

CHAPTER 1

THE PLANNING PROCESS

(What is this document?)

This Master Plan is intended to guide policy and decision making for future land use, infrastructure and public service decisions within Kalkaska County. The Plan identifies key planning issues, guiding principles, policies, and action steps that are instrumental to its implementation. Background information, analysis and recommendations provide a context for informed decisions. This plan is highly graphic to existing land use patterns and how development should be designed.

Proposed future land uses and policies presented in this Plan were developed based on a combination of the natural capability of the land to sustain certain types of development; the important natural functions of unique land and water resources in the area; the future need for residential, commercial and industrial land uses; the existing land use distribution, including the State Forest areas; the relationship of undeveloped lands to existing community character; and the desires of local residents and public officials as expressed throughout this process.

This Master Plan is adopted pursuant to the authority of the County Planning Act, PA 282 of 1945, as amended. This Act provides for the preparation of a basic plan to promote the community health, safety and welfare through provision for the use of land and resources and the assurance of adequate public facilities and services. The Kalkaska County Master Plan is prepared as a foundation for, and depends primarily on, the County's Zoning Ordinance, subdivision regulations and capital improvement program for its implementation. It is hoped that cooperation with local planning commissions within the County will result in compatible local land use plans so that a coordinated approach will be achieved.

WHEN TO USE THIS PLAN (ALWAYS!!!)

- As the basis for developing Kalkaska County's Zoning Ordinance;
- as promotion of the public interest in and understanding the planning process and Plan implementation;
- as a guide when reviewing, coordinating, or preparing specialized plans which address a particular subject (like housing) or geographic area (like a neighborhood within the County);
- as a guide in reviewing applications for rezonings, subdivisions, variances, and special use permits;
- as a guide when preparing and reviewing capital improvement programs and the public works projects of other local agencies;
- as the basis for more detailed township and village plans and development ordinances;
- as a frame of reference for private investment in the County;
- as a guide to village, township and county public facility and infrastructure decisions;
- as a guide to the Kalkaska County Planning Commission in fulfilling its responsibility to review proposed public facility expenditures for consistency with the Master Plan;
- as a guide to the Kalkaska County Planning Commission fulfilling their statutory responsibility to review township plans and zoning amendments;
- as a guide to preparing measures to protect sensitive environmental areas;
- as a guide in protecting air and water quality;
- as a guide to improved long term resource management decisions, especially with regard to renewable resources, and critical plant and animal habitats;
- as a base reference for joint or separate village, township, and county grant activities;
- as an organization plan for county program expenditures;
- to stimulate and facilitate intergovernmental cooperation (i.e., among not only the County and local units of government, but also: private and semi-private organizations, area schools, the DNR, the Soil Conservation Service, adjoining county of governments, etc.),
- to define issues of greater than local concern and establish appropriate mechanisms to deal with those issues, including but not limited to solid waste and recycling facilities; utility and sewage disposal sites,; large scale developments; fire and emergency services; and affordable housing.
- **Every time the Kalkaska County Planning Commission meets.**

HOW WAS THE PLAN CREATED

(Who wrote this document?)

The Kalkaska County Planning Commission (Planning Commission) is responsible for this document. In 2002 the Planning Commission contacted New Designs for Growth about updating the 1995 Kalkaska County Master Plan. They had been very impressed by the Grand Traverse Bay Regional Development Guidebook (Guidebook) written by New Designs for Growth. Their intentions were to develop a new master plan based on the concepts discussed in the Guidebook and have a similar design layout. New Designs for Growth, on behalf of the Planning Commission, applied for a grant from the Traverse City Area Rotary Charities to fund this master plan. Traverse City Area Rotary Charities approved the grant. New Designs for Growth contracted with Gosling Czubak Engineering Sciences to provide the technical expertise and write the plan. New Designs for Growth and Gosling Czubak met with the Planning Commission seven times during the process. Gosling Czubak presented drafts of the various sections to the Planning Commission members to get their input and finalized the Plan based on their desires. The final version of this Plan reflects their desires and ideas about the preferred future development of Kalkaska County. The Northwest Michigan Council of Governments provided the mapping service.

LOCATION AND JURISDICTIONAL ISSUES

(What's involved?)

Named in 1843, the County was originally called Wabassee, which honored a Potawatomi chief. Located in the northern lower peninsula of Michigan, Kalkaska County is situated within some of the State's most beautiful natural settings, drawing many seasonal visitors to the area. Traverse City is located only 20 miles west of Kalkaska County and the City of Detroit is 230 miles southeast, or little more than a four-hour drive. Surrounding counties include: Grand Traverse County to the west, Crawford County to the east, Antrim County directly north and Missaukee County to the south. Major transportation routes through Kalkaska County include US-131, traversing the northwest section of the County; M-66, running north and south; and M-72 running east and west.

Kalkaska County contains thirteen jurisdictions, namely one village, and twelve townships. Of special significance is the Village of Kalkaska, serving as the commerce center for the County. There is a broad array of issues that extend beyond the boundaries of any one jurisdiction and decisions made by one jurisdiction are often affected by the decisions made by other jurisdictions. For instance, air and water conditions in Kalkaska Township, will impact the quality of life and natural environment in Rapid River Township. Conversely, a large-scale industrial development in Orange Township could have large impacts on Kalkaska and other nearby townships. Intergovernmental communication and coordination are essential when planning for the future of a county. Effective integration of the policies of this Plan with existing regulatory and planning documents in the County will require an ongoing commitment to intergovernmental cooperation.

Zoning issues are also important when thinking in terms of intergovernmental cooperation. It is important to keep all local governments informed of proposed changes to this Plan or of its regulatory instruments and encourages their input prior to changes. Currently only three townships (Kalkaska Township, Garfield and Blue Lake) and the Village of Kalkaska have master plans. Four townships (Garfield, Blue Lake, Clearwater, and Boardman) and the Village of Kalkaska have adopted zoning ordinances. County zoning applies in the rest of the Townships.

KALKASKA COUNTY

(Who's involved?)

- The Kalkaska County Master Plan affects all of the Townships and Villages in the County.
- Individual Township and Village Master Plans should be compatible with each other and with the County Master Plan.
- Kalkaska County administers the zoning for the following townships: Kalkaska; Rapid River; Cold Springs; Excelsior; Orange; Oliver; Bear Lake; and Springfield.

