

ALPENA COUNTY GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTION ITEMS

COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND QUALITY OF LIFE

A community's "character" is an intangible item which identifies the attributes that make a community unique. While a community's character continually changes over time, attempting to preserve it can be a very important part of maintaining a community's cultural heritage and traditions. A community's "quality of life" are those factors, when taken in totality, help define the viability of a community as a place to live, work, and play.

GOAL 1: MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE THE OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALPENA COUNTY AND ITS RESIDENTS.

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Promote Alpena County's quality of life to attract and retain families and individuals.

Objective 2: Encourage public feedback and input regarding ongoing efforts to improve the County's quality of life.

Objective 3: Build the sense of place through the implementation of programs throughout the community.

Objective 4: Utilize recreational amenities to enhance the overall quality of life in the county.

ACTION ITEMS

Action 1: Hold quarterly reviews of annual goals and objectives to ensure effective implementation of the Master Plan's goals and objectives.

Action 2: Create a public engagement policy for each local government to use.

Action 3: Research funding opportunities to enhance the county's overall quality of life.

Action 4: Support the development and promotion of recreational events and programs that use the existing recreational facilities.

Action 5: Support community groups that expand or develop new community events.

Action 6: Encourage and support the County concerning the improvement(s) and maintenance of the county parks and recreational facilities.

GOAL 2 - MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE THE APPEARANCE AND CHARACTER IN ALPENA COUNTY.

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Encourage all communities to preserve the integrity of existing neighborhoods by protecting them from the intrusion of incompatible uses.

Objective 2: Enhance community gateways through the implementation of land use controls, landscaping, and screening.

Objective 3: Strive to balance future growth and development in the county, while maintaining its rural character.

Objective 4: Investigate the implementation of conservation-based open space or cluster development options as a means to protect community character.

ACTION ITEMS

Action 1: Actively engage in strategic planning to ensure the Master Plan’s goals and objectives are met.

Action 2: Research the development of beautification efforts to enhance the appearance of public facilities and gateways into the County.

Action 3: Work with the County Board of Commissioners and participating Township Boards to expand community clean up days and recycling programs.

Action 4: Encourage public feedback and input through online forums and public meetings.

Action 5: Investigate the feasibility of burying utility lines, where appropriate.

Action 6: Support local government’s efforts in enforcing blight ordinances and regulations since counties cannot enact blight ordinances.

Action 7: Encourage local governments to adopt uniform blight and nuisance ordinances.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Governmental institutions should continually seek ways to operate in a transparent and cost effective manner. The efficient and consistent delivery of services to the public, and the cooperation and collaboration between local governments are critical to achieve this goal. Open lines of communication with the public will help assure constituents this is being pursued.

GOAL 1 - COOPERATE AND COLLABORATE WITH OTHER LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, NEIGHBORING COUNTIES, AND LOCAL BUSINESSES AND ORGANIZATIONS.

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Implement methods to coordinate and collaborate with the County Board of Commissioners, local governments, neighboring counties, businesses, and appropriate departments, agencies, and organizations.

Objective 2: Research techniques to generate economies of scale and cost savings through collaboration and coordination with other units of government.

Objective 3: Encourage and support the county’s involvement on the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council.

Objective 4: Participate in the Pure Michigan campaign for Alpena County and Sunrise Coast.

Objective 5: Participate in the US-23 Heritage Route program, the Up North Trails Initiative, and Alpena: Sanctuary of the Great Lakes.

ACTION ITEMS

Action 1: Support the uniform development and adoption of land use controls among local governments.

Action 2: Develop and implement procedures for consistent and timely exchange of information between the County Planning Commission and the townships’ and city’s Planning Commissions, including but not limited to sharing all local zoning ordinance amendments submitted to the County Planning Commission.

Action 3: Implement active communication techniques between all local planning commissions.

Action 4: Recognize communities for outstanding planning and zoning efforts.

Action 5: Determine the feasibility of joint meetings, the use of intergovernmental committees, the creation of multi-jurisdictional planning commissions, and areas of coordination and cooperation between the county, neighboring counties, and/or local planning commissions. If feasible, participate in annual joint meetings with the townships and the city, and schedule a summit for all Planning Commissions in the county.

Action 6: Encourage the County Board of Commissioners to continue participating in the Michigan Association of Counties meetings and on the Alpena Intergovernmental Council. Schedule an initial joint meeting of the Michigan Townships Association with the County Board. Encourage the Township Boards to participate in the Michigan Township Association meetings.

Action 7: Consider cross-jurisdictional issues when reviewing community master plans and zoning ordinances.

Action 8: Participate in the Alpena CRTC Community Council to work collaboratively with the installation, surrounding communities, and state, federal and local agencies toward the strategies identified in the Joint Land Use Study (JLUS), if appropriate.

GOAL 2 – EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE WITH THE PUBLIC.

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Support the County Board of Commissioners efforts to inform the public about the scope and value of County services.

Objective 2: Encourage feedback from a wider array of County residents on issues impacting Alpena County, including but not limited to improvement of infrastructure and community facilities, public safety services, and types of residential, commercial, and industrial developments.

Objective 3: Increase public awareness about the County Planning Commission.

ACTION ITEMS

Action 1: Implement annual strategic planning sessions and encourage public participation.

Action 2: Solicit public feedback from all demographic sections in the county.

Action 3: Publish and promote planning-related information and resources.

GOAL 3 - ENSURE EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT COUNTY AND TOWNSHIP RESPONSES TO PUBLIC NEEDS.

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Work with the County Board of Commissioners to determine efficient methods to deliver county services.

Objective 2: Collaborate with the County Board of Commissioners regarding future planning issues in Alpena County.

Objective 3: Work with the County Board of Commissioners to ensure continued funding and support for the Alpena County Planning Commission.

ACTION ITEMS

Action 1: Implement annual strategic planning sessions to organize efficient service delivery.

Action 2: Work with the County Board of Commissioners to implement the Master Plan’s goals and objectives.

Action 3: The County Planning Commission will ensure Township Boards are aware of the value of master plans and/or assist the townships in implementing the goals and objectives from their master plans.

Action 4: Work with the County Board of Commissioners to ensure funding for adequate training for Planning Commission members and staff.

Action 5: Consider cross-jurisdictional issues when reviewing community master plans and zoning ordinances.

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Another essential part of ensuring a vital and healthy community is to maintain and improve the transportation system. The maintenance and expansion of transportation systems is complex and expensive. Changes in transportation infrastructure can have a profound impact on a community’s environmental conditions and land use patterns. Therefore, it is necessary to continually and carefully plan for improvements.

GOAL 1 - DEVELOP, MAINTAIN, AND FUND A SAFE AND EFFICIENT MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM.

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Plan and prepare for the future transportation needs of the entire county.

Objective 2: Support the County Road Commission in its efforts to plan and implement road improvements across the County.

Objective 3: Support, fund, and promote the implementation of the Road Inventory Asset Management System, the Alpena Area-Wide Transportation Plan, and the US-23 Heritage Route Management Plan.

Objective 4: Promote new commercial development at designated hubs and corridors in the Master Plan.

Objective 5: Encourage the continued development of public transportation options for the benefit of county residents.

Objective 6: Support the enhancement of the deep water port in the City of Alpena to better facilitate commercial shipping and tourism.

Objective 7: Support the continued development and expansion of the Alpena County Regional Airport as a regional commercial hub.

Objective 8: Maintain and improve rail service in Alpena County.

Objective 9: Advocate for uniform transportation access control across the county.

Objective 10: Promote the use of planning and zoning techniques to maintain the rural appearance of Alpena County and protect high quality recreation lands.

Objective 11: Determine the feasibility of developing and implementing a countywide wayfinding program designed to enhance tourism opportunities and promotion.

Objective 12: Continually maintain, implement, and promote the County Recreation Plan.

ACTION ITEMS

Action 1: Support the implementation of land use controls and techniques, such as clustering, shared parking, access management, and landscaping, to regulate commercial development and discourage linear strip development along state highways and primary county roads.

Action 2: Work with the County Board of Commissioners, the County Road Commission, local communities, property owners, developers, residents, and other entities to ensure road maintenance priorities are established and implemented.

Action 3: Work with the County Board of Commissioners and the County Road Commission to implement more frequent maintenance activities, such as dust control, road grading, road striping, and snow removal.

Action 4: Ensure planned transportation system improvements are included in the County Capital Improvements Plan and the Township Planning Commissions' Capital Improvement Plans.

Action 5: Determine the feasibility of developing a wayfinding program with the County Board of Commissioners and the County Road Commission. If feasible, conduct public education sessions about the merits of the wayfinding program.

Action 6: Work with the Thunder Bay Transportation Authority to ensure sufficient public transportation options for County residents and to educate the public about the public transportation services.

Action 7: Work with the City of Alpena and private facility owners to enhance the deep water port to better facilitate commercial shipping and tourism.

Action 8: Support participation in the Small Harbors Coalition and the Port Cities Collaborative.

Action 9: Determine ways to develop and expand the Alpena County Regional Airport.

Action 10: Improve rail service in Alpena County.

Action 11: Encourage and support the adoption of uniform transportation access control by local governments.

Action 12: Work with the County Board of Commissioners, County Road Commission, Township Boards, Michigan DNR, user groups, and the public to expand and improve the county's recreational trails.

Action 13: Work with the County Board of Commissioners and local governments to promote, develop, and/or maintain public water access sites.

Action 14: Address dockage and boating issues on inland lakes.

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

The protection of a community's natural environment is imperative in maintaining quality of life and ensuring future generations live in healthy surroundings. A clean and attractive environment helps attract new businesses, residents, and tourists. Economic development and environmental protection are both necessary for a healthy community. Arts and culture generate significant cognitive, emotional, and social benefits in addition to creating a local identity and sense of place. Furthermore, arts and culture stimulate local and regional economies through the revitalization of commercial corridors, the generation of jobs and spending, and the attraction of tourists, businesses, and employees.

GOAL 1 – PRESERVE AND CONSERVE THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT THROUGH THE PROTECTION OF GROUNDWATER, SURFACE WATER, AIR QUALITY, FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE, FORESTS, FARMLAND, WATERFRONT LANDS, WETLANDS, AND SCENIC VISTAS.

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Work cooperatively with communities, agencies, and organizations to develop studies and institute programs that address watershed, woodlands, wildlife, and ecosystem management.

Objective 2: Support studies that identify techniques to protect critical resources, wildlife habitat, water resources, ecological corridors, scenic areas and vistas, and other important ecological resources.

Objective 3: Encourage the adoption of zoning ordinance language to protect greenbelts, farmlands, forestlands, groundwater, and surface water.

Objective 4: Encourage the preservation of open spaces at strategic locations throughout the County.

Objective 5: Encourage the county and townships to effectively administer and enforce regulations, such soil erosion and sedimentation control, and to adopt needed ordinances, such as stormwater control.

Objective 6: Support natural resource education and technical programs to assist landowners, businesses, and communities.

Objective 7: Determine effective methods to work with local governments for natural resource protection.

ACTION ITEMS

Action 1: Work with the County Board of Commissioners and Township Boards to develop local ordinances and policies to protect the county’s natural resources, and to inform the public about the natural resource protections and regulations.

Action 2: Develop zoning ordinance language to protect greenbelts, farmlands, forestlands, groundwater, and surface water. Encourage local governments to adopt them and to cooperate with adjacent local units for the protection of these resources.

Action 3: Encourage the development of appropriate stormwater protection regulations.

Action 4: Encourage local officials to meet to ensure proper enforcement of existing regulations.

Action 5: Determine the feasibility of implementing wellhead protection zones in appropriate areas.

Action 6: Determine effective techniques and methods to preserve open spaces and scenic vistas in the county.

Action 7: Determine the feasibility of purchase of development rights or conservation easements as land use tools. Provide this information to the public.

Action 8: Work with the Conservation District, MSU Extension, the County Drain Commissioner, and Northeast Michigan Council of Governments (NEMCOG) to develop natural resource education and technical programs to assist landowners, businesses, and communities.

GOAL 2 - RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURAL LANDS AS AN ECONOMIC BASE, AND THE HERITAGE AND WAY OF LIFE IN ALPENA COUNTY.

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Promote agricultural growth and recognize the importance of all farms in Alpena County.

Objective 2: Encourage and support the preservation of farmland and woodlands, where feasible.

Objective 3: Discourage the conversion of farmland into other more intensive uses. Recognize farmland as contributing to the scenic and rural character of the County.

Objective 4: Discourage residential and farming land use conflicts.

Objective 5: Encourage the use of “Purchase of Development Rights”, “Transfer of Development Rights”, Clustering, and Conservation Easements to help farmers retain their agricultural acreage.

Objective 6: Recognize farmland as part of the County’s active economic base and potential source of jobs for county residents.

Objective 7: Support the maximization of the most beneficial agricultural use of agricultural lands in Alpena County, while encouraging environmentally sensitive farming practices to protect water quality without unnecessarily limiting the economic rights of agricultural landowners.

Objective 8: Encourage agricultural landowners to work cooperatively with supportive public agencies, such as MSU Extension, the Conservation District, USDA, and National Resource Conservation District.

Objective 9: Encourage farmers to produce, process, and market wholesale and retail products grown on their property.

Objective 10: Educate residents and local officials on Michigan’s Right to Farm Act.

Objective 11: Encourage the use of Generally Accepted Agricultural Management Practices (GAAMPs).

Objective 12: Establish Alpena County as a regional “local food hub.”

ACTION ITEMS

Action 1: Work with local, regional, and state organizations to preserve the economic viability of farming through the attraction of “value-added” industries for agricultural products.

Action 2: Encourage the adoption of zoning ordinances to include regulations that encourage and promote agricultural tourism activities, preserves large tracts of farmland, and creates rural residential transition zones to minimize residential and farmland land use conflicts.

Action 3: Encourage the use of “Purchase of Development Rights”, “Transfer of Development Rights”, Clustering, and Conservation Easements to help farmers retain their agricultural acreage. Provide this information to local residents.

Action 4: Support the development of web-based and print marketing local food promotions.

GOAL 3 - PRESERVE THE HISTORIC RESOURCES IN THE COUNTY.

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Work cooperatively with communities, agencies, and organizations to develop studies and institute programs that protect historic resources.

Objective 2: Support the creation of historic districts within the County.

Objective 3: Encourage private efforts to protect valuable historic resources.

Objective 4: Support historic resource education to assist landowners, businesses and communities.

ACTION ITEMS

Action 1: Collaborate with the County Board of Commissioners to promote the development of local ordinances and policies to protect historic resources in Alpena County.

Action 2: Encourage county and local officials to meet to ensure proper enforcement of existing regulations.

Action 3: Research and promote the adoption of zoning ordinance language to protect historic resources.

Action 4: Work with agencies and officials to inform the public about the benefits of historic preservation.

Action 5: Determine the feasibility of creating historic districts in the County.

Action 6: Encourage the inclusion of properties on the National Historic Register.

Action 7: Support the expansion of the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

GOAL 4 – SUPPORT, PROMOTE, AND ADVANCE ARTS AND CULTURE IN ALPENA COUNTY.

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Encourage and support community organizations in developing cultural arts activities and educational programs.

Objective 2: Broaden awareness about the value of arts and culture in the community.

Objective 3: Support the expansion of arts and cultural organizations, activities, and programs to allow for their growth and prosperity in service to the community.

ACTION ITEMS

Action 1: Assist with educating the public about arts and culture opportunities.

Action 2: Assist with promoting and marketing the arts and cultural organizations, activities, and programs.

COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES

In addition to the transportation infrastructure, other types of facilities, infrastructure, and services (e.g. water, sewer, fire, police, schools, etc.) constitute the foundation of a community. Well designed and managed infrastructure and services greatly adds to the community's livability. The continued maintenance of these facilities is essential and requires constant oversight. The expansion of

infrastructure and services is extremely expensive and places additional funding burdens on the public. Expansions that are not carefully planned can inadvertently cause environmental degradation and undesirable sprawl.

GOAL 1 - MAINTAIN AND EXPAND, AS NEEDED, THE COMMUNITY FACILITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND SERVICES TO ACCOMMODATE THE NEEDS OF RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES.

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Include planned improvements to community facilities and public infrastructures in an adopted County Capital Improvements Plan.

Objective 2: Secure state and federal funding for infrastructure improvements.

Objective 3: Identify services in need of attention during annual goal setting sessions.

Objective 4: Solicit public input regarding upgrades to community facilities.

Objective 5: Support the investigation into determining the need to create a water and sewer authority that oversees the public water and sewer services within the populated areas of the county and adjacent communities.

Objective 6: Collaborate with all of the dam owners in the county to assess the condition of the dams.

ACTION ITEMS

Action 1: Assist in the development and implementation of an annual Capital Improvements Plan.

Action 2: Participate in the Northeast Michigan Council of Governments' annual Community Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) process.

Action 3: Coordinate with the County Board of Commissioners regarding the need to maintain and improve the community facilities and infrastructure.

Action 4: Assist with conducting annual goal-setting sessions that include discussions about community facilities and infrastructure.

Action 5: Work with local governments to investigate joint utility authorities.

GOAL 2 – ENSURE THE EFFICIENT DELIVERY OF EMERGENCY SERVICES IN THE COUNTY.

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Encourage the efficient deployment of law enforcement services in the County.

Objective 2: Encourage expanded levels of Fire Department and Emergency Medical Service volunteers.

Objective 3: Support the planning efforts to upgrade the existing public safety equipment to ensure provision of efficient services, decrease response times to public safety incidents, and future telecommunication needs for public safety services.

Objective 4: Support the ongoing improvement of 9-1-1 operations.

Objective 5: Support Emergency Management operations.

Objective 6: Support the coordination of public safety services between communities to efficiently use tax dollars.

Objective 7: Determine the feasibility of collaborating or consolidating public safety services between local governments.

Objective 8: Support planning efforts for the present and future needs of the county jail.

ACTION ITEMS

Action 1: Encourage collaboration between the County Board of Commissioners, Alpena County Sheriff's Office, Michigan State Police, City of Alpena Police Department, Michigan DNR, and Coast Guard to ensure adequate law enforcement coverage within the County.

Action 2: Encourage collaboration to ensure adequate staffing of fire departments and emergency medical services.

Action 3: Incorporate future upgrades to the county's public safety equipment and telecommunications needs into the County Capital Improvements Plan.

Action 4: Support funding and training for the County 9-1-1 operations.

Action 5: Maintain and improve the 9-1-1 telecommunications facilities.

Action 6: Support continued funding and training for Emergency Management operations.

Action 7: Collaborate with Emergency Management regarding planning efforts. Participate in Emergency Management exercise operations.

Action 8: Work with the County Board of Commissioners and the Alpena County Road Commission to ensure the county road network provides quick and efficient travel for public safety vehicles.

Action 9: Encourage the implementation of land use controls that require sufficient private road access for emergency vehicles.

Action 10: Encourage the County Board of Commissioners to determine the feasibility of collaborating or consolidating public safety services with local governments.

GOAL 3 - ENCOURAGE THE EXPANSION OF THE COUNTY AS THE QUALITY MEDICAL SERVICES HUB IN NORTHEAST MICHIGAN.

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Support the growth and expansion of Mid-Michigan Medical Center, other medical facilities, and the healthcare network within the county.

ACTION ITEMS

Action 1: Encourage and support the recruitment and retention of primary care providers and medical specialists.

Action 2: Encourage and support programs that focus on medical and behavioral prevention services.

GOAL 4 – ENSURE EFFICIENT AND ACCESSIBLE SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL METHODS IN ALPENA COUNTY.

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Encourage and support solid waste efforts by the Montmorency-Oscoda-Alpena Landfill Authority.

Objective 2: Support and promote the Alpena County Resource Recovery Facility.

Objective 3: Provide information to the public about solid waste and recycling options available in the County. Encourage local recycling efforts.

Objective 4: Encourage gasification efforts at the landfill.

ACTION ITEMS

Action 1: Determine the best locations to place recycling drop-off sites in the county.

Action 2: Work with the Montmorency-Oscoda-Alpena Landfill Authority and the Alpena County Resource Recovery Facility to educate the public about the available solid waste and recycling options.

GOAL 5 - SUPPORT THE CONSTRUCTION OF EFFICIENT COMMUNICATION NETWORKS WITHIN THE COUNTY.

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Determine methods to improve coverage for cell phone service in the County.

Objective 2: Research methods to upgrade available Internet services to high-speed capability.

Objective 3: Work with other agencies to diversify the internet and cell phone service providers.

ACTION ITEMS

Action 1: Work with Target Economic Development Corporation, Alpena County Emergency Management, and private vendors to upgrade cell phone coverage in the County.

Action 2: Work with Target Economic Development Corporation and private vendors to provide high speed Internet in the County.

Action 3: Determine the feasibility to develop and deploy countywide fiber optics or wireless internet networks.

Action 4: Collaborate with and support the Alpena County Fiber Optics Consortium.

Action 5: Meet with Internet Service Providers on a regular basis to discuss short, medium, and long-term plans for increasing connectivity and partner with agencies to set up meetings with the private sector.

GOAL 6 - SUPPORT THE GROWTH OF THE EDUCATIONAL SECTOR IN THE COUNTY.

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Support the expansion of college-level educational opportunities.

Objective 2: Assist with maintaining high quality primary and secondary education.

ACTION ITEMS

Action 1: Encourage increased funding from the State of Michigan for public schools.

Action 2: Support the expansion and growth for all degree and certificate programs at Alpena Community College and its affiliates.

RECREATION

Alpena County is fortunate to have many natural resources and recreational opportunities to add to its quality of life and to make the county a more enjoyable place to live and work. The area's many recreational facilities and opportunities are also very important in attracting tourists, new residents, and

businesses. Maintaining and improving recreational facilities and opportunities is vital for present and future generations.

2019 JOINT RECREATION PLAN GOALS

The following goals and objectives are from the 2019 Joint Recreation Plan. Specific action items can be found in the plan at the following website:

http://www.discovernortheastmichigan.org/downloads/combined_alpena_recreation_plan_2019_final_alpenacounty.pdf

SHARED RECREATION GOALS

Alpena County, the Charter Township of Alpena, Green Township, Ossineke Township, and Wilson Township share the following recreational goals.

GOAL 1: TO PROTECT, PROMOTE, AND PRESERVE THE COMMUNITIES, NATURAL RESOURCES, AND JOBS OF OUR AREA.

GOAL 2: TO ENSURE LOCAL GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE DEVELOPMENT, MAINTENANCE, AND PROMOTION OF OUR RECREATIONAL ASSETS AND OUR NATURAL RESOURCES AND RECOGNITION BY ALL AGENCIES IN OUR AREA THAT RECREATION IS FUNDAMENTAL TO THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR RESIDENTS.

GOAL 3: TO BE AN ACTIVE PARTNER IN REGIONAL COLLABORATIONS TO PLAN, MAINTAIN, DEVELOP, AND PROMOTE NEW RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.

GOAL 4: TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE THAT IS CRITICAL TO OUR RESIDENTS' HEALTH, THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT, AND ATTRACTION OF OUR AREA TO THOSE VISITING AND CONSIDERING MOVING HERE.

GOAL 5: TO ENSURE ALL PEOPLE HAVE ACCESS TO RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES AND FACILITIES REGARDLESS OF AGE, SEX, INCOME, CULTURAL BACKGROUND, HOUSING ENVIRONMENT, OR ABILITIES.

GOAL 6: TO PRESERVE AND CONSERVE THE AREA'S NATURAL RESOURCES, PROTECT THEM FROM INVASIVE SPECIES AND DEGRADATION, RECOGNIZING THAT THEY ARE CRITICAL TO THE LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY OF OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND QUALITY OF LIFE.

GOAL 7: TO ENSURE THAT AREA RESIDENTS ARE INVOLVED IN THE RECREATION PLANNING PROCESS.

ALPENA COUNTY OBJECTIVES AND ACTION ITEMS FROM THE 2019 RECREATION PLAN

General Objectives

Objective 1: Encourage the pursuit of outside funding sources, such as State and federal grants, for recreational development and improvements.

Objective 2: Work in cooperation with communities and agencies to ensure access is available to surface water resources, such as lakes, rivers, Lake Huron and Misery Bay, for activities such as boating, fishing, kayaking, canoeing, swimming, ice fishing, snowmobiling, and ice boating.

Objective 3: Continue to work with land conservancies and public agencies to identify key parcels and set aside undeveloped properties for parks, nature preserves, and future recreational needs.

Objective 4: In a cooperative effort, designate snowmobile routes that connect communities to regional snowmobile networks by working with the appropriate local unit of government, snowmobile groups, the County Road Commission, County Sheriff Department and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

Objective 5: Support the integration and expansion of non-motorized transportation facilities to link neighborhoods, communities, commercial areas and cultural destinations, parks, schools and regional parks and trails.

Objective 6: Promote Alpena as a trail destination. The Recreation Commission OR another organization or committee that includes economic development representatives could work together to develop and promote trails. Work with local businesses, health professionals and the hospital to promote biking and walking for health. Support efforts to tie together the various trail systems, existing and proposed such as a South Bay Trail loop as well as the Thunder Bay River water trail project.

Objective 7: Encourage improvements to non-motorized recreation trails such as cross-country ski trails, bike trails and horseback riding trails. Work with state agencies and local governments to continue to improve and enhance regional multi-use trails for year round use including the North Eastern State Trail (NEST) and the Alpena to Hillman Trail. Non-motorized transportation may be in the form of on-road bicycle facilities, sidewalks, side-paths, and shared use off-road paths. Great trails have great amenities and there would be need to add rest stops, benches, overlooks, interpretive signs and local access sites along the trails.

Trail Objective 1: Add amenities and access points along the NEST.

Trail Objective 2: Improve the surface and accessibility for the Alpena to Hillman Trail.

Trail Objective 3: Add amenities, trailhead and access points along the Alpena to Hillman Trail.

Trail Objective 4: Work with and coordinate the many volunteers that are maintaining existing trail.

Trail Objective 5: Work with the DNR to find the best location for mountain bike trails on existing DNR land.

Trail Objective 6: Non-motorized transportation facilities and trail connections:

- Connect from Alpena south to Oscoda (NOTE: A Coastal Zone Management Grant has been awarded to do trail planning in this corridor in 2019.) Connect to Partridge Point, Ossineke and Negwegon State Park.
- Connect to Norway Ridge via Werth Road and a connection from the Alpena to Hillman Trail.
- Create a connection from Alpena to Rockport and Long Lake County Park.
- Work with the DNR to find a solution to the 2 mile gap of trail corridor between M-65 and Salina Road and then improve trail from M-65 to Hillman.
- Connect Alpena to Hillman Trail with Optimist Acres and Alpena Sno-drifters barn.

Trail Objective 7: Water Trails:

- The Huron Blueway trail is planned but needs to be marketed; the County could facilitate a group to mark, sign, and promote this trail.

- Thunder Bay River water trail mapping project is wrapping up the mapping work in 2018. Look at public access and consider improvements, signage, maps and marketing.
- Need a livery to provide boats for both the Lake Huron/Thunder Bay water trail, the Thunder Bay River and the water trail in Lake Besser in the City.

Trail Objective 8: Create a trailhead for Norway Ridge and the Alpena to Hillman Trail from M-32.

Objective 8: Consider re-activating the Recreation Commission to build, manage, and maintain regional trail systems and coordinate with trail groups. Trail opportunities exist for all trail user groups (ATV/ORV, motorcycle, equestrian, non-motorized, bicycling, mountain biking, water trails, snowmobiles, and hiking).

Objective 9: Support and encourage improvements to area indoor and outdoor recreational, historical and cultural facilities and programs in accordance with locally adopted recreation plans or other officially adopted documents.

Objective 10: Create a Karst Discovery Trail that you could drive and or bike ride to each site. Consider purchase of the karst property along the NEST on Maple Grove Road as a day use park and trail destination. Work with the Michigan Karst Conservancy.

Objective 11: Encourage more and safer enjoyment of hunting and fishing.

Objective 12: Continually seek input from the public for planning future recreation needs and to promote safe use of recreational opportunities.

County Parks Objectives

Objective 1: Increase usage of the campgrounds through improved advertising and working with local and state tourism organizations

Objective 2: Continue to make improvements to camp sites and associated facilities to improve user experience

Objective 3: Address Americans Disability Act (ADA) guidelines when making improvements to campground facilities

Objective 4: Expand family oriented activities and activities for kids

Objective 5: Improve boating and fishing opportunities

Objective 6: Provide opportunities for winter recreation at Manning Hill Park

Objective 7: Develop partnerships with community service clubs, organizations and agencies to assist with maintenance and improvements to parks

Objective 8: Seek funding from a variety of sources to support operations and capital investments.

Objective 9: Conduct water quality testing

Plaza Pool Objectives

Objective 1: Enhance marketing and advertising efforts to increase awareness of public pool access to Alpena County residents

Objective 2: Provide a variety of programming offered to all age groups, abilities and fitness levels, including, education as to the health benefits of swimming

Objective 3: Develop partnerships with local clubs and area businesses to facilitate new user groups

Objective 4: Seek funding from a variety of sources to support operations and capital investments

Objective 5: Continue to explore opportunities to operate the pool in an energy efficient and cost-effective manner

Objective 6: Continue to make needed improvements to the facilities, including addressing ADA guidelines

Northern Lights Arena Objectives

Objective 1: To continue to focus NLA as one of the economic centers for growth in the County of Alpena

Objective 2: Continue to explore opportunities to operate the arena and facilities in an energy efficient and cost effective manner

Objective 3: To become the center of Winter Sports in Northeastern Michigan, involving every form of ice-skating indoors and outdoors, cross-country skiing, snowmobile head point on the State and Regional Rails to Trails programs, snowshoeing trails, plus other opportunities

Objective 4: Seek development of a modern toboggan run to elevate Alpena as a destination for winter tourists

Objective 5: Continue to provide the community with excellent arena space for special events requiring large areas and seating for 1,000 to 1,500 persons

Objective 6: To seek funding and sponsorships for various programs for all age groups and families to use the assets of NLA to improve the quality of life in Alpena

Objective 7: To continue to raise funds and/or seek funding for capital improvement of the facility and supporting projects

Objective 8: Continue to make needed improvements to the facilities, including addressing ADA guidelines

Objective 9: In the summer, serve as the head point in Alpena for bikers and hikers using the rail to trails program

Objective 10: Work with Alpena County, Alpena Community College, APlex, local government and other groups to implement the Woodward Avenue Vision Plan and Center of Recreation

County Fairgrounds Objectives

Objective 1: Continue to provide the site for the Alpena County Fair and other community activities and events

Objective 2: Provide opportunities for camping, open space, outdoor recreation and water access to the Thunder Bay River

Objective 3: Continue to make needed improvements to the facilities, including addressing ADA guidelines

Objective 4: Seek funding from a variety of sources to support operations and capital investments

Objective 5: Develop partnerships with public and private entities to expand opportunities for community use of Fairground facilities

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Diverse and well-maintained housing choices are another vital component of a community since the strength of a local economy is based, in part, on the affordability and selection of the housing stock. As a strong economy is essential in a healthy community, adequate housing choices must be available for residents to feel economically secure and to attract new citizens to the area. A broad mix of demographics in a community provides for a well-rounded economy, which adds to the community's quality of life. Housing choices impact more than what type of structure an individual buys. The ability to access and afford housing choices impacts overall community development by influencing factors, such as church attendance, community organizations, the ability to access quality education, and convenient

shopping opportunities. Therefore, a local community should actively encourage desirable residential development.

GOAL 1 - PROVIDE SUITABLE HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL INCOME LEVELS AND AGE GROUPS, WHILE PRESERVING AND ENHANCING THE EXISTING SMALL-TOWN AND RURAL CHARACTER.

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Assist in ensuring there is adequate and suitable housing available to all residents. Investigate the use of State and federal funding programs to meet these objectives.

Objective 2: Support new residential construction or the renovation of existing houses to meet the needs of all residents regardless of income.

Objective 3: Encourage a mix of housing developments in the County.

Objective 4: Balance new residential growth with the existing rural character of the County.

Objective 5: Assist in maintaining the tranquil quality of existing residential areas.

Objective 6: Encourage the maintenance of the existing housing stock to keep residential areas in good repair, appearance, usefulness and safety.

Objective 7: Encourage the development and installation of fiber optic/WiFi in residential areas.

ACTION ITEMS

Action 1: Support local governments in implementing zoning ordinance language to protect residential areas from intrusion by incompatible uses.

Action 2: Encourage quality infill development that is compatible with the existing housing stock and rural character, and will strengthen the residential areas.

Action 3: Determine effective techniques to preserve and maintain older homes as owner-occupied, single-family dwellings. Provide this information to the public.

Action 4: Collaborate with and support the county housing program.

Action 5: Work with the County housing program and local building departments to use incentive programs and legal approaches to eliminate structures in disrepair

Action 6: Support local governments in implementing zoning ordinance language to direct medium and high density residential development to lands with the capacity to support such development and that are adequately served by public services.

Action 7: Work with the County Board of Commissioners to pursue grant funding to encourage restoration and rehabilitation of older homes.

Action 8: Promote neighborhood enhancement programs (e.g. street tree plantings, clean-up days, neighborhood gardens, community pride programs, etc.).

Action 9: Work with local units to explore the possibility of secondary dwelling units in the County.

Action 10: Work with the County housing program and appropriate agencies to pursue affordable housing funding programs.

Action 11: Plan for the mixing of residential uses with commercial and office uses where possible.

Action 12: Support local governments in developing zoning ordinance language to implement minimum size standards for single- and multi-family housing.

Action 13: Support the implementation of rental housing programs to ensure high standards are maintained in single- and multi-family rental housing.

Action 14: Research housing preservation options through the implementation of historic preservation techniques.

Action 15: Advise local governments to develop standards that regulate the construction and use of wind turbines.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A strong economy is essential to a healthy community. Residents must have the opportunity to earn family-sustaining wages to be productive community members. A strong economy does not usually happen without the local community actively seeking ways to encourage desirable development. The U.S. and world economies are changing rapidly, which is profoundly affecting local economies. Alpena County has seen first-hand how quickly communities can lose high-paying employment due to new technological advances and competition from abroad. It is imperative, therefore, to plan ahead to ensure a vital economic future.

GOAL 1 - PROVIDE FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH THAT CREATES A DIVERSIFIED ECONOMIC BASE AND IMPROVES THE COMPETITIVENESS OF THE COUNTY'S ECONOMY THROUGH THE ENHANCEMENT OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND THE PROFITABILITY OF BUSINESSES AND INDUSTRIES, WHILE MAINTAINING THE COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND ENVIRONMENT.

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Encourage local governments, community organizations, and the public to provide input on ongoing strategies to build Alpena's status as a regional marketplace in Northeast Michigan.

Objective 2: Support and cooperate with regional economic development organizations to determine techniques and methods to promote and develop all of Northeast Michigan.

Objective 3: Support reasonable land use and development regulations, and the development of infrastructure and facilities necessary to support economic development.

Objective 4: Encourage economic expansion through the promotion and attraction of new businesses to the State designated Renaissance Zones.

Objective 5: Support the attraction of health-related businesses and services to the Alpena area.

Objective 6: Strengthen the partnership between the county and the Alpena Combat Readiness Center to seek ways to expand the center's training activities.

Objective 7: Strive to balance economic development, while preserving the rural character of the County.

Objective 8: Encourage a diverse mix of new businesses.

Objectives 9: Promote the design concept of compact development to maximize potential land uses.

Objective 10: Encourage the consideration of public or private parking needs for all expansions and new developments.

ACTION ITEMS

Action 1: Support the implementation of zoning ordinance language to protect commercial areas from intrusion by incompatible uses.

Action 2: Support the implementation of zoning ordinance language to concentrate future development in desired areas.

Action 3: Work with the appropriate economic development agencies to promote business retention, expansion, and diversification.

Action 4: Promote worker education and training programs.

Action 5: Work with the appropriate agencies to expand high-speed telecommunication coverage in the County.

Action 6: Determine the feasibility of creating Downtown Development authorities, Corridor Improvement authorities, or Tax Increment Finance authorities in the appropriate areas to improve local economic conditions.

Action 7: Support the implementation of streetscape projects to increase the attractiveness of commercial areas.

Action 8: Work with Target Alpena Development Corporation to implement existing business retention programs, and to encourage economic expansion through the promotion and attraction of new businesses.

Action 9: Support the expansion of economic opportunities at the Alpena County Regional Airport.

Action 10: Continue to investigate and implement methods to develop high speed telecommunication service in rural areas, while maintaining a rural character.

Action 11: Encourage the expansion of the infrastructure required to make the County attractive to commercial, industrial, and home-based business.

Action 12: Determine the feasibility of creating a County Brownfield Authority.

GOAL 2 - SUPPORT THE RETENTION AND EXPANSION OF JOBS.

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Assist in developing goods, services, recreation, and employment opportunities needed to retain families and individuals.

Objective 2: Support development that expands family sustaining job opportunities.

Objective 3: Encourage partnerships between community organizations, Alpena Community College, and Michigan Works to ensure education and training programs meet the needs of the area's present and future employers.

ACTION ITEMS

Action 1: Support efforts to attract "daily shopping need" types of businesses into walkable locations.

Action 2: Encourage the development of all businesses.

Action 3: Encourage entrepreneurial training programs to assist residents in starting and maintaining small businesses.

GOAL 3 - EXPAND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE COUNTY.

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Diversify business opportunities through efforts to make Alpena County a vibrant community and desirable place to live and work.

Objective 2: Balance new commercial growth with the existing rural character of the County.

Objective 3: Work with the Chamber of Commerce, Target Alpena Development Corporation and the business community to develop and maintain healthy and vibrant community centers.

Objective 4: Determine the feasibility of developing a business incubator in the County.

Objective 5: Support development of the County's Renaissance Zones.

Objective 6: Encourage the retention of basic services for County residents.

ACTION ITEMS

Action 1: Form public-private partnerships to improve the local economy.

Action 2: Seek out and encourage the establishment of businesses that serve to fill the year-round needs of the County.

Action 3: Support the maintenance of identifiable central business districts.

Action 4: Support the development of mixed land uses in appropriate areas.

Action 5: Encourage the development of home-based businesses.

Action 6: Develop innovative planning and zoning techniques, such as design standards, to maintain the rural character of the County.

Action 7: Investigate tax incentive and abatement programs to encourage commercial development.

Action 8: Support zoning regulations that establish and enforce standards to require businesses to maintain an aesthetically desirable appearance.

Action 9: Investigate and support business façade improvement programs.

Action 10: Encourage small neighborhood businesses to serve residents and support a walkable environment.

Action 11: Encourage and support a coordinated effort for marketing and recruitment of small businesses.

GOAL 4 - PROMOTE AND ENCOURAGE TOURISM AND AGRICULTURAL-BASED TOURISM ACTIVITIES.

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Promote cultural, historical, industrial, and environmental attractions to a broad market.

Objective 2: Establish Alpena County as a year-round tourism destination.

Objective 3: Promote eco-tourism and agricultural tourism opportunities.

ACTION ITEMS

Action 1: Work with local governments, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Convention and Visitor’s Bureau to develop strategies to market the area as a tourism destination.

Action 2: Encourage community organizations to develop strategies that build on the idea of Alpena County as a destination.

Action 3: Support the promotion of the Alpena area as the “Sanctuary of the Great Lakes.”

Action 4: Promote sustainable, year-round tourism through the implementation of spring, summer, fall and winter festivals, and other activities that will attract people to the County.

Action 5: Support the tourism marketing and promotion efforts for regional entities, such as the US-23 Heritage Route, the Sunrise Coastal Coalition, and the Michigan Arts & Culture Northeast.

Action 6: Support the development and expansion of the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary and Underwater Preserve.

Action 7: Support the improvements to recreational facilities in the County.

Action 8: Encourage the sale of local produce in the County’s commercial areas and through home-based businesses.

Action 9: Work with local, regional, and state organization to attract “value-added” industries for agricultural products.

Action 10: Determine the feasibility of developing a tourism-oriented wayfinding program.

GOAL 5 - INVESTIGATE AND SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE EXPANSION OF THE COUNTY’S INDUSTRIAL BASE.

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Provide the necessary services, facilities, and programs to expand industrial development opportunities in Alpena County.

Objective 2: Initiate public education opportunities regarding the nature and economic impact of industrial development.

Objective 3: Balance new industrial growth with the existing rural character of the County.

Objective 4: Determine suitable locations for industrial development.

ACTION ITEMS

Action 1: Support the implementation of zoning ordinance language to protect industrial areas from intrusion by incompatible uses.

Action 2: Support the implementation of zoning ordinance language to direct industrial development to land that has the capacity to support such development and is adequately served by public roads and utilities.

Action 3: Research tax incentive and tax abatement programs to encourage industrial development.

Action 4: Encourage infrastructure expansion, where needed, to make the county attractive to industrial development.