



PAW PAW'S MASTER PLAN UPDATE

BACKGROUND

The Village of Paw Paw has initiated a community effort to update the Village's Master Plan. Community master plans, developed under the authority of the Village Council and outlined by state statute, serve as important policy guides for many municipalities.

Trying to look at Paw Paw's future now may be a bit cloudy. But, after going through the master plan update process, the picture of Paw Paw will get clearer for all.

Master Plans describe what the community is today, as well as what it wants to be in the future. A basic principle of the Master Plan is flexibility, which allows it to continually identify and monitor changing conditions and circumstances in order to effectively guide future change toward established community goals.

The Master Plan is futuristic in orientation, as it reflects what we want the Village of Paw Paw to ultimately become.



It is not a blueprint of the village's future. Rather it is a tool used to direct, coordinate and evaluate the village's development and progress and to ensure continued orderly development of our community.

The Master Plan is not an attempt to keep any change from taking place in the community. It simply shows a compatible pattern for land uses in the village.

In the Village of Paw Paw, the Master Plan will be a key policy document for community leaders to use in making well-informed decisions about many vital local issues ranging from future development, open space protection and affordable housing, to transportation and community facility infrastructure needs.

Since the late-1970s, the Village has maintained a master, or comprehensive, plan. The Master Plan serves as a guide to direct development toward established community goals. The last plan was developed in 1998. Master Plans are updated every 10 years.

UNIQUE TO THE PAW PAW MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Master plans and updates of master plan do all that is described above. In the Village of Paw Paw, more was sought. The Village's master plan would incorporate land use planning as well as downtown viability, natural resources and housing.

Land Use Planning.

Typical to a master plan, the Village of Paw Paw update will consider the current land uses, forces putting pressure on current zoning districts, and the interaction between zoning districts.

Downtown Viability.

The Village of Paw Paw elected to incorporate a focus on its historic downtown district and its commercial sector. Commercial sprawl along Michigan Avenue (Red

Arrow Highway) east and west of the Village downtown, pressures from commercial development along South Kalamazoo Street (M-40) and in the large parcels immediately south of I-94, all present pressures and concerns in maintaining a viable downtown district which also maintains a 'sense of place' for residents. [*Sense of place can be defined as the character of a community or parts of a community that leads a person to feel that 'this' is where they belong and can call 'home.'*] These concerns led to the inclusion of a market analysis and strategy to be incorporated into the Master Plan Update. Also incorporated will be design concepts to protect and secure the 'sense of place' any community needs.

Natural Resources. The Village of Paw Paw Master Plan will focus on its natural assets with Maple Lake, Maple Island, Briggs Pond, the branches of the Paw Paw River and

Why Plan?

'Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?'

'That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,' said the Cat.

'I don't much care where --' said Alice.

'Then it doesn't matter which way you go,' said the Cat.

'-- so long as I get SOMEWHERE,' Alice added as an explanation.

'Oh, you're sure to do that,' said the Cat, 'if you only walk long enough.'

Lewis Carroll's **Alice in Wonderland**

Instead of taking a random walk,
Invest in planning for your land
use and community needs.



consider connections between these assets. The system of parks and recreation, both passive and active current and potential, are also community assets that will be incorporated into the update. The Master Plan Update will consider how best to present and protect the Village’s natural assets and its parks and green spaces.

Housing. The Village of Paw Paw Master Plan Update will closely look at housing concerns in an effort to enhance owner occupied housing.



PURPOSE AND PLANNING PROCESS

The purpose of the Village of Paw Paw Master Plan is to provide guidelines for future development, while protecting the water resources, other natural resources, and small town character of the Village. This plan will present extensive background information for the Village of Paw Paw and the surrounding area, including socio-economic

data; description and mapping of natural resources; and inventory of existing community facilities. The background information is analyzed to identify important characteristics, changes, and trends occurring in Paw Paw.

Community concerns are identified based on citizen participation in Master Plan meetings, focus groups, conducted Community workshop, citizen surveys, previous planning studies, input provided by the various Village departments, as well through extensive efforts by the Master Plan Steering Committee, various Village boards and commissions.

These goals, along with a detailed map of existing land use, provided the basis for the Future Land Use Map, which specifies the extent and location of where various types of future development can be accommodated within the Village. This plan also provides suggestions for implementation of the identified goals and policies. The guidance provided by this Master Plan will be utilized in updating the Zoning Ordinance of the Village of Paw Paw and other measures the Village is authorized to take.

THE MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE:

Ellyn Jones, Representative from the Downtown Development Authority
Kathy Larson, Chair of the Planning Commission
Mary McIntosh, Representative from the Village Council
Julie Pioch, MSU Extension Director and Representing community residents.
Don Rook, Representative from the Downtown Development Authority
Dondi Squires, Representative from the Chamber of Commerce
Rebecca Harvey, Planning Consultant to the Village of Paw Paw
Larry Nielsen, Village Manager

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The Village of Paw Paw Master Plan Update . . .



PLEASE NOTE

Please take the time to open the companion document titled “We Want Your Comments.” This asks for your comments on how Paw Paw looks now and how you want it to look in the future; what you love about Paw Paw; what you think could be improved; and, what other issues you think are important that we should know. We ask, because we want to know what you think!