

**Village of Pentwater
Planning Commission**

**Pentwater Township
Planning Commission**

***The Pentwater Community
Master Plan***

***Adopted
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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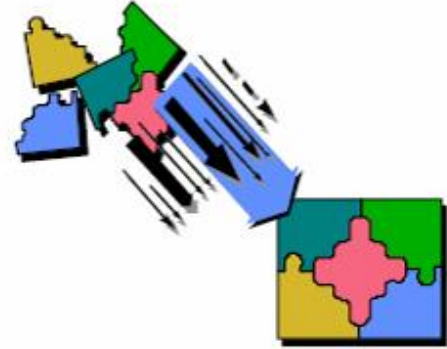
- Overall Total Results
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CHAPTER 1

THE MASTER PLAN



WHAT IS A MASTER PLAN?

Building a community is a little like putting a jigsaw puzzle together; each land use decision fits another piece of the puzzle. Just as we use the top of the jigsaw puzzle box to guide our progress, the Master Plan provides us with a guide for fulfilling our vision of the future.

Master Plans are authorized by the Michigan Township Planning Act (168 of 1959) and the Municipal Planning Act (285 of 1931). These Acts describe the basic purposes and requirements of Master Plans including the need to:

- promote the public health, safety, and general welfare;
- encourage the use of resources in accordance with their character and adaptability;
- avoid the overcrowding of land by buildings or people;
- lessen congestion on public roads and streets;
- facilitate provision for a system of transportation, sewage disposal, safe and adequate water supply, recreation and other public improvements; and
- consider the character of each township and its suitability for particular uses judged in terms of such factors as the trend in land and population development.

The reasons Master Plans are adopted vary widely. Pentwater Village and Township officials have recognized the need to preserve the character of the community that first drew them, and others, here.

Although the Master Plan has little legal authority, it is a powerful expression of a community's intentions for the future. Once adopted, it is used to guide Planning Commission, Township Board and Village Council decisions regarding issues which affect the use of land.

(The Master Plan) is a powerful expression of the Pentwater Community's intentions for the future.

The dedication of community leaders and the desire of each Planning Commission, the Township Board, and the Village Council members to preserve the qualities that they felt made Pentwater unique spawned this planning process.

THE “PENTWATER COMMUNITY” PLAN

Shortly after beginning work on Pentwater Township’s Master Plan, the Village of Pentwater requested to join in the planning process to develop a single, unified Plan which could be adopted and followed by each community. Both communities recognized that the concept of “community” went beyond the unseen municipal boundaries which separate Township and Village. The people of the “Pentwater Community” work, shop, relax, and go to school everyday without regard to the artificial lines that separate one political jurisdiction from another.

It was especially encouraging to have two neighboring communities recognize their interdependency and wish to build on their common strengths, while preserving their individual identities. The Village and Township of Pentwater are linked physically, economically, and geographically. Their shared interests in maintaining a high standard of living, protecting those assets that make each community what it is, and charting a future course to preserve their distinct character led to the formulation of a joint planning effort.

This effort demanded a process that recognized and respected the individual needs, interests, and priorities of each community; but created an atmosphere for joint decision-making on matters of mutual interest and concern.

The Planning Commissions

Planning Commission members are selected to be representatives of major interests in their community. But Planning Commissioners are not legal representatives of area residents; Township Board and Village Council members fulfill that role. Planning Commissions, through the Planning Acts, are delegated the responsibility of completing and adopting the Master Plan; in fact, the Plan need not be adopted by the Township Board or Village Council. However, for the Plan to be effective, the ongoing participation of elected Pentwater Community representatives was critical, making them important players in the formulation of the Master Plan. After all, these officials would later be asked to implement the Plan through the adoption of various ordinances.

THE PUBLIC PLANNING PROCESS

The Pentwater Township and Village Planning Commissions wanted the Master Plan to reflect the desires of the people of the community concerning future development. This input was first obtained through a mailed survey sent in the summer of 1996 to randomly selected households in the Township and Village, including seasonal residents. The survey asked a number of questions about growth attitudes, needed improvements, and concerns about the future.

In all, the survey was initially sent to a random sample of seasonal and permanent residents. Other copies were picked up by a number of residents and returned. The results of the survey helped the Planning Commission formulate the Vision and Values (as described in Chapter 2) that will be used to guide land use decisions. A joint public hearing was also held to receive input on the draft of the Plan.

THE MASTER PLAN PROCESS

Community Issues

A workshop was held to educate both Planning Commissions about the process and use of a Master Plan. Part of this workshop involved a discussion of those issues which affect land use and development attitudes in the community. These concerns ranged from the preservation of natural features to ensuring that the Township and Village coordinate planning efforts. Many of these issues formed the basis for the Community Survey.

Attitude Survey

The next step was the development, mailing, and tabulation of a community wide Attitude Survey. As noted earlier, the survey was used to gather concerns regarding the future development of the area. The results of the Survey may be found in the Appendix.

Data Collection

The purpose of data collection is to form a picture of the community as it is now, compared to how it used to be. The data collected and included in the Plan related directly to the character of the area. Census data about the population, economic, and social status of residents was collected. In addition, a land use survey was conducted to determine existing uses of land to form a picture of land use pattern development over past decades.

Existing land use can speak volumes about past development policies and how effectively they were implemented. Even a cursory look at mapped land uses will present an interesting picture of how the community has developed. For example, incompatible uses scattered throughout the community, with some close to residential uses, may be a reflection on the wisdom of past zoning and land use decisions, and could complicate planning of those mixed areas.



Another important part of the character of Pentwater is embodied in its natural features (wetlands, topography, woodlands, floodplain, soils, etc.). Information regarding the natural resources of the community was collected and analyzed to highlight those areas which should be treated sensitively. Much of the information collected as part of this analysis is contained in Chapter 2, The Pentwater Community.

Community Vision and Goals

Determining the overall direction of the Plan, and that of the community, took place during a goal setting process. The goals for the Plan were structured around the major issues and desires as expressed by both Planning Commissions, the Township Board and Village Council, as well as the Community Survey. A Town Meeting was held to begin development of the initial set of goals and a Vision Statement. These statements and ideas were later formed into a community Vision, a description of Core Values, and a set of Goals. These are contained in Chapter 3.

Future Land Use

The land use information collected earlier was then reviewed to determine broad land use patterns; where residential uses were concentrated, where commercial uses had developed; and how public use of land had influenced development.

Environmental conditions were also considered in future land use planning. The Commissions determined earlier those areas which were environmentally sensitive, appropriate limitations on the intensity of development that should be allowed to occur, and the need for the creation of additional development regulations.

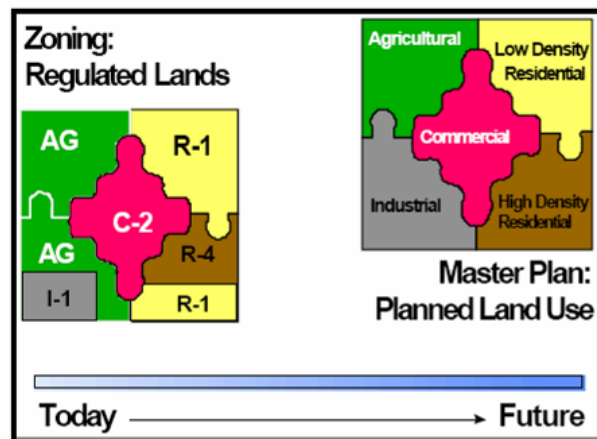
The establishment of goals and objectives played an important part in determining future land use patterns. The Future Land Use map reflects these goals. In addition, future land use considers:

- environmental constraints;
- uses needed in the community;
- watershed management;
- capacities of community services; and
- effects on existing land uses.

A description of existing and future land uses is contained in Chapter 4.

MASTER PLAN AND ZONING

The relationship between the Master Plan, and the zoning map of the Zoning Ordinance is a critical one. The primary difference between the two is a matter of timing. The Master Plan shows the intended use of land at the end of the planning period, which could be as long as 20 years in the future; the Zoning Ordinance shows land as it is intended to be used today. Accordingly, the two maps will normally not be identical.



Another point of confusion with property owners is the effect that a Master Plan has on the current use of their land. The Master Plan is a policy document; its adoption does not regulate or change the use of land. Only a change to the Zoning Ordinance, through a rezoning, can change the uses to which the land may be put, or change the regulations affecting that land.

However, the Master Plan should be taken as a strong indication of the intent of the community to coordinate the Plan's land use and the Zoning Ordinance's designation of land into various zoning districts. Rezoning requests will normally be required to be consistent with the land use designation of the Master Plan.

CONCLUSION

The leaders of the Pentwater Community have a responsibility to look beyond the day-to-day zoning issues and provide guidance for land use and development through the Master Plan. A properly developed, well thought-out Master Plan can be of great value by providing tangible benefits in improved quality of life, more efficient use of financial and other resources, a cleaner environment, and an economically healthy community.

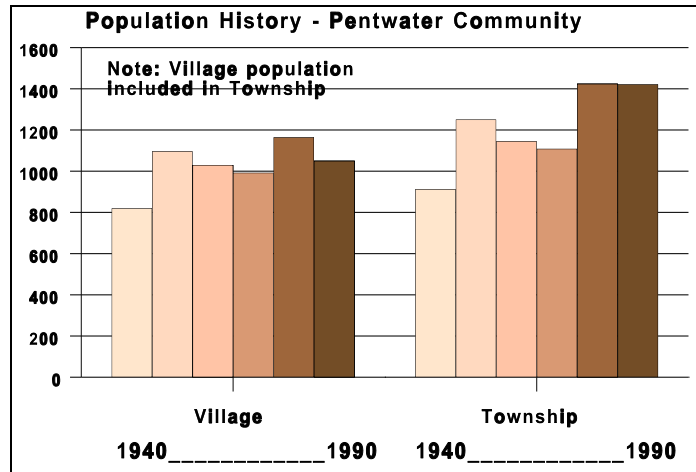
However, the value of the Master Plan is directly related to a willingness to follow its course, and diligence in keeping the plan current and relevant to today's conditions. It is hard work; but the rewards make the effort worthwhile.

CHAPTER 2 THE PENTWATER COMMUNITY

Demographics

Population Growth

The combined population of the Township and Village of Pentwater grew by 56% from 1940 to 1990. The largest gain occurred between 1940 and 1950 when the population increased by 37 percent. However, from 1950 to 1970 there was a substantial decrease in population of 11 percent. After 1970 the population increased 28% and stayed the same through 1990.



The Census only reflects year round residents and does not account for the effects seasonal residents have on the total population. Also, Township population figures include both Township and Village residents. A comparison of the above chart indicates, however, that population growth has taken place primarily in the Township. This is in large part due to the lack of developable land remaining within the Village.

Population projections for Oceana County predict that the population of the county will increase by 8% to 24,300 persons by the year 2000, and rise by another 5% by the year 2010 to 25,500 persons.

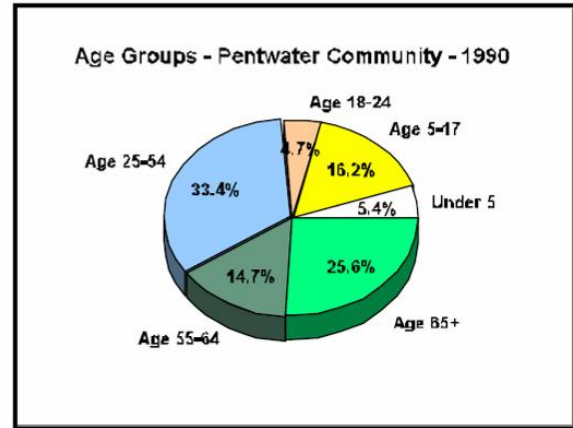
How much of that growth may take place in Pentwater depends on a number of factors, including lifestyle, commuting habits, economic influences, and housing availability. Many of these factors are outside the control of Pentwater, and others may only be marginally influenced by actions of the community.

Housing availability and economic conditions can be somewhat influenced by providing land use opportunities for new homes and businesses.

<i>Oceana County Population Estimates</i> <i>(Source: State of Michigan)</i>		
<i>Year</i>	<i># of persons</i>	<i>Percent Increase</i>
1990	22,454	NA
2000	24,300	8%
2010	25,500	5%

Age

The age of Pentwater’s residents provides an indication of economic, transportation, recreational and other community needs for certain age groups. The median age for the Pentwater Community was considerably higher in 1990 than Oceana County (which itself increased from 30.0 in 1980 to 33.5 in 1990). The median age for Pentwater Township increased from 40.8 in 1980 to 45.1 in 1990; the Village increased from 40.8 in 1980 to 46.3 in 1990.



While the age shift at the county level is reflective of the national trend of a generally aging population, the greater increase in median age for Pentwater indicates other influences as well. The median age for the Pentwater Community reflects both population stability and the community’s desirability as a retirement destination; the 1990 Census counted over 25% of Community’s residents over age 65, compared to Oceana County which had just under 14% of its total population over 65. The median age of the Pentwater Community will likely continue to increase, although possibly at a more modest rate, as more individuals retire to the Pentwater area to enjoy the benefits of the Lake Michigan shoreline and its related tourism/recreation atmosphere.

In 1990 the percentage of residents age 25-64 showed a modest increase from 1980. This portion of the population may have migrated to Pentwater to enjoy the charm of the Lake Michigan shoreline and its many recreational opportunities. On the other hand, the percentage of young adults ages 18-24 is relatively low, which could indicate a general outward migration.

Education

The Pentwater Community had the highest percentage of individuals over the age of 25 with a high school or college degree in Oceana County in 1990. Eighty-five and 84% of the population in the Township and Village, respectively, possessed a high school education and 24% and 21% had a college degree. Within Oceana County, 73% had a high school education and 10% had a college degree. The higher percentage

According to the 1990 Census, Pentwater had the highest education level of any community in Oceana County.

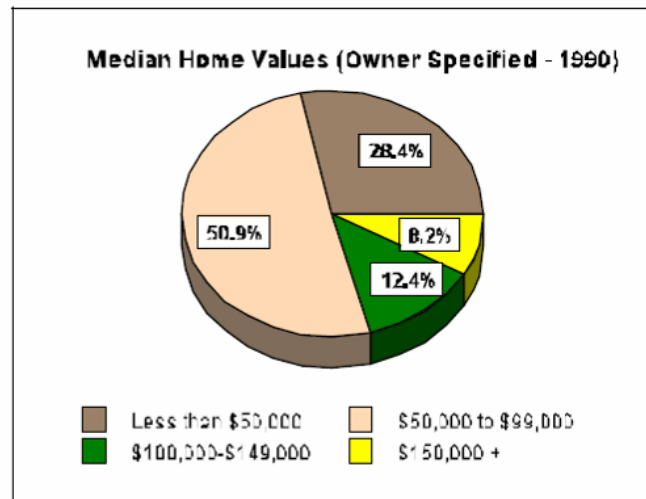
of education is likely related to the higher per capita and median household incomes in Pentwater, as compared to other townships within Oceana County.

Housing

The Pentwater Community had median home values that were considerably higher than those of the County. Values for Pentwater were in excess of \$64,000, compared to the Oceana County median of \$43,300. High value homes are commonly associated with desirable lakeshore property. This can be evidenced by Weare Township, Pentwater’s eastern neighbor, which had a median home value equal to that of the County.

However, the lakeshore does not offer a complete explanation. Other shoreline communities directly north and south of Pentwater; Golden Township, and Summit Township in Mason County, had owner specified values of \$44,400 and \$59,400 respectively. Clearly, Pentwater has something special to offer.

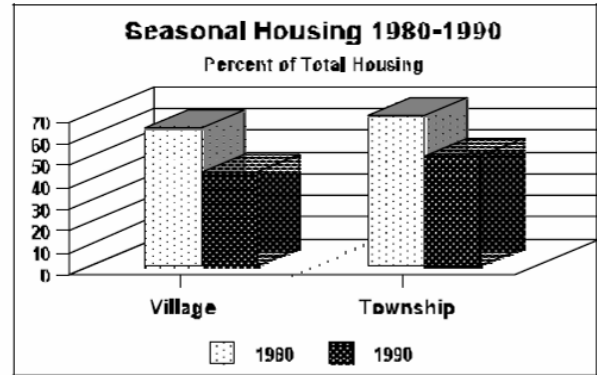
Pentwater’s “owner specified” home values for 1990 showed that only 28% of the homes were valued at less than \$50,000, while over half of the homes were in the \$50,000 - \$99,000 range. A significant percentage of homes (21 percent) were valued at over \$100,000. The large number of high value homes in Pentwater reflects residents’ attitudes toward the community and adds a very distinct, prestigious atmosphere to an already very remarkable place. This atmosphere is also what attracts seasonal residents and tourists to visit Pentwater.



The 1990 census showed an average of 2.31 and 2.26 persons per household for the Township and Village, respectively, which is significantly lower than the 2.78 persons per household for the county. The lower number of persons per household for Pentwater reflects the higher median age, the fewer numbers of families in the lower age ranges, and the presence of retirement couples/singles.

Seasonal Homes

Seasonal housing made up nearly 50% of all available Pentwater housing in 1990, which was significantly higher than the county average of 27 percent. This is in part due to the accessibility of the Lake Michigan shoreline as well as the related recreational opportunities which attract seasonal residents.



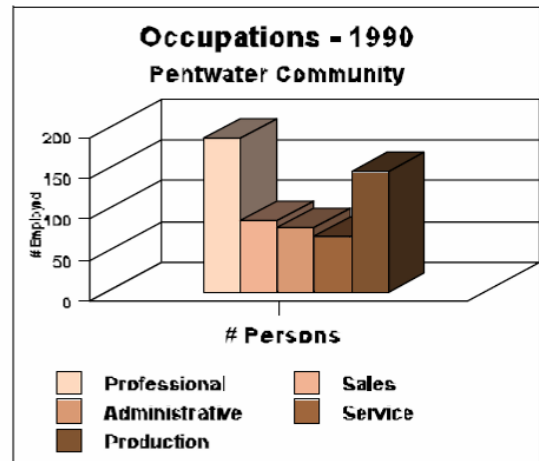
There was a 20% drop in the number of seasonal homes between 1980.

However, the percentage of seasonal housing dropped by nearly 20% between 1980 and 1990. This represents a shift in the housing choices of people in the area; seasonal residents are converting homes to year round use, or they are building new, permanent homes.

Economy

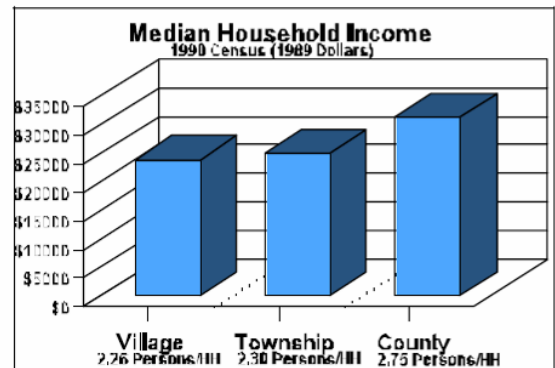
Employment

The occupations of Pentwater’s residents are generally weighted toward either professional or production jobs. The higher number of professional occupations is generally supported by the higher education levels noted earlier.



Incomes

Household incomes varied little between Pentwater and the rest of the county. The median household income in 1990 for Pentwater Township and Village was \$24,783 and \$23,636 respectively, while Oceana County’s median household income was \$22,383.



Household income numbers, however, are somewhat deceiving since the County averaged a

greater number of persons per household, lower median age, and higher number of working families. If considered in light of the higher number of retirees, combined with the smaller household size, it is likely that the average income would be relatively higher than the Village of Pentwater and that of the Township of the county as a whole. This is more directly reflected by the per capita income figures for 1990, which indicated the Township at \$13,144, the Village at \$12,590 and the County at \$9,582.

Natural Resources

Much of character as well as the economy of the Pentwater community is based on the area's natural features. Ninety% of the respondents to the Community Survey identified the area's natural features as a factor in their decision to move to or live in the area.

Some of the highest rated factors for living in or moving to Pentwater were directly related to natural and environmental quality, including natural features, rural surroundings, good air and water quality, quality of lakes and beaches, and nearness to Lake Michigan. There was also a strong desire to protect these elements and others, such as surface and groundwater quality, protecting the dunes, and preserving the natural and small town character of the Pentwater community.

Recognizing the importance of natural features to Pentwater residents and visitors, as well as the irreversible nature of the destruction of most of these resources, efforts to either limit or prevent harmful development will be necessary. Two approaches may be used: preservation or integration. Preservation measures should be applied to those features which are so sensitive or so valued that any alteration would have a negative impact on the community in terms of aesthetics, environmental quality, and safety. In these areas, development should be either prohibited or restricted to those projects which would have a negligible effect on the environment.

Regulated wetlands is an example of lands which require preservation techniques. These lands generally do not require the implementation of local land use regulations to ensure their protection since state and federal laws have already been enacted. In some instances, communities have the option of implementing environmental regulations at the local level which are as strong or stronger than state laws to insure the protection of a particular resource.



Natural features may also be integrated into the development of a site, allowing them to remain as pristine as possible. The use of small wetlands as aesthetic features, or maintaining vegetated areas for screening or visual interest is becoming more common.

Shoreline Resources

Michigan's shoreline along the Great Lakes is a resource of statewide significance in many different ways: environmentally, there are a number of diverse and unique ecosystems which are present nowhere else in the world; economically, the tourism industry is one Michigan's largest industries; and socially, the recreational opportunities are countless.

Despite the beauty and benefits found along the shoreline, it can be hazardous as well. Flooding of low lying areas and exposure to extremes of winds and water leading to erosion can cause property loss and great expense to the state and local communities. Pentwater has significant areas of concern along the shoreline with areas of high erosion risk and large expanses of critical dunes.

High Risk Erosion Areas

Erosion is the result of natural forces; wind, water, and gravity either individually or collectively, wearing away at the earth's surface. Despite the beauty and benefits found along the Lake Michigan shoreline, exposure to extremes of temperature, wind and water can lead to severe erosion which has often times resulted in the loss of private property, recreational facilities, roads and other public facilities.

Pentwater has sizeable stretches of high risk erosion areas extending through parts of Sections 27 and 33 south of the Village, just north of the State Park, and further north in Sections 2 and 11. These areas are indicated on the Environmental Features map.

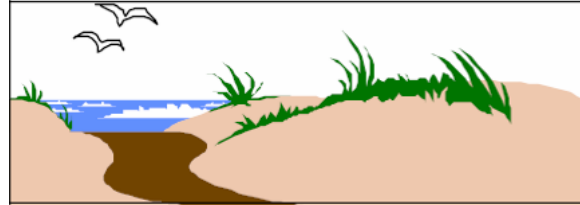
Part 323 of Act 451 of 1994, as amended (formerly PA 245 of 1970, as amended), discusses High Risk Erosion Areas (HREA) as part of the Great Lakes Shorelands Management Program. Part 323 provides public and private protection from the natural hazards of coastal erosion in addition to providing for the protection of fragile coastal areas.

High risk erosion areas are defined as areas along the Great Lakes and connecting waters where erosion has been occurring at a long-term average of one foot or more per year. Required setbacks are used to regulate and protect high risk erosion areas from development, and conversely, the destruction of private property as a result of erosion.

The Village of Pentwater and/or Pentwater Township may establish regulations for high risk erosion areas, with ordinance approval and oversight from Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ). Local regulations would replace state permitting duties and allow more stringent regulations above the minimums set by the State, if that is a desired community goal.

Critical Dunes

Sand dune protection and management is detailed in Part 353 of Public Act 451 of 1994, as amended, (formerly PA 222 of 1976) to ensure the preservation of critical dune areas from damage and destruction. Critical dunes are those areas which have been designated in the “Atlas of Critical Dunes” dated February 1989, prepared by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR). Critical dunes may be found along virtually the entire shoreline of Pentwater. Their depth varies significantly.



Critical dune areas are regulated by MDEQ, unless a local community has opted for regulatory authority. Protected dune areas slow the rate of shoreline erosion and provide habitat to rare plant species. Preservation of this important resource may be achieved through the enforcement of limitations on developable slopes, setbacks, vegetation, and development locations.

A permit is required prior to the removal of vegetation, land alteration, structural development, or silvicultural or recreational activities that can significantly alter the characteristics of a critical dune area. Each permit must also be accompanied by a soil erosion permit, sewage treatment permit (from the local health department), an approved tree cutting plan, and a site plan. All special use projects must also complete an environmental impact statement.

Water Resources

Floodplain

Flood or flooding may be defined as the overflow of surface water onto lands which are typically dry. Land may be inundated with water temporarily as a result of heavy precipitation; it may be covered with water as a result of overflow from a lake, pond, stream, and/or wetland; or the land may be flooded by natural runoff.



Those lands which hold a one% chance of being flooded as a result of overflow from an adjacent body of water within any given year during a 100-year period are considered to be in a floodplain. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) issues a floodplain map which includes the 100- year floodplain and that of the 500-year floodplain.

Floodplains have been established within the Village along portions of the lakeshores of Lake Michigan and Pentwater Lake. Several floodplain areas extend into the developed portions of the Village in or near the central business district.

Floodplain protection provides safe areas for overflow in times of heavy precipitation, limits property loss, reduces soil erosion, and maintains open space. As floodplains slow flood waters, nutrients and sediments sink and remain within the floodplain; creating a rich top soil. In addition, these areas also provide productive wildlife habitat including wetlands and travel corridors for animals.

Coordination of local regulations with those of the state are an important first step towards achieving appropriate and effective floodplain regulations. Part 3108 of Act 451 of 1994, as amended, defines the unlawful occupation, filling, or grading of floodplains, as regulated by MDEQ. Local governments can regulate floodplains through the use of building codes, zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, health regulations, and/or use of police powers. Implementation of protective measures should be used in conjunction with soil and sedimentation, stormwater, and wetland regulations.



Wetlands

Part 303 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act defines a wetland as: “*land characterized by the presence of water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances does support, wetland vegetation or aquatic life and is commonly referred to as a bog, swamp, or marsh..*”

Wetlands contribute to the quality of other natural resources, such as inland lakes, ground water, fisheries, wildlife and Lake Michigan. Wetlands serve as storage areas for excess water and nutrients; controlling floods and the aging of rivers, lakes and streams. In addition, acre for acre, wetlands produce more wildlife and plants than any other Michigan land cover type.

Part 303 seeks to protect wetland resources through regulating land which meets the statutory definition of a wetland, based on vegetation, water table, and soil type. Certain activities will require a permit from the MDEQ on a site which satisfies the wetland definition, including:

- filling or placing of material in a wetland;
- draining of water from a wetland;
- removal of vegetation, including trees, if such removal would adversely affect the wetland;
- constructing or maintaining a use or development in a wetland; and/or
- dredging or removing soil from a wetland.

Certain activities are exempt from permit requirements. In general, exempt activities include: fishing, trapping or hunting, hiking and similar activities; existing, established farm activities; and harvesting of forest products.

Wetland areas subject to regulation by the MDEQ include wetlands, regardless of size, which are contiguous to, or are within 500 feet of the ordinary high water mark of, any lake, stream, or pond; wetlands which are larger than five acres and not contiguous to any lake, stream, or pond; and those wetlands which are not contiguous to any lake, stream or pond, but are essential to the preservation of natural resources.

Generally, wetlands must be identified through individual site determinations. Accordingly, the low lying areas or wetlands shown on the Environmental Features map are for planning purposes and represent only indications of where some of these areas may be located.



Water Quality

Surface water features which are affected by land use include Lake Michigan, Pentwater Lake and their associated tributaries and streams. Soil erosion, impermeable surfaces (such as parking lots and roofs), soil contamination, and additional recreational pressures can impact surface water quality. The preservation of water quality is important for plant and animal life, tourism, and drinking water supplies.

Water resources are part of a fragile system which is potentially at risk. A combination of poor soils unsuitable for septic systems, a high water table, and an increasing amount of rural development, may begin to threaten the quality of the area's water supplies. Specific regulations

pertaining to soil erosion and sedimentation control practices, protection of wetland areas, increased water body setbacks, the use of greenbelts or buffers, and density reductions can assist in protecting water quality.

One of the most significant threats for surface water is soil erosion which deposits sediment into streams. One identified problem is the Pentwater River. The Initial Water Quality Statement completed as part of a grant application proposal contained the following information.

“The south branch of the Pentwater River is a designated cold water trout stream (Director’s Order titled ‘Designated Trout Streams for the State of Michigan’ DF-101.91). According to the Fisheries Habitat Biologist for the area, 1991 charter boat data shows that the Pentwater fishery is ‘excellent when compared to other Lake Michigan ports.’ The MDNR Fisheries Division attributes this to the substantial amount of natural reproduction occurring on the north branch of the Pentwater River, but not the south branch. According to the 1990 MDNR biological survey, ‘soil erosion and sedimentation within the watersheds of both the North Branch Pentwater River and South Branch Pentwater River have severely impacted stream quality by reducing available habitat for fish and macroinvertebrates.’ Also, MDNR records show that the access locations in the watershed experience heavy public use.”

The proposal continues by suggesting a watershed management approach to improving this situation. Watershed management involves a combination of land use and environmental analysis to determine actions to identify and address those areas which contribute to sedimentation of the stream system. A watershed approach is used to ensure that problems that are regional in nature are addressed, rather than attempting to find solutions on a site by site basis.

Another element to surface water protection is the need to moderate the effects that recreational activities have on surface waters.

Overuse of inland and lakeshore areas can, over time, degrade water quality through small gasoline and oil spills, stirring of lake bottom sediments, and other effects. These activities also have an effect on shoreline erosion, which further contributes to a decline in water quality.

Groundwater quality is also a concern since domestic water for nearly all of the township is supplied through individual wells. Any substance that is placed or injected in the ground has the potential to affect groundwater quality. A recent report by the Geophysics Study Committee of

the Commission on Physical Sciences, Mathematics, and Resources (National Research Council) stated:

“Groundwater contamination may be localized or spread over a large area, depending on the nature and source of the pollutant and on the nature of the groundwater system. A problem of growing concern is the cumulative impact of contamination of a regional aquifer from nonpoint sources (i.e., those that lack a well defined single point of origin), such as those created by intensive use of fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides. In addition, small point sources, such as numerous domestic septic tanks or small accidental spills from both agricultural and industrial sources, threaten the quality of regional aquifers.”

The *State of Michigan Comprehensive Groundwater Protection Program*, published by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality reports that:

“(A)bout half of all Michigan residents depend on groundwater as their primary source of fresh drinking water - either through public water supply systems or private drinking water wells. For many communities, groundwater is the only possible source of fresh water for drinking. Cleanup of groundwater contamination sites is expensive and slow, and often creates hardships for the persons affected.

Land use regulations, land acquisition, and education programs can play a key role in protecting groundwater. Examples of land use control activities include the following:

- Land use plans which take into account groundwater vulnerability;
- Zoning ordinance and site plan review standards related to aboveground secondary containment, interior floor drains, and other topics;
- Purchase of land and/or conservation easements to provide a wellhead protection buffer around municipal wellfields;
- Public education through public meetings, school-based classroom programs, library displays, cable television videos, public information flyers, and municipal newsletters.”

Groundwater protection will become increasingly important as population densities in areas not served by public utilities continues to increase. In rural areas like Pentwater, contaminated groundwater has a potentially devastating effect. As a result, maintaining appropriate densities of

development and proper disposal of sanitary sewer wastes are critical factors in ensuring the adequacy and quality of domestic water sources.

CHAPTER 3

VISION AND VALUES

VISION STATEMENT

The Pentwater Community will be one with strong core values based on our small town character and the natural features which are treasured by our residents and visitors. These values will be supported and nourished by a balanced pattern of land use and a stable economy which provides opportunities for our residents but does not detract from our core values.

Our Core Values are:

- Close communication between those who make decisions about our future and those affected by these decisions.
- A community which values its surroundings and pledges to protect those natural features which make up the fabric of our area.
- Maintaining small town values of local responsibility, involvement of people, and cooperation with our neighbors.

G O A L S

Land use decisions will support our core values through planned development which is low density and designed to create a community consistent with our small town character. These decisions will include the need to provide neighborhoods that are consistent with this character, yet offer a variety of housing that appeals to a wide range of individual and family circumstances.

Supporting Statement

Land use decisions will take into account our desire to maintain our core values. Our small town character is based on its people, who have common interests in preserving our natural features and historic values. The Community Survey indicated that 93% of those responding agreed that Pentwater has a small town character. Similarly, the natural features of the area were noted by

90% of respondents as a factor in their decision to move to or live in the area.

Achieving this goal will require the Pentwater Community to carefully consider the proper design and location for new development to ensure that natural features are not unnecessarily disturbed and that neighborhoods are created rather than housing developments. Our neighborhoods will encourage interaction between residents and continue the closeness of our citizens. At the same time, we recognize that homes need to be available for families covering a broad spectrum of individual situations.

Decisions regarding locations for new development will consider the capability of the Pentwater Community to provide a suitable level of public services, be of limited size and intensity, and preserve the natural character of the landscape.

Supporting Statement

The Pentwater Community lies in a rural area with limited available public services. Before new development is considered it will be important to identify the services that will be needed and the capability of the community to provide those services. With limited services available, development in the Township in particular will need to be of limited size and intensity. Large industrial or commercial developments can neither be economically supported or provided with the infrastructure necessary to accommodate them. Moreover, large, intensive land uses will tend to detract from the small town and natural character of our community.

Pentwater Township and Village will cooperate to ensure that new commercial development does not detract from the economic vitality of the Village business district.

Supporting Statement

In keeping with the development goals of the Township, it is appropriate to not create commercial centers that could detract from the central business district of the Village of Pentwater. This goal supports our efforts to keep a low density, small town character while supporting the Village's desire to maintain its business core.

New commercial, tourism related, or industrial development will be planned in locations where they fit the fabric of the community; where existing and potential new homes will not be affected; and where services are adequate. New development will be of limited size, scale, and intensity, in keeping with the rural, small town character of the Pentwater Community.

Supporting Statement

While the Community Survey showed little support for actively attracting new commercial or industrial development, there was not a strong indication that such development should be kept entirely out of the area. There was a slight indication that commercial development would be viewed more favorably than industrial. There was some support for limiting the overall level of tourist related activities to avoid over development and the possible introduction of larger scale commercial services. This was also reflected in the responses that showed a desire to maintain enough control over the rate and location of growth to preserve natural areas and the character of the area.

The Pentwater Community will work with the County and other communities to promote economic opportunities for the area.

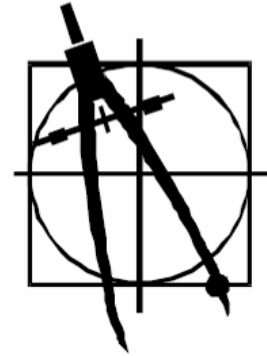
We recognize that economic opportunities will have to be provided in order to make jobs available to those who wish to live in the Pentwater Community, particularly younger people and families. Although we do not have ideal locations, public services, and other desirable features for intensive industrial and commercial development, other communities in the area do, particularly those with direct access to U.S. 31. As a community, Pentwater can offer a desirable quality of life for those who wish to live and work in the area.

CHAPTER 4

CHARTING THE FUTURE

LAND USE AND QUALITY OF LIFE

The form and vitality of any community is defined largely by how its citizens see the way land is used and how that use relates to their daily life. As a result, the way we use the land is linked directly to the quality of life of Pentwater.



As a guide, the Plan is not meant to be rigidly administered; changing conditions may affect the assumptions used when the Plan was originally conceived. But changing conditions do not necessarily mean that the Plan must change. Rather, the Township and Village Planning Commissions must examine those changes and decide if the principles on which the Master Plan was based are still valid. If so, the Plan should be followed.

The relationship between the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance is often misunderstood. The Master Plan is a *guide* for land use for the future; the Zoning Ordinance *regulates* the use of land in the present. The Master Plan is **not** a binding, legal document; the Zoning Ordinance is a law that must be followed by the community's residents.

As growth within Pentwater continues, the Township and Village will have to address difficult zoning issues brought on by the pace and increasing complexity of development plans by residents and property owners. The need to provide flexibility, coupled with Pentwater's desire to maintain some degree of control, may create the need for innovative zoning solutions, such as clustering provisions, planned unit development regulations, and other techniques.

Infrastructure

Utility and transportation planning provides many benefits. To achieve these benefits at lower cost, land use policies should encourage infill, and discourage extensions of infrastructure that may compromise other land use goals, such as preserving sensitive lands from development pressures. Such extensions should meet specific criteria consistent with this Plan.

Residential use can increase local traffic significantly, along with costs for road maintenance. These increases may be tempered by focusing the highest densities of development around ready access to improved roadways. Pedestrian recreational use of rural roads is common, and should

be part of transportation planning; roadside trees and associated character should receive similar attention.

Community planning for infrastructure can have positive effects on land use. Failure to plan may be expensive and frustrating for all involved; a good plan can provide many economic and financial advantages; help retain community character; and reduce public safety concerns related to transportation and environmental contamination.

In order to understand how economic growth occurs, it is helpful to know if the characteristics of that growth can be directly or indirectly influenced by the Pentwater Community. There are two main infrastructure elements over which the Community has some degree of control or influence: sewer and water services, and road systems.

Sewer and Water Services

The principal utilities needed for more intensive development are water service and sanitary sewer disposal. These services may be provided in a number of ways, ranging from on-site wells and septic tanks to public water and sanitary sewer utility systems. For the most part, industrial development is the heaviest user of both water and sewer.

In rural areas, residential development density is influenced by the presence or lack of public utilities. The cost of extending public sewer and water means that development density will have to reach a certain level to be cost effective. In other words, the costs of providing utilities are spread by the developer through the cost of the lot; the more lots, the lower the individual cost to the buyer.

Where public water or sewer cannot be provided, careful attention is needed to the soil structure to ensure that groundwater supplies are protected from contamination by an excessive number of individual septic systems. This does not suggest that public water and sewer should be planned for all rural areas. Instead, areas that can and will be served should be made more attractive to residential development.

Pentwater's public water system is drawn from three wells. A long-term goal is to increase the capacity of the water system to allow larger volumes of water to be pumped into the system. The present water system is considered adequate to meet current demand. The current storage capacity of the existing water tower is approximately 125,000 gallons. Chlorine and phosphate are the only chemicals added to the water supply.

Past system upgrades have included the replacement of water mains within the Village. Almost all of the water mains located in the business district have been updated. Neighborhood water mains found within the village are gradually being upgraded and replaced. Water mains which have not been replaced in the neighborhood area cross property lines and are not located on every street, even though service is provided.

An estimated 70% of residents located within the Village of Pentwater are served by the public water system. Township residents are not served by public water. The public water system is at capacity during the summer months, with wells running at least eighteen hours a day to meet demand. Conversely, the system has more than enough capacity during the winter months. It is estimated that another 25% could be added to the present system if a new well were provided, in addition to the new well which is needed currently.

The public sewer system serves 80 to 85% of Village residents as well as some areas within the Township. The Village has an agreement with the Township regarding the maintenance of the sewer system. Pentwater presently has adequate sewer capacity. The waste water treatment is accomplished using a lagoon system located east of the Village north of Madison Road, which requires the use of an irrigation well and a discharge field.

It is estimated that the settling pond capacity could be expanded to another 20 to 25% if necessary. The discharge field, although it meets current demand, is near capacity (an estimated 5-10% remaining). Although the system may be able to gather and hold additional wastes, there are serious difficulties with getting rid of all of the waste in an appropriate manner. In order to accommodate any growing demand, the system will require an improved irrigation well system which allows greater land coverage of the treated waste. Expanding the system would permit improved sewer availability for areas across Pentwater Lake.

Road Systems

As development intensifies, new industry, homes, offices, and commercial services create traffic demands on the road system. This is particularly true where new development occurs in areas previously planned for low intensity uses, such as single-family homes.

The Pentwater Community has direct, convenient, access to U.S. 31. In addition to the attraction for commercial uses, convenient highway access also allows commuters to live further from their jobs, using the highway system to extend the distance, but keep commuting time the same. With relatively cheap operating costs for individual vehicles, residential development can easily extend well beyond the job site.

Many residents of the Pentwater Community travel to work in other communities, some as far as Kent County. To reduce local road construction and repair costs, the Master Plan intends to keep residential and other high volume uses where roadway access is convenient. This would allow local maintenance to focus in some years on specific high volume roads, rather than over a large network of segments, each with higher traffic volumes.

As growth continues, new demands will be created on the road system. This is particularly true where new development occurs in rural areas. Residents in these areas are particularly sensitive to traffic increases; even small jumps in traffic volumes become noticeable. Residents will voice concerns about the "heavy traffic" on their road, even though the roadway is easily capable of handling the traffic.

As new subdivisions, site condominium, or other residential projects are considered it is important to implement a street network to ensure that adequate circulation is provided between abutting development projects. Rather than having each development provide singular access to the major public street, project approvals should include provisions for stub streets to vacant properties that may be available for future development.

These street networks improve overall traffic flow by allowing residents to access nearby residential areas without traveling on the main streets of the township. In addition, circulation between projects improves access for emergency vehicles. Finally, maintenance and snow removal costs are reduced and efficiency improved.

EXISTING LAND USE

The reasons that land has developed to this point in time vary widely. Some uses of land predate zoning; others were approved by previous planning commissions and legislative bodies with or without the benefit of a master plan. Many of these existing areas have stable, active uses that are thriving economically and socially. Others have uses that sometimes conflict with one another. And still others have seen their best days pass by and are in need of attention. Present land use patterns can tell us *what* the Pentwater Community is, *how* it has developed, and *where* new growth will occur.

Land uses found within the Village of Pentwater have helped to create its small town character. The downtown, Village Green, neighborhoods, churches, and schools found in Pentwater provide residents identifiable areas where they can interact with each other and create

community bonds. The rural areas of Pentwater Township present a different character, but no less desirable, for those wanting the open spaces and sense of isolation or separation from others.

Commercial

Pentwater has successfully maintained an innocence that has been lost in many other lakeside communities in Michigan. Pentwater lacks the restaurant and hotel chains which oftentimes provide the feeling that a person could be in any tourist or urban area in the state.

Pentwater has successfully maintained an innocence that has been lost in many other lakeside communities in Michigan.

Instead, Pentwater’s businesses range from small, family-owned establishments and convenience shopping to specialty retail stores, similar to those of other successful “non-commercialized” tourist areas in Michigan. Much of this activity is concentrated in the central business district along Hancock Street, which serves as the commercial center for Pentwater. This traditional downtown, made up of small businesses, offices, and older buildings, has establishments which satisfy both resident and visitor needs. A post office, coffee shop, and market are available to serve local customers. Higher-end retail shops, some of which are seasonal, are also located within the central business district.

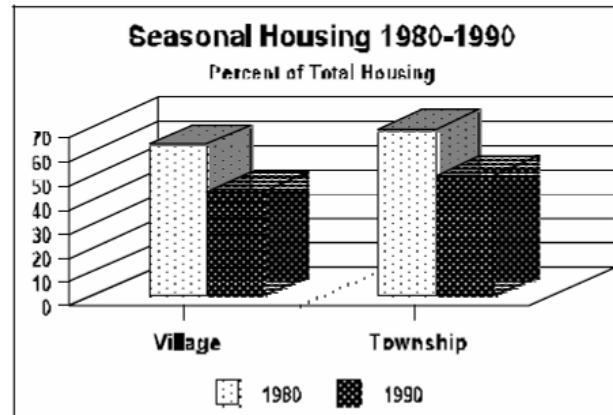
The Village has identified itself as being a historic and recreational resource, citing its ties with boating, fishing, golfing, and civic band concerts. Other commercial areas, primarily related to the marina and water activities such as boating and fishing, skirt Pentwater Lake. However, the relationship between the waterfront and the downtown is not a particularly strong one. The marina area filters views of the water, while Fifth, Fourth and Third Streets dead-end at the waterfront. There are no clearly identified markers of park areas or public access to the water.

Links to Charles Mears State Park are also weak because of the lack of directional and information signs, and surrounding development crowds park boundaries. The designated bike lane on Lowell street, however, does assist in providing a formal entrance to the park, and encourages walking and bicycling use.

Commercial uses in the Township tend to be isolated and normally fit well in their surroundings. Many of these uses have been in existence for years and have “grown up” with homes in the area. Many of these businesses maintain a rustic, rural character. Buildings are often placed close to the road and parking areas are unpaved; all of which adds to their character.

Residential

Much of the older, non-lakefront residential development within the Township is concentrated along major streets or on unimproved roadways. As noted earlier, much of this housing is seasonal. Seasonal housing makes up nearly 50% of all available housing, however, the percentage of seasonal housing dropped by nearly 20% between 1980 and 1990. This represents a shift in the housing choices of people in the area; seasonal residents are converting homes to year round use, or building new, permanent homes.



A large number of homes around Pentwater Lake and along Lake Michigan serve as second-home, summer residences. Many of the homes built along Lake Michigan are two and three story buildings. Some of those along the roadway from U.S. 31 north to the Village, are older, more established homes, generally of a single story, ranch style design. Many homes constructed near the water's edge block views of the water.

Neighborhoods surround the downtown area and Pentwater Lake. Some residences within the Village of Pentwater have been in existence prior to the turn of the century. Displaying plaques that identify the year of construction, many of the permanent residences located along Green Street appear to have been former summer lodgings. Despite the age of many of the homes, a survey of housing conditions, conducted in 1997, revealed very few maintenance or structural problems.

The close-knit, community feeling of the Village of Pentwater is well illustrated in the neighborhood below Park Street. Based upon a traditional grid street system, the homes are a mix of Victorian style and modern ranch designs with reduced setbacks from the road. The oldest part of this neighborhood is between Third and Lowell Street, extending from Rush to Hancock Streets. Several homes within the area are under the process of being refurbished and sidewalks have recently been replaced. Low vehicular traffic volumes in this neighborhood encourage residents to walk for recreational activity, allowing them to interact with neighbors.

Residential development north of Park Street is typical of more recent development trends, with homes constructed on larger lots with greater setbacks and of a development density less than that found south of Park Street. A manufactured housing development found off of Sand Street is the exception; it has a higher density than most of the older neighborhoods.

Multi-family housing is available in a condominium development bordering Pentwater Lake and two other developments, near the Pentwater Schools, off Hanover Street; and along Park Street. .

Several homes located throughout Pentwater are utilized as bed and breakfast inns. But unlike some communities, where these establishments can change the character of residential neighborhoods, Pentwater’s bed and breakfast community is an essential element of the character of the area.

Semi-Public and Public Facilities

Pentwater’s four community churches, placed within the neighborhood section below Park Street, are located in areas where it is possible for members to walk from home to church. Very little parking is provided for these congregations. The different denominations served include Baptist, United Methodist, Episcopal, and Catholic.

Schools and the public library are located nearby as well, benefitting children and families due to their proximity to neighborhoods. The Pentwater Public Schools (K-12) are located at 600 Park Street. The public library is located on the corner of Park Street and Rush.

Other publically owned areas include a public boat launch and marina on Pentwater Lake and a large parcel of state-owned land, Charles Mears Park on Lake Michigan, which provides camping opportunities for visitors.

The commercial campgrounds and associated uses north of the Village on Hancock are also included in this classification in recognition of their special place in the fabric of the Pentwater Community, rather than as a means of classification that ignores their commercial nature.

Light Industry

Although industrial development is uncommon in the area, Pentwater Wire is located off of Carroll and Wythe Streets, between Fifth and Fourth. This light-industrial facility manufactures wire racks with plastic coatings to be placed in products such as refrigerators. The facility employs local residents. There are no industrial parks or concentrations of industrial development within the Township or Village.

FUTURE LAND USE

Future land use decisions for Pentwater will be guided by the Vision, Core Values, and Goals

Future land use decisions for Pentwater will be guided by the Vision, Core Values, and Goals noted in Chapter 3. The principles governing land use rest on the desire of residents and officials to preserve the values that make Pentwater a desirable place to live. Those values are centered on the preservation of the small town and rural character and natural features of the area, while recognizing that new development will occur and must be planned. It is also based on the recognition that these values are fragile and that steps will be necessary to protect them.

Land Use Goals

A number of Goals were established dealing directly with land use. The following Goals form the basis for determining appropriate land use types, their location, and each use's ability to blend with existing land use patterns.

Land use decisions will support our core values through planned development which is low density and designed to create a community consistent with our small town character. These decisions will include the need to provide neighborhoods that are consistent with this character, yet offer a variety of housing that appeals to a wide range of individual and family circumstances.

New commercial, tourism related, or industrial development will be planned in locations where they fit the fabric of the community; where existing and potential new homes will not be affected; and where services are adequate. New development will be of limited size, scale, and intensity, in keeping with the rural, small town character of the Pentwater Community.

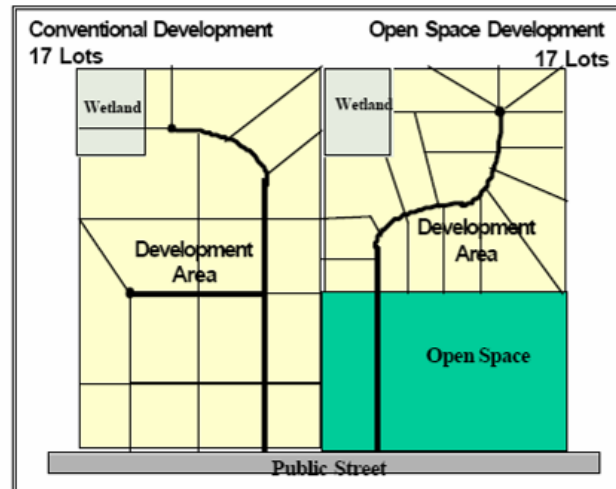
Decisions regarding locations for new development will consider the capability of the Pentwater Community to provide a suitable level of public services, be of limited size and intensity, and preserve the natural character of the landscape.

Pentwater Township and Village will cooperate to ensure that new commercial development does not detract from the economic vitality of the Village business district.

Residential Land Use Principles

- A. Residential land uses will be provided for more affordable homes. Factors that may be used to make homes more affordable may include higher densities (lower lot sizes), wider areas of utility coverage (to permit higher densities), inclusion of a variety of housing types, and providing paved roads.

- B. New areas of residential development will have the same neighborhood characteristics as those already found in the Pentwater community. These characteristics include paved roads, sidewalks, adequate lighting, well placed open spaces for recreation, and a sensitivity towards natural features (woods, dunes, shoreline, etc.).



Residential Future Land Use Classifications

Rural Residential

Lands placed in this classification shall be primarily identified for large lot, low density, residential development, ranging from as high as 10 acres and as low as 2 acres. Lower densities planned for these Rural Residential areas reflect lacking public services and roads, as well as heavily wooded lands. Much of the area in the southern part of the township is in the Pere Marquette State Forest. Areas in the northern part of the township contain larger parcels. The intent of this classification is to recognize the lack of public services and roads, and to protect the qualities of rural living enjoyed by Pentwater residents.

Where development of land is requested, the densities and design of such proposals should be of a nature that will continue the rural character of the area or permit use of a portion of the land for preserving open space or natural features. This may be accomplished through the use of cluster, or open space development.

Clustering provides for a dense concentration of development in a limited area, with the overall, or "gross density" of the site remaining the same. Although clustering may increase the net density for a smaller area of a larger parcel, the gross density should still fall into the requirements of the Master Plan and subsequent zoning regulations. The object of clustering is not to increase the number of units developed, but to regulate the amount of land disturbed by structures, lawns, and drives.

Allowing cluster development through the use of a planned unit development (PUD) provides the opportunity to ensure that land will be kept free from future development. Apart from being a requirement of the PUD, preserved open space may be deeded in equal parts to the property owners of the cluster with restrictions on individual sales, requiring approval of a majority (or

greater number) of the remaining owners. Regardless of ownership, the remaining acreage would not be permitted to be developed with additional housing units.

Other land use techniques may become available for use in these areas, such as the purchase or transfer of development rights, private property restrictions through land donations or conservation easements, as well as other available methods.

Lakeshore Residential

This classification serves a number of purposes, but is intended primarily to protect development along the shoreline and ensure that it is compatible with other, inland development. Locations for this land use are concentrated around Pentwater Lake and along the shoreline of Lake Michigan north and south of the Village.

Development within Lakeshore Residential areas will be sensitive to the need to preserve the qualities that make lakeshore living desirable, while at the same time protecting the benefits of the shoreline for the general public. One of the most important aspects of this is the ability to maintain views to the water.

Low Density Residential

Much of the character of lands classified as the Low Density Residential is similar to that of Rural Residential, except that these are generally better served by a transportation network. Density ranges may occur from 2 acres to half-acre lots. Most of this development is concentrated along the major roadways which radiate from the Village, paralleling the shoreline, east to U.S. 31, and south into Weare and Golden Townships. It is likely that much of the residential development in this classification will occur along existing roadways. Although development of this nature is not unusual in rural areas, it does present some practical problems.

First, the number of driveways along these roadways can become a traffic issue, particularly in areas where zoning allows relatively narrow lot widths. Although individually these driveways do not generate excessive amounts of traffic, over time an increase in their number on a busy roadway can present problems with additional turn movements, especially where vehicle speeds are high.

As development along roadways increases, property owners are also more likely to demand better maintenance. Over 60% of the Community Survey respondents thought that improving

existing roadways was an important issue for the area in the next 10 years. This issue will likely continue to appear as more development occurs along these roadways.

Finally, homes spaced out along roadways, particularly when near the street, tend to detract from the rural character of the area when the view is more of buildings than of open space. A byproduct of strip residential development, the inefficient use of land, also occurs when homes are placed near the front property line. A number of properties in the Township are divided into relatively large lots, with the frontage taken up by individual homes. This type of development tends to create relatively deep lots which leaves sizeable portions of properties cut off from road access and essentially unuseable.

While this may not be a problem for the original and some subsequent owners, others may look for opportunities to use the back portions of these lots for further development and seek variances or other approvals from the township to do so. The 1997 amendments to the state Subdivision Control Act (now called the Land Division Act) provide some opportunities to limit the depth of lots created without the filing of a plat, but access to interior properties will continue to be an important consideration in reviewing future development proposals.

In addition, the Community Survey revealed considerable concern about the quality of groundwater that will be available in the future. Without access to public utilities, protecting the source of well water will be very important for the long term welfare of Pentwater's residents.

Medium Density Residential

New locations for Medium (and High) Density Residential land is concentrated to the east of the Village. Part of the intent for placing homes at a moderate density in this area is to decrease the infrastructure costs that would be necessary to serve such higher intensity uses elsewhere within the Village or Township. Directing growth to the east is also intended to preserve the natural character of those areas closest to the Lake Michigan and Pentwater Lake shorelines. Density may be approximately 5 units per acre.

These areas are intended to be developed with many of the same neighborhood characteristics already present in the Village, including paved roads, sidewalks, adequate lighting, well placed open spaces for recreation, and a sensitivity towards existing natural features (woods, dunes, shoreline, etc.). Public services, especially public water and sanitary sewer, will also generally be desired.

High Density Residential

High Density areas are intended to be served by public utilities, where possible, and to provide additional housing opportunities for new residents, in keeping with the Residential Land Use Principles. High Density areas will generally require public services, especially public water and sanitary sewer, be served by paved roadways, and designed to limit any negative effects on existing homes. Densities will range as high as eight units per acre, where proper facilities are in place.

Commercial Land Use Principles

- A. Downtown land use should ensure that retail development is concentrated on Hancock and office/services are directed to side streets off of Hancock.
- B. Development outside of downtown may be appropriate and land zoned accordingly, if the following criteria are satisfied:
 - Necessary land or buildings are not available within the downtown that would accommodate the use.
 - The site is located where residential development will not be impaired or negatively affected.
 - The development provides goods or services that are not, cannot, or should not be provided in the downtown.
 - Provides goods and services that are principally for Pentwater area residents, rather than serving the regional market. (Note: This is intended to discourage large scale, regional shopping areas, which are not appropriate to the land use character desired by the Pentwater Community.)
- C. Commercial development outside the downtown will meet the following criteria:
 - Not be developed in a strip commercial fashion.
 - Be located on and direct traffic to streets other than those strictly serving neighborhoods.
 - Provide adequate building and parking setbacks, buffering for adjacent residential uses, have limited access points to the main street, be sensitive to natural features (woods, dunes, shoreline, etc.), have moderate sized signs, and connected to public utilities.

Commercial Future Land Use Classifications

Central Business District

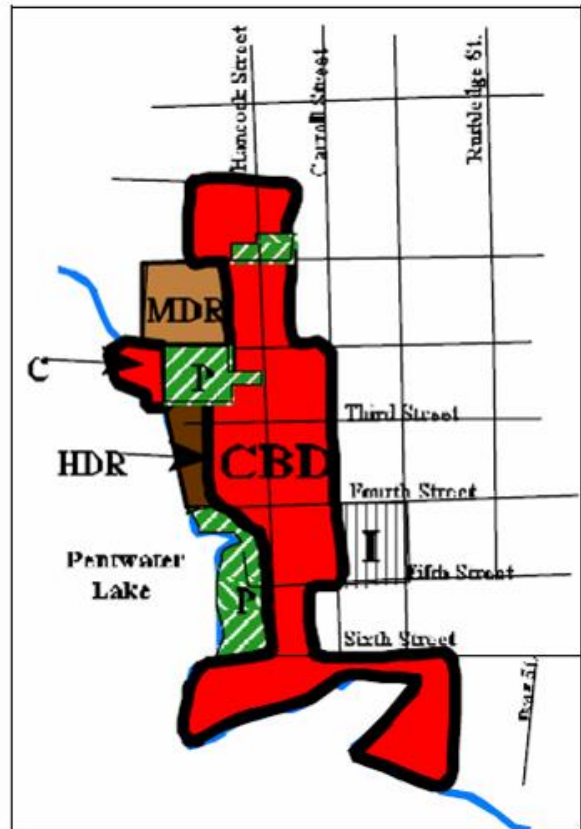
Most people not only readily identify views of the water as being part of the image of the Pentwater Community, but views of the Village's central business district as well. The Village has undertaken a series of improvements to enrich the physical image of the downtown and to improve its economic climate. Distinctive elements of the improvements, including trees, new sidewalks, and other improvements will greatly enhance the favorable view residents and visitors have of Pentwater.

Pentwater has a long history of being a cohesive community, as a center of transportation for the lumbering industry, and a destination for recreation and tourism. Many of the original characteristics that created the Village still exist and their heritage provides a strong tie to the present. One of the unique aspects of any older downtown area is its older buildings. While these buildings contribute to the character of the downtown, they also often present challenges to their owners. Extensive renovations and changes over time tend to create inefficient space and circulation patterns.

The limited size of the buildings tends to restrict the variety and volume of merchandise that may be offered. As a result, many of the basic shopping needs, such as groceries and pharmacy supplies, are more difficult to sustain. Other physical limitations, such as the lack of centralized parking, also complicates the successful operation of these businesses.

Finally, since a number of the businesses are seasonal, operating primarily in the spring, summer, and early fall, it is difficult to sustain a "critical mass" of activity to sustain the year-round businesses. This raises the key issue of the ability of the downtown to expand. The Master Plan calls for the principle downtown shopping area to be located on Hancock between Sixth Street and Lowell.

Over time, expansion of the downtown may be



possible to Carroll Street, between Fifth Street and Second Street. Care will have to be taken to ensure that existing neighborhoods are not affected. This area could be used for additional parking, or to permit some expansion of retail or service businesses.

The success of the long term revitalization of the Village downtown cannot be assured by any single group, person, or agency. A consolidated effort will be needed by the property owners, the Village and Township, and the people of the community to assure the success of downtown. The variety of programs, funding requirements, physical development needs, and personalities dictate the need for cooperation and, where necessary, compromise.

Neighborhood Services

The intent of the Neighborhood Services classification is to limit the overall size and intensity of commercial development and to provide such goods and services that do not compete with downtown Pentwater. Businesses and services will be those that cater to residents of nearby areas. Generally, total square footage should be limited to 5,000 to 10,000 square-foot areas or less. Sites should be located on lots of at least two acres with at least 200 feet of lot width along a public street.

This classification will also be used to indicate the potential for highway related services near the north interchange with U.S. 31. However, these services will be in keeping with the overall intended character of the Pentwater Community and the previously stated Goals and Principles. In particular, the location and design of specific uses must be especially sensitive to the homes on or near Bass Lake.

Lands designated for Neighborhood Services should be planned with specific consideration of such factors as compatibility with surrounding existing and planned land use; traffic safety and convenience; shared driveways and parking areas; consistent site elements, such as signs, landscaping and lighting; roadway improvements, including such elements as turning and deceleration lanes; and other factors that are consistent with the neighborhood and rural character.

Driveways will be located as far as possible from any public street intersections to minimize traffic conflicts, but generally not less than 150 feet from the intersection. In most situations only a single driveway will be permitted unless a professional traffic study determines that a second drive is needed to accommodate higher volumes of traffic.

Industrial Land Use Principles

- A. Industrial sites will be located where residential development will not be impaired or negatively affected.
- B. Industrial development will generally provide employment principally for Pentwater area residents, rather than serving the regional market.
- C. Sites shall be located on and direct traffic to streets other than those strictly serving neighborhoods.
- D. Industrial site development shall provide adequate building and parking setbacks, buffering for adjacent residential uses, demonstrate sensitivity towards natural features (woods, dunes, shoreline, etc.), have limited access points to the main street, and have access to public utilities and services.

Industrial Future Land Use Classification

Industrial

Industrial uses will generally be limited to those areas which are or may be served by public utilities. Certain Industrial uses may be permitted without utilities, but will usually be restricted to those operations which do not require large scale waste disposal or water use, such as auto repair businesses and small machine and fabricating shops. Sites that generally meet the following qualifications may receive consideration for rezoning.

- Access to an appropriate roadway capable of accommodating the weights and/or volumes of trucks.
- Availability of public utilities.
- Sufficient property to accommodate generous setbacks for parking, loading, and other activity areas.
- Designed to limit any negative effects on existing homes or other uses.

One area planned for industrial growth is east of the Village on Madison Road, just west of U.S. 31 and a narrow band paralleling U.S. 31 at the north interchange. However, most other industrial development will be deferred to the interchange with U.S. 31 in Weare Township.

Public/Semi-Public

Unlike traditional master plans, the Pentwater Community Master Plan uses the Public/Semi-Public future land use classification for a wide variety of situations. The common use of this

classification is for churches, schools, government lands, parks, and other similar lands. While these uses are included in the classification, a broader range of uses is also used.

For example, the campgrounds north of the Village on either side of Hancock are noted as Public/Semi-Public. Ordinarily these areas might be noted as Neighborhood Services. However, one of the unique aspects of Pentwater, like many similar communities, is the presence of resort oriented land uses, most of which are seasonal, some of which take up large land areas.

The intent of using this classification is not to attempt to deny the commercial nature of these uses, but rather to limit them to resort oriented land uses. This is, in part, an attempt to recognize their existence and vitality in the community, but not permit these uses to transition to a more general business or commercial nature.

Environmentally Sensitive Development Area

The Plan also calls for a special area, labeled *Environmentally Sensitive Development Area*. This area overlays a number of different Future Land Use classifications. The intent of this overlay is to recognize the unique features of Lake Michigan's critical dunes and high risk erosion areas. Treatment for these sensitive areas is outlined in Chapter 2. Treatment of these features will be considered as part of any development within this area, regardless of the land use or zoning classification in place.

Other Land Use Elements

Arrival

When people take long trips away from their home, after a time they begin to picture various parts of their community with which they are familiar. This is the "sense of place" that we all have; that place where we are most comfortable. Upon returning, those same people will quickly identify landmarks that announce that they have arrived at their "place." This sense of arrival may take many forms, but whatever form it takes, it provides a distinct feeling of comfort and identity. By placing a physical landmark at the entrances of the community, the arriving resident, or visitor, can gain a sense of arrival.

This is especially important for the Pentwater area, since it has some dependence on visitors. The entry to the Pentwater area actually begins at the south end of Pentwater Lake and is highlighted at the entry to the Village as the road transitions to Sixth Street.

Views

Most of the landscape that provides pleasant scenery and visual quality is privately owned. Nevertheless, the public "uses" the landscape visually, and, for Pentwater, views are a key element of the community. Therefore, protecting these recognized resources provides a significant and tangible benefit. Normally the most direct way of achieving view protection objectives is through the control of building location, spacing, bulk, and height.

When protecting eye level or ground level views such as a lake view, or on the downhill side from a viewpoint, such as an overlook, it is important to control building bulk and spacing, as well as the placement of fences, shrubs, and trees. In this setting, even one story buildings erected within the view area or in a long solid mass can block a line of sight.

In such settings, buildings should be placed in such a manner that they do not obstruct the view to be preserved. Buildings along a shoreline, placed so as to create a solid wall effect, not only obstruct views of the lake but also adversely affect the shoreline's visual quality from the lake. To assure that this will not happen, designers, developers or builders should be required to stake out the outline of all proposed buildings and landscaping for on-site inspection, so that the amount of the view blocked will be made clear before the plan is approved or a building permit issued.

Buildings might be limited to a height of no more than 30 feet (measured from the average ground elevation at the building walls) where they would obstruct views or project above the tree cover. Heights exceeding this limit might be permitted where it can be shown that such construction will not interfere with the scenic attractiveness of the view to be protected. While maximum building height might be restricted in absolute terms, buildings may be restricted to a height determined relative to the object or view to be protected.

Evaluating Rezoning and Land Use Changes

Changing the land use or zoning designation on any property can have far reaching consequences, physically, environmentally, financially, and legally. Therefore, a careful evaluation of proposed rezonings is essential. As with any land use decision, the use of standards is essential to reaching fair and consistent decisions. The following evaluation measures are included in the Pentwater Community Master Plan to permit their use by the Village and Township Planning Commissions and legislative bodies when rezoning or land use changes are contemplated.

1. Consistency with the Vision, Core Values, Goals, and Land Use Principles of the Future Land Use Plan.

If conditions upon which the Master Plan was developed have changed significantly since the Master Plan was adopted, such as economic factors, demographic shifts, new utility lines, changing traffic conditions, or other reasons, the Planning Commissions and legislative bodies should consider these events as part of their deliberation to insure that the Master Plan is current. Particular attention should be paid to the Vision, Core Values, Goals, and Land Use Principles to ensure that they remain valid, and that the proposed rezoning or land use change does not impair their intent.

2. Compatibility.

All of the uses allowed in the proposed district should be compatible with the conditions present on the site and in the immediate vicinity of the site especially in terms of density, character, traffic, aesthetics, and property values. The Master Plan provides several guidelines, as noted above, which should be considered when determining whether or not the proposed district is compatible with the neighborhood and the Pentwater Community as a whole.

3. Capability of being used as already zoned.

It is the right of every property owner to receive a reasonable return on the investment placed on property. This does not mean that zoning is a slave to the "highest and best use," which is not a zoning, but a real estate term. It does mean that there should be a reasonable use available within the zone district. But if the property is capable of being used as zoned, there will need to be a compelling reason to change. These reasons may be related to the first two standards of consistency and compatibility.

Site plans will generally not be considered as part of a rezoning request (with the exception of a Planned Unit Development). The Planning Commissions and/or legislative bodies will not be swayed by what is proposed by the petitioner. Instead, the Village and Township will specifically note that ALL of the uses permitted in the proposed district may be placed on the site; not just the one shown on a site plan.

APPENDICES

1996 Community Survey Results

Overall Total Results
Village Results

Maps

Environmental Features; Pentwater Community
Existing Land Use; Pentwater Township
Existing Land Use; Village of Pentwater
Future Land Use; Pentwater Community
Future Land Use; Village of Pentwater