

Chapter Two: Goals and Objectives

The primary purpose of this Master Plan is to give direction about the future use of land in Grayling. For the Plan to work effectively, it must reflect the views of the people who live and own property in the City. This involves obtaining a consensus on a wide variety of issues through a citizen participation process. The goals and recommendations contained in this Chapter reflect feedback gathered through a community-wide survey.

Goals are statements of general issues and problems needing to be addressed in the City. Objectives are more specific action items that support each goal. To be effective, the Grayling Master Plan must include goals and objectives that reflect the community's desires, while balancing the rights of individuals and reflecting the technical evaluation carried out in preparing the Plan.

The following goals and objectives give this Master Plan the direction to guide the community in addressing present and future issues such as, retaining the character of the community, protecting the environment, accommodating new growth, and improving the quality of life offered in the City. They vary in complexity and are often interrelated or complementary. Therefore, it is important that they are viewed collectively and not individually.

OVERALL LAND USE

Goal: Create a diversified and balanced mixture of land uses that will support the economic vitality, tax base, and livability of the City.

- Provide residential areas that offer varying degrees of density and housing.
- Accommodate an acceptable amount of commercial and office development in various forms to balance the needs of nearby neighborhoods, the community as a whole, and the region.
- Encourage continued commercial development in both the central business district and general commercial districts, but maintain distinct boundaries to ensure they will not alter the character and vitality of the central business district.
- Continue to encourage community uses such as public and institutional facilities.

- Encourage the gradual elimination of non-conforming uses.

Goal: Promote redevelopment of vacant lots and dilapidated sites with buildings that would not otherwise be used, to maximize the desirability of the City.

- Support reuse and redevelopment of vacant, decaying or dilapidated sites throughout the City, especially the former Bear Archery property and select downtown structures.
- Develop an established list of improvement projects and locations that are targeted priorities for the City.
- Consider existing programs offered by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation that can be used to support the City's redevelopment strategy. Small business financing, tax abatements, Community Development Block Grants, neighborhood enterprise zones, and property rehabilitation programs can be used to achieve this objective.

RESIDENTIAL

Goal: Encourage in-fill development within existing neighborhoods that is consistent with the established character of the City.

- Enlist the aid of private developers and local housing organizations to renovate existing homes or to build new infill housing.

Goal: Provide high quality residential opportunities for all current and future residents of Grayling, regardless of age, income, lifestyle, physical capability or household type.

- Provide flexible regulations and consider ways to allow increased densities (such as by allowing garage apartments or in-law suites) that may be attractive to developers of affordable housing.
- Identify future areas for higher density residential development, including smaller condominium complexes, townhomes and apartments that will allow the City to absorb future population growth.
- Develop financial programs that facilitate and encourage home ownership.
- Encourage and maintain the level of safety of all residential neighborhoods. Street lighting, landscaping of public spaces, sidewalks and paths, orientation of dwelling "front rooms", and other residential design features can be effective in discouraging crime. Consider implementing the design principles of programs such as "Crime Prevention Through

Environmental Design (CPTED)”.

Goal: Promote the preservation of existing residential structures rather than complete reconstruction.

- Promote housing rehabilitation programs to facilitate use of existing quality housing as an alternative to new construction.
- Examine the existing housing stock and promote maintenance and rehabilitation of existing housing and residential neighborhoods
- Maintain an environment that encourages pride of ownership and contributes to an affordable and easily marketable housing stock.
- Consider implementing an awards program that recognizes landscaping and upkeep of individual residential properties or blocks.

Goal: Ensure that rental housing units are maintained and remain an asset to the community.

- Develop rental control regulations that address such issues as parking, general safety and maintenance of units in a fashion consistent with local building codes.
- Consistently enforce zoning, building code and property maintenance regulations to ensure that rental units do not become a blighting influence on the community.
- Create an ordinance implementing a rental property control program.

COMMERCIAL

Goal: Create vibrant, visually attractive commercial development that is consistent with the City’s established character and that provides a wide range of goods and services.

- Encourage local merchants to use the established design guidelines by helping to identify sources of funding or creative financing options.
- Create safe, convenient, and attractive pedestrian routes and green spaces throughout the City’s general commercial areas.
- Encourage the inclusion of residential uses within and around the central business district.
- Identify and emphasize structures and places of historical and/or architectural significance to support and reinforce the special identity and character of the community.
- Maintain and buffer the edges of commercial areas as related to

- surrounding neighborhoods.
- Promote private investment and use of the County's façade improvement program through continued investment in the central business district (i.e. the current streetscape improvements), provision of municipal parking, and through identification of unique financing programs.
 - Conduct a 'void' or 'gap' analysis to identify those businesses that might be attracted to one or more of the City's commercial or industrial areas.

Goal: Promote commercial development, redevelopment and business expansion that supports full employment of all residents and that provides income opportunities above the poverty level.

- Create new jobs through retention and expansion of existing employers and the attraction of new companies.
- Target both the light industrial and tourist/recreation sectors of the economy for new job creation.
- Market the industrial park as a desirable location for new and expanding business and manufacturing development.
- Work with local groups to expand the business and industrial development marketing program to support business attraction and retention consistent with the goals of this Plan.
- Work with local educators to provide technical, educational and job training support programs which match residents with industry needs.
- Recognize the City's unique opportunities in the medical, educational, arts and industrial markets, and strongly pursue development of a new college that, through focused curriculum, will support these disciplines.
- Promote business mentor programs and involvement in the schools.
- Develop and maintain cultural/historical facilities in keeping with community support.
- Continue to upgrade and enhance the City's transportation system to satisfy the needs of business, industry, tourists and residents.

Goal: Coordinate economic development efforts with other communities, the County and state, and enlist the resources and assistance from local and state agencies, organizations and advocacy groups to promote a positive and strong image for the Grayling area.

- Acknowledge the presence of Camp Grayling as a strong

member of the Grayling community, and support their continued expansion of operations and facilities by discussing any housing, transportation or community facility needs that may be accommodated in the City. Specific attention should be given to improving cross-access between the Camp and their ancillary training facilities during peak training times.

- Engage the State in discussions related to the future of State lands between M-72 and Four Mile Road, east of I-75. Sale of State-owned land around the City should be coordinated in a way that will enhance the City's efforts to create new industry, jobs and residential development.
- Work with local agencies such as the Grayling Promotional Association (GPA), the Grayling Recreational Authority (GRA), Crawford County Economic Development Partnership (CCEDP), the Grayling Chamber of Commerce, Grayling Visitor's Bureau, and others to present a coordinated economic development strategy for the City.
- If possible and desirable, work to merge the various business-oriented groups and organizations into one unified force that will benefit from shared knowledge, facilities, staff and resources.
- Coordinate efforts to promote the Grayling area to the mutual benefit of all jurisdictions.
- When negotiating franchise agreements with local cable, internet, and wireless communication providers, pursue city-wide broadband and Wi-Fi services that will attract additional commerce to the area.
- Expand the City Industrial Park, possibly through annexation.

Goal: Create a lively downtown environment that has a good variety of businesses and maintains historical character and aesthetics of the City.

- Promote Artisan Village Concept. Promote and support Grayling as a Select Level Michigan Main Street Community.
- Promote a blend of retail, office, and service establishments within the central business district, with a focus toward entertainment, speciality retail, small offices and government buildings. Residential uses may also fit into this mixture to help create activity after the businesses have closed for the day.
- Encourage multiple uses within buildings in the central business district, including retail or commercial on the first

floor and office and/or residential uses in upper floors. Market studies may be needed to ensure the proper mix of uses is achieved.

- Coordinate land use and development strategies for the downtown with local, regional and State organizations to promote continued investment and reinvestment.
- Encourage retention of public tenants that draw daily activity in the central business district, such as the post office and county offices.
- Pursue opportunities to move City Hall back to the central business district.
- As the County seat, continued and increased governmental presence in Grayling's central business district should be encouraged, including the development of shared City/County facilities that offer education and/or training capability.
- Recognize typical shopping patterns and habits, and work to maintain existing downtown anchors, such as the historic theatre or post office, in strategic locations that will maximize local spending and investment.
- Promote community events downtown, especially an Independence Day celebration, as a way of attracting business and attention to downtown shops.
- Promote visual and physical links, such as landscaped walkways, streetscapes, and public art, between the I-75 BL and Michigan Avenue to encourage through traffic to visit the downtown.
- Develop maintenance and design codes to improve or restore the façades of buildings in the downtown area.
- Institute a sign program, including wayfinding, street signs and welcome signs that reflect the historic character of downtown.
- Encourage outdoor seating areas for local restaurants and businesses in the central business district.
- Encourage the development of new residential neighborhoods in the vicinity of the central business district as a source of customers that can add vitality to the downtown.
- As a priority, land occupied by marginal buildings and uses should be redeveloped to benefit the downtown area.
- Encourage volunteer activity in the community, and utilize it for community events and festivals.
- Monitor the progress of the military airport's plans to realign their runway, and when complete, modify City ordinances

to allow taller, mixed-use buildings in the central business district.

INDUSTRIAL

Goal: Locate industrial land uses within existing industrial parks, where they can best be served by existing infrastructure.

- Target and recruit industrial development, that expands upon the existing assets of the community.
- Promote industrial use of rail lines, and work to expand them to accommodate the needs of area businesses.
- Expand on the existing timber industry by attracting complementary business, improving transportation routes, and marketing Grayling's lumber history.
- Attract global industry by improving internet, broadband, Wi-Fi and other technological services within the City.

MEDICAL COTTAGE INDUSTRY

Goal: Encourage continued growth in the medical industry, while maintaining the integrity of local neighborhoods, in order to sustain the local economy by providing valuable jobs and services to the community.

- Recognize the Grayling Mercy Hospital and Medical Complex as a regional employer, and continue to encourage their growth through private-public partnerships that benefit both the hospital and the community
- Preserve the residential character of the area by encouraging re-use and conversion of existing homes into new, smaller scale office facilities
- Allow multiple-lot consolidation to allow for building expansion into reasonably-sized office facilities that are consistent with the existing scale and architecture of the area. Large, institutional style buildings that are inconsistent with the cottage industry concept should be located either in the general business or industrial district.

ENVIRONMENTAL

Goal: Provide local services that encourage environmental stewardship and engages local citizens in preservation efforts.

- Develop a community recycling program that provides residents, either for free or for a nominal fee, curbside

- collection service or convenient drop-off locations.
- Officials should make purchase of recycled products a priority over other alternatives.
 - Expand upon the City's current brush pick-up program to include composting of material that can be used on City grounds or offered to residents.
 - Develop a vegetation management plan for the City of Grayling that identifies compatible vegetation that is recommended for residential use, and educate the public on the importance of riparian buffers and vegetative cover in protecting the quality of local water resources.
 - Educate local residents on their role as stewards of the land by providing resource information and preservation guidebooks.

Goal: Protect and improve the quality of existing natural resources.

- Acquire conservation easements (where possible) for open space to the banks of rivers in developed areas and to wetlands, including buffers along edges of wetlands.
- Suggest best management practices and guidelines for both residential and commercial stewardship. This can include suggestions for landscaping, site design, storm water management, fertilization and maintenance of all property in the City.
- Encourage restoration of riparian corridors and vegetative canopies to prevent siltation and preserve cold water temperatures for aquatic life in the Au Sable River.

Goal: Encourage integration of natural features into site development as aesthetic and functional features, while protecting and improving their quality.

- Support ongoing efforts to promote sensitive and responsible storm water management practices by encouraging natural design of basins and use of innovative technology (i.e. aqua swirl devices) aimed at removing sediment from storm water runoff.
- Incorporate access to natural features in the community into the City's non-motorized transportation system.
- Support developments that increase access and view of the AuSable River.
- Encourage developers to integrate existing natural features into the design of new developments.

TRANSPORTATION

Goal: Create a safe and coordinated transportation system adequate to support existing and future land uses, and economic vitality that balances traffic needs with actions to ensure the City remains an attractive place to live.

- Promote use of all modes of transportation including the automobile, bicycle, pedestrian and small bus or van through capital investment and cooperative efforts with neighboring communities, transit providers and trail enthusiasts.
- Continue to enforce local laws to improve traffic safety along the main routes through the City of Grayling.
- Employ current design philosophy and technology to improve the design of local roads and to improve the safety and efficiency of the system.
- Ensure adequate public and private parking is available to meet business, resident and visitor needs.
- Encourage use of a “bypass” route for truck traffic that uses the interchange at N. Down River Road and routes along M-93 and M-72, to alleviate traffic congestion on the business loop within the City during peak visitor travel periods.
- Work with MDOT and the County Road Commission toward maintaining the long-term function and capacity of the local highway system and ensuring proper road connections.
- Encourage MDOT to modify the I-75 interchanges into the City into full-directional designs.
- Pursue development of a continuous system of pathways and sidewalks as an alternative travel mode and to improve the City’s quality of life.
- Use access management and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) to maximize the safety, efficiency and lifespan of roadways, and reduce the need for significant capital investments.

Goal: Improve the visual appearance of the City through street and related improvements.

- Upgrade the appearance of key corridors through tree preservation, and upgraded site design standards.
- Prepare a detailed streetscape plan that expands upon recent beautification efforts to address safety and aesthetics of the City’s primary roadways and parking lots. Signage should coordinate with way finding programs, and recommendations for street trees, road medians, bike lanes, traffic signals or other

amenities should be included.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Goal: Promote the Grayling area as an attractive place to live and visit that provides a wide range of recreation opportunities to its residents, vacationers and tourists alike.

- Enhance the natural beauty of the City by planting more vegetation, making its physical assets both accessible and memorable to visitors.
- Coordinate with the County and neighboring communities to develop a regional indoor recreation facility for area residents that includes a swimming pool or ice rink, along with general purpose gymnasiums and rooms for events.
- Consider ways to attract or provide a regional conference center that includes facilities for larger events, trade shows, theatre performances, dances, banquets, etc.
- Ensure recreational facilities are accessible to all residents and visitors, and work toward providing additional facilities or services, as needed, for physically disabled or aging residents.
- Provide areas along the Au Sable River for public gathering and recreation within or adjacent to the central business district that are appropriate for events, festivals, or small entertainment venues. These areas should include proper facilities to accommodate such events, including a small band shell, pavilions or stands for local vendors.
- Improve access to the River through expanded riverside board walks and new canoe/kayak launches.
- Bury all power, telephone and cable lines as opportunities arise.
- Consider ways to accommodate snowmobile activity within the City, including directional signage, partnerships with local restaurants, and especially regulatory modifications to allow use of City rights-of-way.