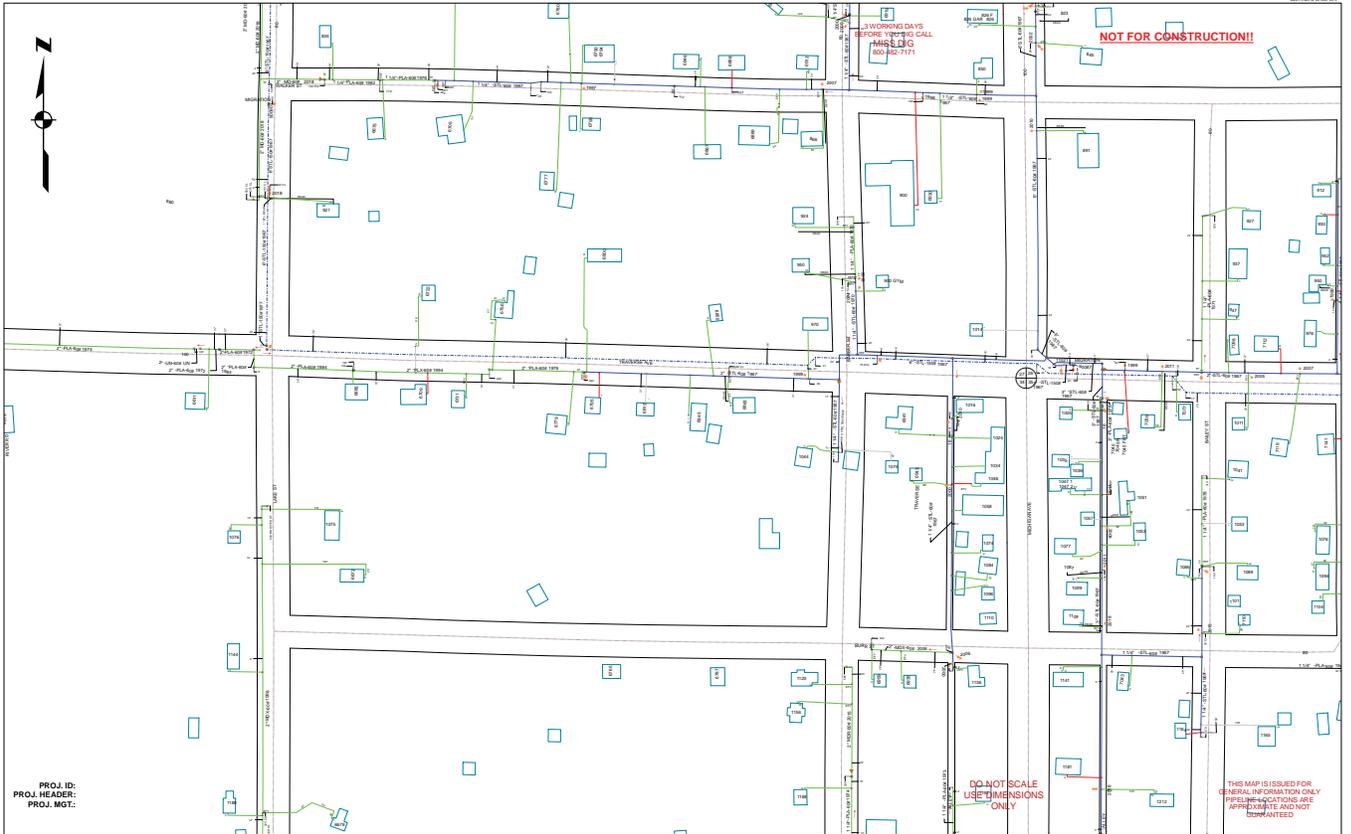
NATURAL GAS LINE PDF'S FROM DTE ENERGY (AUGUST 2019)

NOTE: MAPS TO BE INCLUDED WITH THE DIGITAL PROJECT FILES.

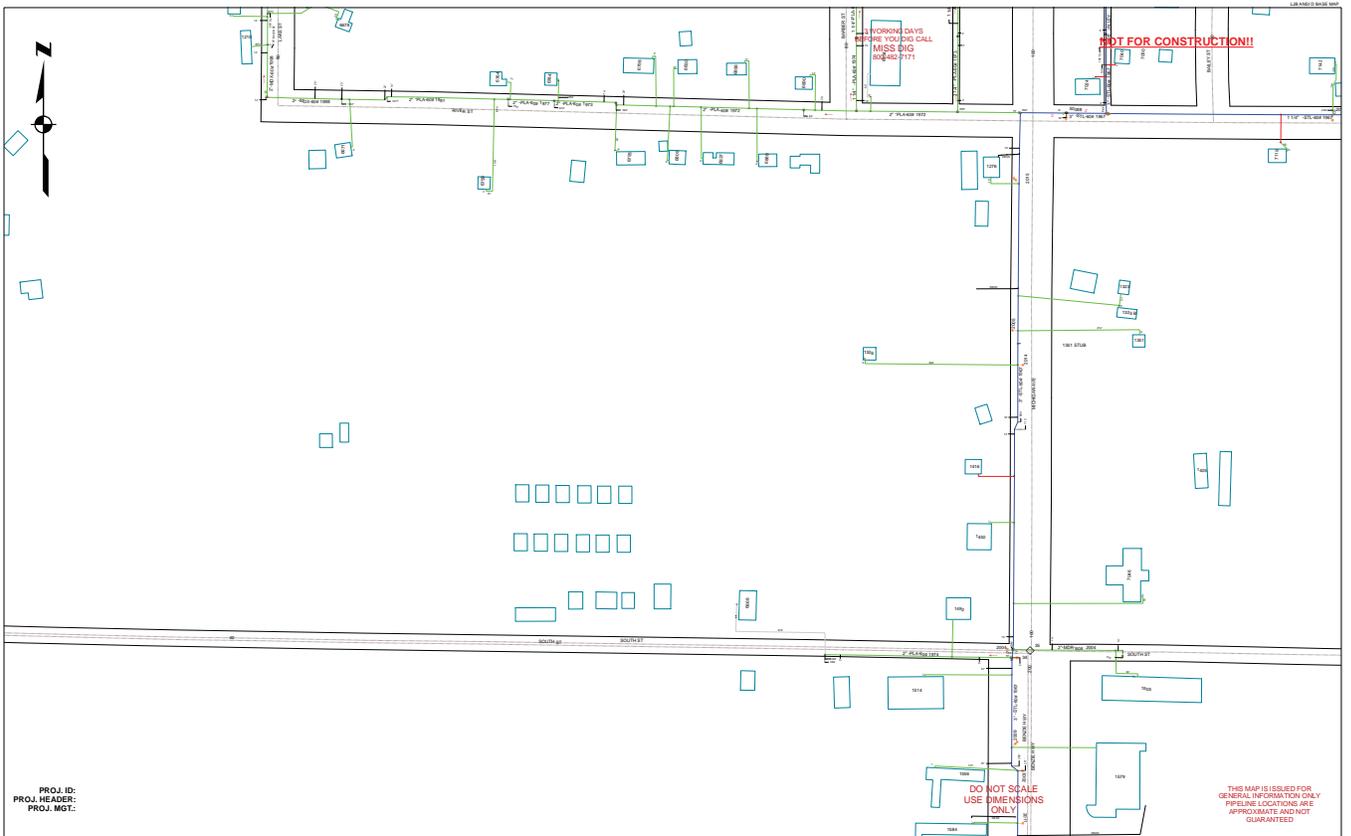


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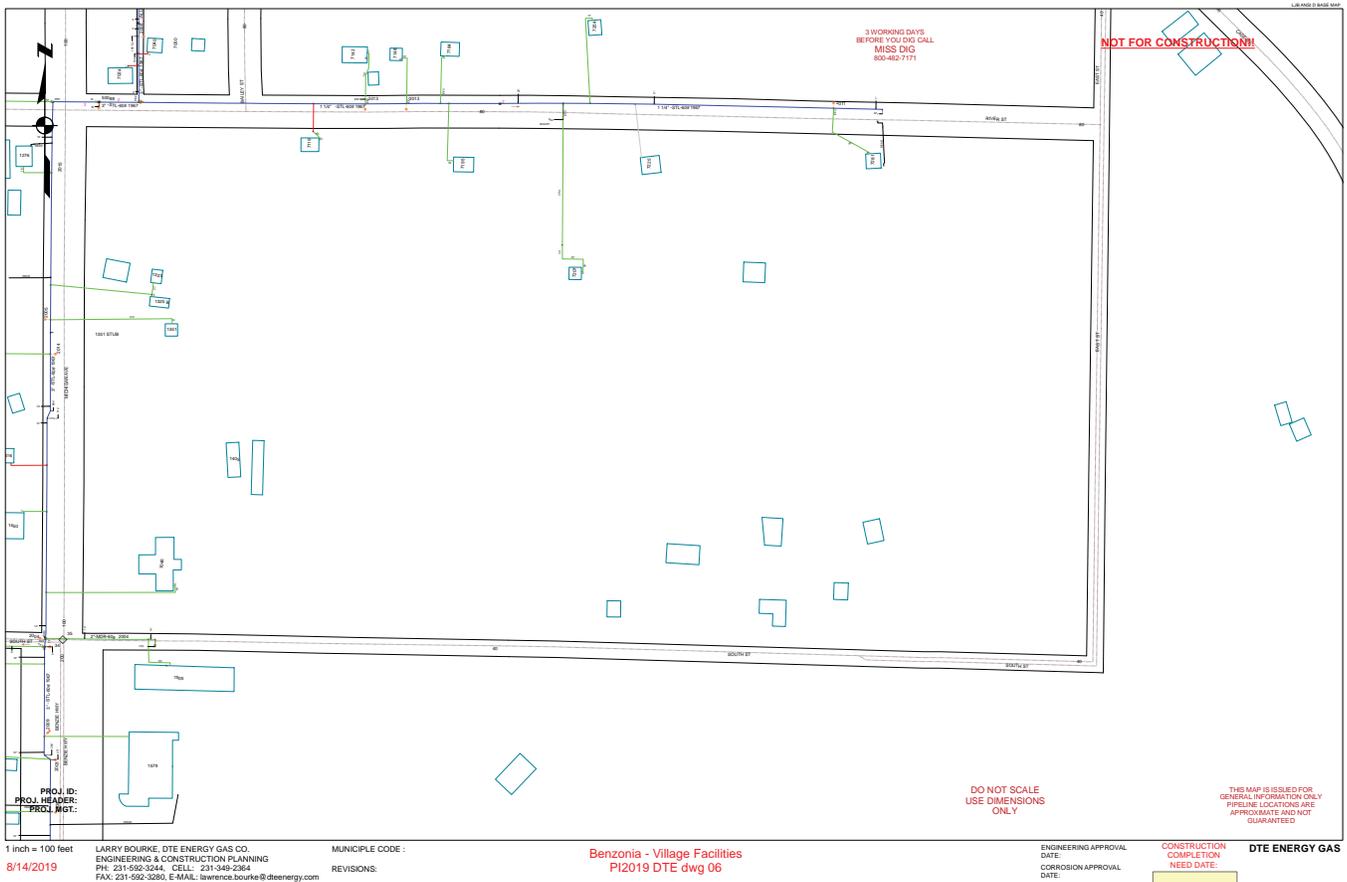
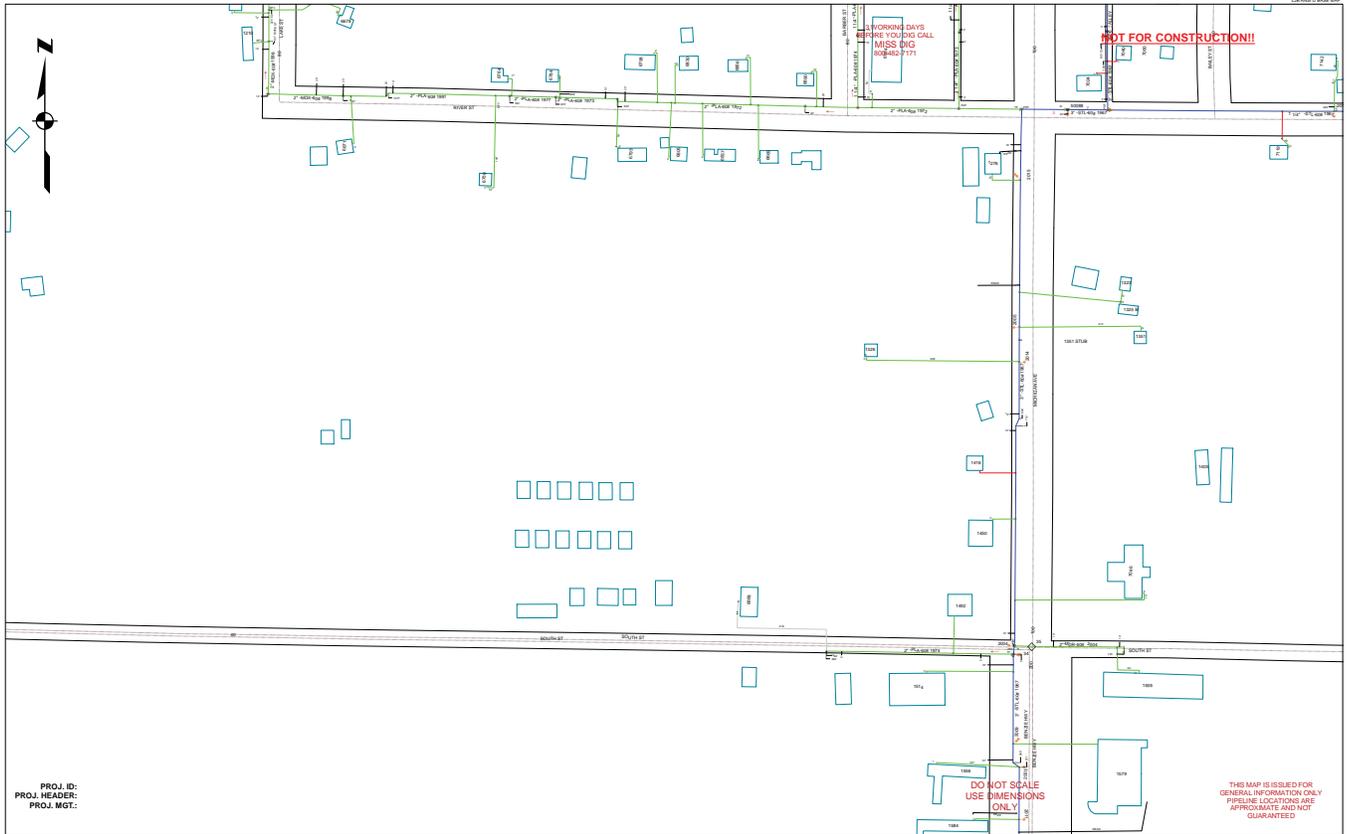
1 inch = 100 feet
 PROJ. ID: 8/14/2019
 PROJ. HEADER: LARRY BOURKE, DTE ENERGY GAS CO. ENGINEERING & CONSTRUCTION PLANNING PH: 231-592-3244, CELL: 231-349-2584 FAX: 231-592-3280, E-MAIL: lawrence.bourke@dteenergy.com
 PROJ. MGT.:
 MUNICIPAL CODE: Benzonia - Village Facilities
 REVISIONS: PI2019 DTE dwg 03
 ENGINEERING APPROVAL DATE:
 CORROSION APPROVAL DATE:
 CONSTRUCTION COMPLETION NEED DATE:
 DTE ENERGY GAS



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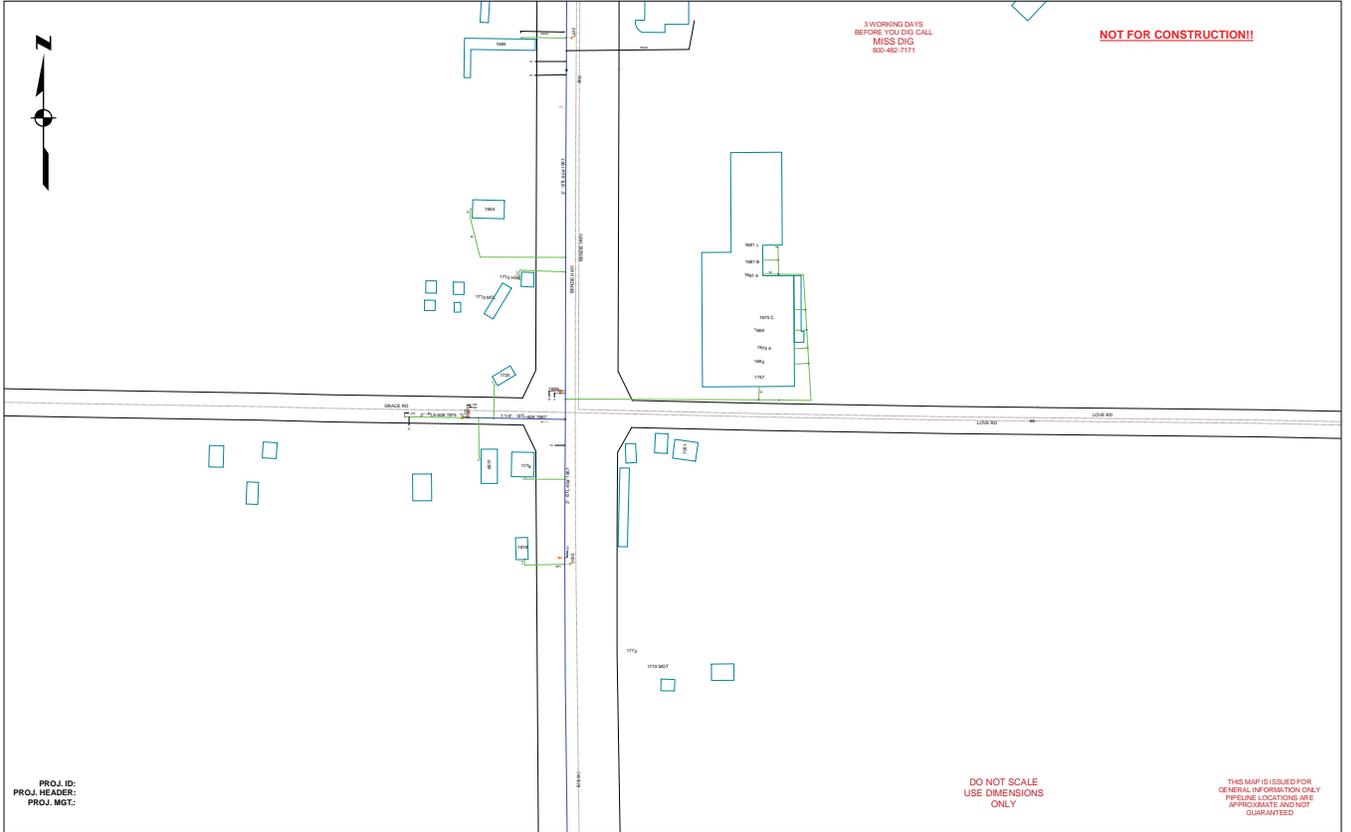
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MUNICIPALITY CODE: Benzonian - Village Facilities
 REVISIONS: P12019 DTE dwg 07

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 CORROSION APPROVAL DATE: []

CONSTRUCTION COMPLETION NEED DATE: []

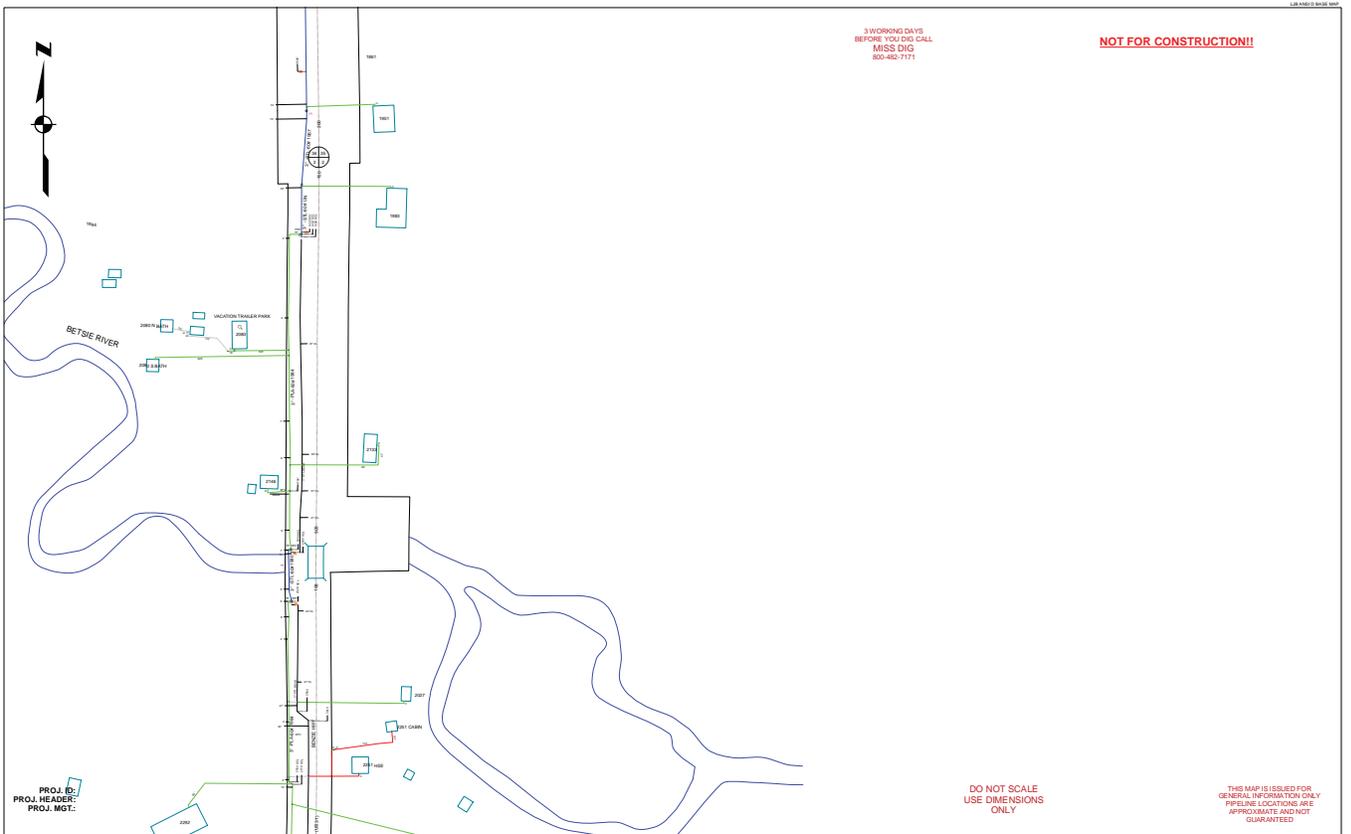
DTE ENERGY GAS

3 WORKING DAYS BEFORE YOU DIG CALL MISS DIG 800-452-7171

NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION!!

DO NOT SCALE USE DIMENSIONS ONLY

THIS MAP IS ISSUED FOR GENERAL INFORMATION ONLY PIPELINE LOCATIONS ARE APPROXIMATE AND NOT GUARANTEED



PROJ. ID: 8/14/2019
 PROJ. HEADER: 8/14/2019
 PROJ. MGT: 8/14/2019

LARRY BOURKE, DTE ENERGY GAS CO.
 ENGINEERING & CONSTRUCTION PLANNING
 PH: 231-592-3244, CELL: 231-349-2584
 FAX: 231-592-3280, E-MAIL: lawrence.bourke@dteenergy.com

MUNICIPALITY CODE: Benzonian - Village Facilities
 REVISIONS: P12019 DTE dwg 08

ENGINEERING APPROVAL DATE: []
 CORROSION APPROVAL DATE: []

CONSTRUCTION COMPLETION NEED DATE: []

DTE ENERGY GAS

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PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION

VILLAGE OF BENZONIA - PLANNING COMMISSION

RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING THE ADOPTION OF THE VILLAGE OF BENZONIA MASTER PLAN 2020, INCLUDING THE 5-YEAR PARK AND RECREATION PLAN

WHEREAS, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act of 2008 (MPEA) authorizes municipal planning commissions to prepare a Master Plan pertinent to the future physical development of the Village and to amend the plan as needed; and

WHEREAS, the Village of Benzonia (Village) Planning Commission has undertaken a planning process to determine the park and recreation needs and desires of its residents during a five-year period covering the years 2020 through 2025 and began the process of developing the park and recreation recreation plan portion in accordance with the most recent guidelines developed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and made available to local communities; and

WHEREAS, residents of the Village of Benzonia were provided with a well-advertised opportunity during the development of the draft plan and maps to express opinions, ask questions, and discuss all aspects of the Master Plan including the Park and Recreation Plan, which included an open house/charrette on July 23, 2019, followed by a public survey process; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission with a consultant has prepared a draft Master Plan including the Park and Recreation Plan for the Village; and

WHEREAS, the Village Council authorized the distribution of the draft Master Plan including the Park and Recreation Plan on November 4, 2019 to the general public and the various entities as required by the MPEA and DNR, for review and comment purposes; and

WHEREAS, the residents of the Village of Benzonia were provided with a well-advertised opportunity to review the final draft plan and maps to express opinions, ask questions, and discuss all aspects the Master Plan including the Park and Recreation Plan, which included an open house and presentation on November 14, 2019; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Master Plan including the Park and Recreation Plan was made available to the various entities and the general public as required by the MPEA and the DNR, and a public hearing thereon was held by the Planning Commission on January 23, 2020 pursuant to notice as required by the MPEA and the DNR; and

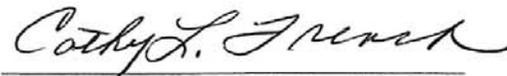
WHEREAS, the Planning Commission finds the proposed Master Plan including the Park and Recreation Plan as submitted and discussed for the public hearing is desirable and proper, and furthers the recreation, land use and development goals and strategies of the Village;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Village Planning Commission hereby resolves to recommend to the Village Council adoption of the new *VILLAGE OF BENZONIA MASTER PLAN 2020 INCLUDING THE 5-YEAR PARK AND RECREATION PLAN* as submitted and discussed for the public hearing, including all the text, charts, tables, maps and descriptive materials contained therein intended by the Planning Commission to form the complete Master Plan including the Park and Recreation Plan.

Adoption of the foregoing resolution was approved by a majority of the members of the Village of Benzonia Planning Commission by a roll call vote at a regular meeting of the Commission held on January 23, 2020 in compliance with the Open Meetings Act.

Motion by: Mary Occorner-Heitjan Second by: Destree Olson
Ayes: 6
Nays: 0

Resolution ADOPTED, January 23, 2020


Cathy French, President
Village of Benzonia Planning Commission

VILLAGE COUNCIL ADOPTION RESOLUTION

VILLAGE OF BENZONIA – VILLAGE COUNCIL

RESOLUTION 2020_02 ADOPTION OF THE VILLAGE OF BENZONIA MASTER PLAN 2020, INCLUDING THE 5-YEAR PARK AND RECREATION PLAN

WHEREAS, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act of 2008 (MPEA) authorizes municipal planning commissions to prepare a Master Plan pertinent to the future physical development of the Village and to amend the plan as needed; and

WHEREAS, the Village of Benzonia (Village) Planning Commission has undertaken a planning process to determine the park and recreation needs and desires of its residents during a five-year period covering the years 2020 through 2025 and began the process of developing the park and recreation recreation plan portion in accordance with the most recent guidelines developed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and made available to local communities; and

WHEREAS, residents of the Village of Benzonia were provided with a well-advertised opportunity during the development of the draft plan and maps to express opinions, ask questions, and discuss all aspects of the Master Plan including the Park and Recreation Plan, which included an open house/charrette on July 23, 2019, followed by a public survey process; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission with a consultant has prepared a draft Master Plan including the Park and Recreation Plan for the Village; and

WHEREAS, the Village Council authorized the distribution of the draft Master Plan including the Park and Recreation Plan on November 4, 2019 to the general public and the various entities as required by the MPEA and DNR, for review and comment purposes; and

WHEREAS, the residents of the Village of Benzonia were provided with a well-advertised opportunity to review the final draft plan and maps to express opinions, ask questions, and discuss all aspects the Master Plan including the Park and Recreation Plan, which included an open house and presentation on November 14, 2019; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Master Plan including the Park and Recreation Plan was made available to the various entities and the general public as required by the MPEA and the DNR, and a public hearing thereon was held by the Planning Commission on January 23, 2020 pursuant to notice as required by the MPEA and the DNR; and

WHEREAS, the Village Planning Commission finds the proposed Master Plan including the Park and Recreation Plan as submitted for the public hearing is desirable and proper, and furthers the recreation, land use and development goals and strategies of the Village and therefore recommend that the Village Council adopt the master plan as required by law;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Village Council hereby resolves to adopt the new *VILLAGE OF BENZONIA MASTER PLAN 2020 INCLUDING THE 5-YEAR PARK AND RECREATION PLAN* as submitted for the public hearing, including all the text, charts, tables, maps and descriptive materials contained therein intended by the Planning Commission to form the complete Master Plan including the Park and Recreation Plan; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, upon adoption copies of the final Master Plan shall be sent to the Benzie County Planning Commission, Regional Planning Authority and Michigan DNR.

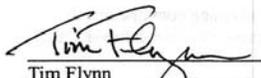
Adoption of the foregoing resolution was approved by a majority of the members of the Village of Benzonia Village Council by a roll call vote at a special meeting of the Council held on January 24, 2020 in compliance with the Open Meetings Act.

Adoption of the foregoing resolution was moved by Council member FRENCH and seconded by Council member HEYN.

Voting for: HEYN, MISNER, FRENCH, COOK, FLYNN

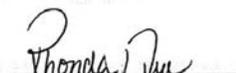
Voting against:

The Village President declared the resolution adopted.


Tim Flynn
Village President

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted at a special meeting of the Benzonia Village Council held on the 24th day of January, 2020.


Rhonda Nye, Village Clerk