

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **A PLAN FOR MANISTEE COUNTY**

**Why does Manistee County need a plan?** Manistee County’s current plan was adopted in 1997 and is in need of revision. A County Plan is used as a guide by the county, other units of government, agencies and citizens to provide an overall, general direction for future land use changes.

Manistee County has changed quite a bit since the last plan was adopted. Changes will continue as new people move into the county and economic development expands. Planned development can minimize environmental damage and save taxpayers and governments money by avoiding costly sprawl.

The County Planning Commission has chosen to create a new plan, rather than amending the original plan, for the following reasons:

- 1) The age of the present plan.
- 2) The enactment of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act and the Coordinated Planning Act.
- 3) The major improvements in planning expertise at the local government level, as well as the efforts of groups such as “enVision Manistee County”.
- 4) The creation and adoption of many plans by local units of government.
- 5) The significant accomplishment made by the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians in the creation of a master plan for tribal lands.



**Manistee County Government Center**

**Who is the plan for?** Since Manistee County does not administer zoning regulations, and has no plans to do so in the future, a Basic Plan or “general plan” is what appears to be the best type of plan for the County. Therefore, this plan is primarily for county government, that is, the plan will serve as a guide to public investment and services provided by Manistee County. It will be used by the Board of Commissioners and other agencies, departments and boards of the county for future decision making, capital budget planning, and a guide to where future services and facilities will be needed.

Of course, agencies related to local and county government, and state agencies will also use the plan as part of their decision making, facility and program planning.

One factor important to the planning commission is the ability to address “Issues of Greater Than Local Concern” with this plan. These are issues that cross political boundaries and may be beyond the ability or jurisdiction of local government to address. These concerns may be entirely within the boundaries of the county, or may even cross boundaries with adjacent counties, or may involve several counties. Therefore, this plan considers adjacent county growth policies and plans as well as those within the county.

**What will the new plan contain?** This new plan will build on planning at the local levels within Manistee County. That is, the Manistee County Planning Commission will honor the planning already done at the city, village and township level within Manistee County, as well as the adopted plans of the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians and other quasi-public organizations within the county. It will contain an overview of existing social, economic and physical characteristics of the county, future goals in these areas, and a future land use plan.

**A plan for coordination:** The state legislature enacted Act 263 of 2001, the Coordinated Planning Act. This act amended the planning statutes of cities & villages, townships and counties requiring notification of adjacent governments of the intent to prepare a plan, a sharing of proposed plans, and an opportunity for an adjacent governmental unit to comment on a proposed plan before it is adopted.

**Who developed the plan?** This plan was developed primarily by the County Planning Commission with assistance from many sources. Following the requirements of the Coordinated Planning Act, the County Planning Commission notified all adjacent governmental units of their intention to prepare this plan. An extensive list of “stakeholders” was developed to be sure all affected and interested parties would know about, and have a chance to participate in, the creation of the plan. In addition, a great deal of information and guidance was provided by the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments and enVision Manistee.

**What is the legal status of the plan?** This plan is a policy guideline, and is intended to be able to be changed as circumstances change in the future. It is not an “ordinance”, so

it has no legal standing such as that of zoning. This plan will be used by the County Planning Commission in its review of local plans and township zoning ordinances.