

zoning incentives to make it easier?) Responses also mention these should consider rural character, vegetation and green spaces and common areas (recreation components) which would help maintain property values.

2. Do you have ideas for creating more housing choices (types, sizes, styles, etc.) in general?

Many of these responses were along the same lines as the prior question. There was again mention of creating more multi-family type houses, supporting seasonal worker housing and smaller housing footprints in general. Concern with the environmental impacts that some housing is creating along the lake shores was voiced. Many residents live here for the quality of life that the lakes and forests provide – we must be protect the reason people live here to begin with! Also mention to make sure that other regional housing studies (Manistee Housing Survey/Networks Northwest are always being referenced and are likely helpful.)

3. What is your opinion of the current housing stock (look, quality, type)?

Responses indicated that it depends on the area. The Townships cover a relatively large geographic area to compare housing styles. For the most part respondents said look of housing seems good. There is mention of a lack of housing stock especially for low income and working -single family home owners. Also that there are areas where more programs are needed to help those under the poverty level.

4. Are you familiar with the Zoning Ordinance? Do you know of anything in the current zoning ordinance that you feel negatively affects residential development?

There were two main areas that respondents focused on. The first were comments regarding strengthening environmental protections, especially for environmentally sensitive areas such as lakes, waterways, forests and steep slopes. The other area several comments focused on what types and look of development. The ordinance should support safety and security of residents, ensure character of development matches the area/environment and supports the local economy. There was also concern about the minimum parcel size of 10 and 5 acres, in some areas this is too restrictive to support other types of development (smaller homes, alternative development, etc.) Need to examine PUD language to make sure it allows appropriate development that supports working families and senior communities.

5. What are your thoughts on short term rental housing? Should it be regulated in any way?

All respondents shared some concerns for the effects of short term rental properties on the local community. Concerns ranged from how they may affect the resources of police/fire/safety, additional impacts on local roads, traffic, parking and noise increases. Main concerns regarding protecting existing neighborhoods and not taking away long term or other housing from local residents. Overall, there was strong support for regulating short term rentals in some ways (even if it was just requiring them to register and follow good neighbor guides). Most respondents thought limits should be considered as well as restrictions in certain areas. There was also support for taxing short term rentals, similar to hotels.

6. Do you feel like the current township zoning regulations allow appropriate opportunities for commercial businesses?

The respondents did not have a lot of strong opinions on this question, the few that commented mentioned they were not aware of any commercial developments that have had issue with the current ordinance.

7. Are there improvements in either Township you would like to see to make it easier for commercial businesses to thrive?

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Some of the items that were mentioned include; being thoughtful where future commercial is located to it protects character of the areas, assuring it works so that housing is available for potential employees, planning for commercial and industrial parks in the future would be good planning practice, plan for bicycling and alternative forms of transportation, consider bike lanes and bike/pedestrian safety improvements, sewer system, better zoning enforcement for rules in place, increasing violations and fines for those that don't follow the ordinance.

8. Do you have concerns with ANY other non-residential zoning regulations?

There were several additional comments on concerns with environmental items including; additional protections to prevent invasive species, protection of wild/forested areas to be used more sustainably in order to support natural resources and public recreation areas, ensuring responsible land use as land is not an infinite resource, building on slopes and tree removals should be regulated more closely. There were also concerns about lack of infrastructure, particularly in providing water and sewer to areas where commercial development is needed.

9. Would you support the development of some type of sewer system (mainly for Benzonia Township) that would allow for additional development options? Do you have any concerns regarding future sewer development?

There was overall concern about lack of sewer system and its effects on environmental quality of the lakes and in areas of more concentrated development. In general, there was support for sewer development in there area and it would benefit in the long run, however all respondents had concerns about costs. One respondent voiced concerns that costs would be too much with all the other items the community has recently been asked to support (school bond, fire department) and that it would be hard to support sewer as well.

10. Are there any regulations in the Zoning Ordinance that you would like to see strengthened, expanded on or new?

Respondents voiced strong concerns regarding blight and lack of enforcement for the current rules in the ordinance. The concerns with blight appear to issues that have been long standing, several references that conditions on some properties have been there 'year after year'. Response seems to realize this is a difficult issue but one that should not be ignored as it drives down property values, creates environmental hazards, and only gets worse over time. There was also again comments about ways the zoning ordinance may support the development of affordable housing with mention of an incentives and appropriate regulation to both allow and assure that environmental impacts are not negative.

11. How do you feel about the existing park and recreation facilities in Benzonia Township (OK as is or need improvements)?

Respondents in general did not have a lot of comments related specifically to the Township Parks - there was one comment that basketball courts are well used in County and could be improved. All seem to think parks are good and a much needed public benefit. Volunteers or students may be useful partnerships to help improve park spaces. There was comments regarding how nice the 'trail' (Betsie Valley Trail) is and it should continue to be improved and expanded. Also the idea that trail and bicycle connections are important and expansion and important links should continue to be pursued.

12. How do you feel about the existing park and recreation facilities in Platte Township (OK as is or need improvements)?

The respondents were not familiar with the park and recreation facilities in Platte Township. One mentioned when trying to find information on the facilities they were unable to find out any information.

13. Are there specific improvements you would like to see to existing park spaces (either township)?

Comments mention that improvements should be based on analysis of park usage (how are fields and dog parks being used). Also mention that maintenance and maintaining accessible access is important. Encourage paving walkways and trails when possible for maximum accessibility.

14. Do you feel the townships should consider any acquisition of new park or recreation areas/lands/facilities in the future?

The responses in general supported consideration of new park facilities, but resources should also focus on maintaining what exists. There was some concern that, at this time, it would not be a good idea to add expenses and long term costs. Some ideas for future consideration included; protecting forested lands, providing places with minimal public access for less environmental impacts, encouraging the Benzie Aquatic Center if feasible, and support that public lands are always a rich resource for the community.

15. If you said yes, do you have a particular recreation area or type of facility in mind that would benefit the public?

The specific ideas included: Nature trails, hunting and fishing with oversight, Benzie Aquatic Center, accessible access to waterfront or beach resources citing example of Betsie River access in Thompsonville.

16. What do you feel is the biggest issue currently affecting the community?

There was a range of responses to this question, they included; concerns over growth and development and how its impacting the environment and character of the community, drugs and crime, availability of workers for full-time and seasonal jobs, lack of both affordable housing and affordable child care.

17. Do you know if there is anything in the township zoning ordinance that negatively affects your organization/business?

There were not many that voiced concerns about of the current ordinance specifically, except for the concern that the watershed ordinance for Crystal Lake is not currently strong enough and concerns it will not provide enough protections for future development.

18. What community sharing/joint program/ or outreach type opportunities do you see that should be expanded on, improved or implemented in either township?

Responses echoed the importance of community programs and supporting youth and those in need. It was mentioned the Township should have an understanding of the mission of community groups and be able to support, help expand and house programs where needed. There was mention of possibility of a community workshop/meeting to organize and get people interested and gain support for the right programs. Programs like SEEDS, supporting other school programs, and the possibility of Aquatic and Wellness Center that could support community programs were mentioned.

19. Thinking about Townships environmental issues; Do you think the protection of natural resources (trees, air, water) is enough?

6. Public Participation

In general, the answers all reflected concern that the current ordinance does not provide enough protection of environmental resources, especially with the increase in development pressure in certain areas (new lake front homes). In particular, nearly all discussed concerns with the protection of water resources. Several of the answers discuss the lack of sewers and the impact that may have be having on water quality of the lakes or future problems the lack of sewers may cause. Some of the more detailed answers also discussed minimal tree and vegetation protections, there seem to be support for stronger tree removal and forest management standards and promoting planting of new trees. Again, there was concern with lack of enforcement and even following the standards that are in the current ordinance.

"The culture, history and beauty we have is a double edged sword. Developing further is a salvation economically, but there is a fine line which, when crossed, destroys the very quality you love so much. If we are careful we can have both. I believe that the upper Midwest with abundant water, and welcoming climate in the face of global warming will be ripe for over development in a few decades, if not sooner. We must guard against allowing the destruction of what we love the most."

- Quote from Stakeholder Survey Response

20. Do you think there are enough social support resources in the area?

Respondents seem to feel there are quality resources in the community to support those in need. They discuss, food pantries, health department, BACN, Benzie Bus, Meals on Wheels, and the Benzie Senior Resource Center. There may be room to improve the communication and the ability to connect these resources with those in need. There was concern about assuring that the area youth are supported enough by programs. There were multiple mentions of the need for shelter assistance, and the idea that is hard to do, but with the state of housing in the area it is probably a big issue and one of the social support areas that is lacking in the Benzie Community.

21. If you could make ONE improvement to the way of life in Benzonia or Platte Townships, what would it be?

Answers include – further environmental protections, safety/security, low cost reliable Internet service, support tourism related businesses, protect the resources we have, affordable housing, affordable child care, legal support and zoning enforcement of ordinance, ensuring township officials are accessible and responsive.

22. What do you love the most about this area?

Answers include – Natural features, characteristics of lakes/rivers/trees/forested hillsides, wildlife diversity, small town/rural way of life, sense of community, culture, history and beauty, environment, the people, beautiful scenic views of landscape beaches and water, small community life, water, sand, friendships with a full spectrum of individuals.

23. What do you like the least?

Answers include – Urbanization of the shorelines, new 'resort size' development on the lake shores, amount of residents at or below the poverty line and negative impacts that has (especially on youth), crime, cost of living, harsh winters with seasonal exodus, necessary evil of tourist dependent economy, need to travel to Traverse City for shopping, lack of



Platte Township Public Open House – Residents working on Vision Board

Public Survey Summary

89 responses (85 on-line, 4 hard copy)

BACKGROUND

Approximately 60% of respondents live in Benzonia township and 40% from Platte. The others do not live full time in the Townships but indicate they are familiar and spend a significant amount of time there, either as a landowner, owning a vacation home, working, or renting. There was a fairly even representation when indicating how long they have lived in the area. In general, the people that said they didn't live in the townships, said they own a second home, work, or own a business or land in the Townships. Of the people that filled out the survey, most live in 2-3 person households and over 70% indicated they did not have children in the home with them. This doesn't mean they don't have children, but if so, that they may be older and no longer living at home. Of the people that did have children the ages were equally split between elementary through college age.

When asked about where they work, the majority of respondents indicated they were retired, the second highest response indicated they work from home. The third highest response was that they work in other areas in Benzie

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county outside the townships or in Benzonia Township (approximately 20% each). This makes sense and a majority of the commercial areas are in the Frankfort/Thompsonville area or the Villages of Beulah/Benzonia. Approximately the same percentage of people (10%) travel outside the County for work or work in Grand Traverse County. Fewer people (approximately 5% each) work in Platte Township or travel to Leelanau or Manistee County.

Take Away- Of the people that responded to the survey, there are a lot of retirement age households and people that work from home in the Townships.

COMMUNITY

When asked what people like best about living here the overwhelming response in the natural beauty of the area and the quiet small town feel.

When asked what they like the least, the responses were more varied. A common theme was the higher cost of living, concern for environmental degradation, unsafe road conditions (high speeds and pedestrian safety concerns) and blighted property.

The next set of questions asked for an overall feeling of what people felt like living in the Townships. All responses were nearly unanimous and agree that respondents enjoy living here, feel like it is generally safe and a good place to raise a family.

A majority of people like the general look of Township, however only 26% strongly agreed, and about 12% disagreed or strongly disagreed. When asked about how they felt about the overall quality of life in the area, again while most agreed, only about 35% strongly agreed.

Take Away- While most people enjoy living here and generally like how things are going, there still appears to be agreement that there are things that could be improved that would increase the overall quality of life.

SERVICES

The next section dealt with community facilities and services such as roads, trails, sidewalks and utilities. Of the people that responded about half (slightly more in Benzonia) said they used the roads or trails to either walk or ride bicycles.

While 60% of respondents felt the current sidewalks were adequate (10% strongly agree and 50% agree), 20% also strongly disagree. The next question asked in particular about sidewalk on US 31 in Benzonia Township, there was about 75% agreement that more sidewalks should be considered along US-31. About 60% of respondents said they felt safe when using the sidewalk/trail facilities and about 12% had strong concerns about safety. Some of the concerns listed in the following responses were; speed of traffic on the roads, lack of safe pedestrian crossings, and lack of space for sharing the road with bicycles. Full responses can be found in the appendix.

Most respondents agree that the roads were adequately sized and maintained in both Townships, those that had concerns likely listed them in the write in questions, which again the full responses can be found on the appendix.

There were few respondents that said they regularly or even occasionally use the Benzie Bus services and of those they were mostly located in Benzonia Township. About half of respondents felt like there were enough public transportation options available.

A majority of people responded that they felt garbage pickup was adequate, 25% thought that it was not (11 responses from each township). When asked if there was enough community clean up days or opportunity to drop off large garbage items, the responses were almost even split between yes and no. There were the most 'no' responses from Benzonia Township.

When asked about high speed Internet, most that responded to this survey said yes. Note it was probably because many of the responses came from the on-line survey. There was deliberately not many questions devoted to high speed Internet as the County has just completed an extensive survey and study - and that data is available for use in this planning effort.

The last few questions asked about the township cemeteries. Most respondents said they were satisfied with the state of both township cemeteries. However, the next question asked what they would change and there were several responses that indicate respondents didn't know a lot about them.

Take Away- Most of the detailed responses in the section had to do with roads, traffic and pedestrian/bicyclists safety concerns.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

The next series of questions focused on factors affecting residential development in the townships. When asked if there should be more residential development in the coming years nearly 70% of respondents agreed, with 23% strongly agreeing.

When asked what types of residential development they'd like to see there was the strongest consensus for single family homes with a smaller footprint (2000sf or less), the next largest response was for affordable housing options, closely followed by small multi-family developments (duplex, triplex, tiny homes). Other options that received a majority of responses were for; accessory dwelling units and senior housing options. There were many thoughtful additional comments, full responses can be found in the appendix.

While most people are satisfied with the general look of residential housing, there were about 25% that either disagreed or strongly disagreed. Over 70% of respondents agreed that improving the quality of residential housing is important.

When asked if there was anything that limited housing development in the zoning ordinance many respondents again gave thoughtful answers. The planning commission should review all responses, found in the appendix. While answers were varied, many raised valid point that should be considered. There seemed to be the most comments related to the minimum lot and structure sizes limiting residential development and housing options, especially related to Benzonia Township. Many responses from Platte Township supported the large lot sizes and didn't want to see changes to residential zoning.

Many respondents (nearly 70%) supported the idea of local tax incentives or other programs to boost development or the rehabilitation of old/derelict structures, while 12% strongly disagreed.

The next few questions asked for long answer responses. When asked to list reasons they thought more housing is NOT being developed (There has been a documented lack of housing options in planning studies in this region for nearly a decade or more.) The responses were varied but some similarities could be found. Many of the responses focused on high costs (cost for materials, costs for land, costs of living in the area). Other responses with some consensus were lack of sewers/infrastructure support, lack of builders and social issues (such as lack of childcare, poor area in general).

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Take Away- Most people agree that providing opportunities for more residential housing should be supported (in particular smaller homes and affordable type housing). There was consensus that some current development standards as well as a lack of sewer limits residential development options.

When asked if there was anything at a Township level that would make it easier for residential housing there were again, many thoughtful responses. There was again great consensus around providing more local incentives for residential development. Other frequent comments were related to the lack of sewers and how that limits certain residential development (in particular in Benzonia Township). There were also several comments that had to do with adjusting the zoning ordinance to accommodate alternative residential developments.

HOUSING ALTERNATIVE – CO-HOUSING

SNAPSHOT – What is Co-Housing?

- Traditionally it is an intentional community of private homes clustered around shared space. The term originated in Denmark in late 1960s. Each attached or single family home has traditional amenities, including a private kitchen, bathrooms and bedrooms.
- While the types may vary, the developments typically feature a common house, a large industrial kitchen, dining area, and ample common green spaces to share.
- In the U.S. this movement has largely been spearheaded by aging adults who were tiring of their large, single-family homes, and seeking an alternative as they grew older.
- "A lot of people also realize that not everyone has to have their own washer and dryer, their own lawn mower, and their own backyard pool. Sometimes it makes sense to share." – Raines Cohen, a board member of the Co-housing Association of the United States.

When asked how the township might support additional long term rental options the comments ranged from regulating short term rentals, supporting long term rental with the zoning ordinance and tax incentives, to providing more rental facilities (like small apartments, senior housing, etc.).

The next few questions dealt specifically with short term rentals (STR). Over 70% of respondents feel that STRs should be regulated in some way. When asked to be specifically about how they should be regulated, the most popular response is that all STR's should be required to follow good neighbor guidelines (this would require some sort of registration at minimum). Other popular ideas were to limit the maximum occupancy of STR's, and that they should be required to register and pay a fee. There was also strong support for STR's to provide proof of legal in-state or US legal residency and being required to provide a local agent. There were also



several concerns about regulating foreign property owners in the written comments. About 50% of responses said they would favor a limit on the total number of STR's allowed in the Townships. 46% felt that STR's should be required to pay a local tax (similar to a hotel tax). 15% of respondents felt like STR's should NOT be regulated in any way.

Take Away- There seems to be support to make revisions to the ordinance to create better opportunities for housing as well as support for various incentives to help increase residential development. There also seems to be support for STR regulations.

NON-RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

When asked if they thought there was enough commercial/retail development in Benzonia Township, about 75% of people felt like the current situation was just right, while 23% felt there should be more in the coming years. Of the people with an opinion about owning a business in Benzonia, most thought it was a good place to own a business.

When asked if they thought there was enough commercial/retail development in Platte Township, about 80% of people felt like the current situation was just right, while 18% felt there should be more in the coming years. Of the people with an opinion about owning a business in Platte, again, most thought it was a good place to own a business.

When asked about the general look of commercial development in the townships, about 60% agreed they liked the look, 35% either disagreed or strongly disagreed. When asked if they thought there were enough 'everyday' shopping options the responses were nearly split 50/50.

The next question asked respondents to list types of commercial development they' like to see MORE of in either townships. For Benzonia the highest responses were for restaurants, followed by recreation types (gyms/entertainment), and then small neighborhood commercial/retail. For Platte the two categories with the highest responses were for restaurants and small neighborhood commercial/retail. Other categories with high responses were for recreation types, recreational lodging (RV parks, campgrounds) and cultural types developments (museums, galleries, etc.). There were also several responses for Platte township that said they don't' want ANY new commercial/retail development.

The next question asked respondents to list types of commercial development they' like to see LESS of in either township. The highest responses were for regional retail stores (big box/chain type development), then industrial development. Other categories with high responses were for lodging and recreational lodging. Many of the write-in comments said less marijuana shops.

When asked about mixed use development there appeared to be high support, with (50%) supporting it in some areas and (35%) supporting it in all commercial areas. When asked where they would support new commercial development, there was general consensus that it should be along the US-31 corridor in Benzonia Township. When asked about Platte Township, there was consensus that there shouldn't be a lot of new commercial or retail development.

Take Away- There was consensus that most commercial type development should remain in the US-31 Corridor. There is not a strong support for commercial/retail development in Platte Township. There wasn't strong agreement on the look of current development and there is likely room for improvement. The types of development desired steer more towards smaller neighborhood types.

COMMUNITY ISSUES

The next section of the survey asked various questions about community and social issues.

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Almost all respondents were aware that the Townships have a zoning ordinance. When asked if they were satisfied with the zoning ordinance only 33% said yes. 17% think the current ordinance is not restrictive enough, while 11% said it was too restrictive. About 25% said they didn't know enough about it to comment.

When asked what areas of the zoning ordinance needed improvement there was strongest consensus for more short term rental regulations. Other areas that received strong support were for improved noise regulations and environmental protections (trees and stormwater/water quality). There was also support for improvements to sign and lighting regulations. There was also support for improved site development and buffer regulations. In the written comments there were several additional concerns about environmental regulations and blight regulation and enforcement.

There were nearly identical concerns about blighted property in both Townships, about 75% agreed or strongly agreed it is an issue. When asked if code enforcement was adequate, only about 50% agreed, 12% strongly disagreed.

The next series of questions were asked to gauge opinion about the level of support for a number of social/community issues related to potential future development.

Over 90% of respondents feel like historic preservation is important. Nearly all (98%) of respondents feel that preservation of agricultural lands is important, while 100% either agreed or strongly agreed that support of local agriculture and local food sources is important for the community

When asked if the ability to utilize alternative forms of energy is important, most people agreed, only about 18% either disagreed or strongly disagreed. There was again unanimous support for the preservation of natural resources and significant views. As well as for the protection of water resources (lakes, streams, groundwater).

The last question related to the zoning ordinance asked if there were specific issues that they felt could be improved. There seemed to be the most consensus on improved blight control/enforcement and also on issues related to natural resource protection/environmental regulations and short term rentals. There were also a lot of responses that also said they didn't know, or none.

Take Away- Most people support making improvements/updating the zoning ordinance in regards to environmental, short term rental, development standards, and blight regulation/enforcement. There is strong support for preserving natural resources and protecting environmental resources. There is also strong support for agriculture and providing for and supporting local food sources.

PARKS AND RECREATION

The first series of questions were asked for facilities in Benzonia Township. It should be noted that many of the respondents to this survey either said they did not use the park facilities at all or used them only occasionally.

The respondents did feel like Memorial Park in Benzonia Township was generally in good condition. When asked if they knew about the current planned improvements to the park over 70% said they did not know anything about them, only 5% had heard of the planned improvements.

When asked if they use the Betsie Valley Trail, there was more "yes" responses. About 30% say they frequently use the trail, while 25% said they never use it. When asked if they use the trail in Platte Township, most respondents (85%) said they do not.

The next question asked what other recreation facilities they use in the Township. The highest response was for the

Sleeping Bear Dunes (NPS) facilities in Platte Township. The next highest responses were nearly equal and were; the MDNR water access sites, GTRLC properties, and Railroad Point. Other places that received high responses were private recreation facilities (golf/campgrounds) or Crystal Lake Access (road ends).

When asked why they may NOT use recreation facilities, there were many varied responses. Many appear to say they try to use them but can't find the time. There were some concerns about safety, or that they were not accessible (either lack of ways to get there or mobility issues using the facilities).

The next question was to gauge how active the respondents of this particular survey are in general. About 50% say they participate in any outdoor recreation 4 times per week or more, and another 30% say they participate 2-4 times per week. About 10% say they get outdoors for recreation less than once per week or never.

Take Away- Respondents of this survey were not heavily active in regular outdoor activities. Also there is significant room to improve the awareness and communication for township park and recreation facilities. When only 5% of a group of people are aware of major planned improvements to a public park facility, there is likely an issue with a lack of communication to residents.

The next series of questions was related to cultural resources in the Townships.

Almost half of the respondents say they never participate in activities at the Benzonia Historical Museum. Only about 10% say they regularly utilize the Mills Community House (Benzonia Library and programs). About 7% regularly use the Darcy Library in Beulah. 86% say they have never participated in programs or visited the Historic Drake School in Platte Township.

Take Away- Based on these responses, is limited community participation in cultural events and facilities. There may again be opportunities to better engage, communicate and inform the residents on available community and cultural programs.

The next series of questions asked more detailed quotations about the types of recreation facilities people would like to see and what was most important for their households. The overwhelming consensus was for additional trails and trail improvements. 87% said trails were the most important recreation facility for their household. Other responses for the types of facilities that people would like to see more of included; picnic facilities, open spaces, playgrounds and athletic fields. Some of the other types of facilities that people think are most important for their household include; picnic areas and open spaces, the ice rink (Benzonia Village), sledding hills and playground and athletic fields.

90% of respondents felt they would support the development of new recreation facilities, nearly the same amount said they would support the acquisition of property for additional future recreation facilities.

When asked what their specific concerns were for park and recreation facilities, there were many responses that thought the current state of facilities was OK, and there were also several thoughtful responses, all can be found in the appendix. Some comments had to do with improving maintenance and upkeep of facilities that exist. The final park and recreation question asked if there were any specific ideas for improvements, again all the responses can be found in the appendix. There were several responses that were related to trail type improvements and again maintaining what exists with thoughtful and organized planning efforts for any new improvements. Some other similar comments were for addition indoor recreation options and easier accessibility.

The final survey questions asked respondents to be brief and list the one thing that they think would improve their quality of life the most (in either township). Many responses were related to housing and the need for more affordable

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housing. Other areas of consensus were for better environmental protections for water resources and trees, etc. There were also several responses related to better communication and cooperation/coordination for residents on various issues. (refer to word cloud graphic)

Take Away- Overall there seems to be support for improving park and recreation facilities. Trail and bicycle facilities and providing places to walk/hike seem to be the most popular, this is similar to national trends.

DEMOGRAPHICS

A majority of respondents (55%) that filled out the survey were in the 35-65 age group range, the second highest age range was 65+ (40%). No one under the age of 18 filled out the survey. A majority of respondents (63%) were women. 65% had either a graduate or 4-year college degree, while another 24% of respondents had at least some college experience. The annual household income of respondents was somewhat evenly divided among the categories, with 20% of respondents of this survey having an annual household income of \$150,000 or more, while another 20% have an annual income of over \$100,000. About 27% have an annual income of \$50,000 or less.

Analysis of Inventory

The following is an analysis of the inventory gathered in previous chapters of this document along with the public feedback gathered including stakeholder feedback, public survey comments and comments and discussion at the public open houses and regular planning commission meeting held throughout the process. This analysis is important to review in developing community goals and objectives.

Another important tool is to use this analysis to identify community assets and problem areas. These are also sometimes called opportunities and constraints. These are key points that should be considered in the development of the goals and objectives and also in all future planning and regulation decisions.

COMMUNITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE

- When looking at the demographics for the townships, Benzonia Township has been showing a slight decline in overall population since the 2000 census, while Platte has been holding relatively steady.
- There is a national trend that shows that family households are declining and single family households are on the rise. This is generally true for both townships as well, with households for individuals over 65 shown to be on the rise. This tends to reinforce the demand for smaller type and transitional housing needs, especially for senior populations.
- Owner occupied housing is on the decline in both Townships as shown from the 2010 to current census data. Rental occupancy rates are also much lower in the Townships when compared to the State averages. This may be an indicator of the trend in higher numbers of housing being used for short term rentals (STRs).
- Lack of housing options is still a strong concern, particularly in Benzonia Township where there is more of a need for 'workforce' type housing to support denser commercial development.
- Both townships show a significant decline in the labor force from the 2010 census. There are less people aged 16 and over working in the area than shown in previous census data.

- Poverty rates remain high, however there is a slight decrease in the overall households in Benzie County considered in ALICE (38%) from the 2019 report. However, Benzonia Township shows a significant increase in poverty rates with 17.4%, while Platte Township shows a slight decrease about 8% of population in poverty. Of those who work, about 10% still live in poverty.
- Overall school enrollment is trending down in both Townships, this is supported by the trend indicating the increase in senior households.
- There appears to be an increase in those that use alternative means of transportation (bus or bicycle) to get to work in Benzonia Township.
- Both Townships have significant natural resources, particularly in regards to water resources with both Crystal and Platte Lakes and with significant land on both the Platte and Betsie Rivers.
- There seems to be very strong support for the protection of natural resources in the review of feedback during the public input. In all meetings and surveys there were residents that voiced concerns about protections of water and forest resources. This is a trend that is also seen in the review of all previous planning efforts across Benzie County over the last decade or more. Residents are continually passionate about protecting the natural beauty of this area and it should remain a driving factor in planning decisions and ordinance regulations.
- US-31 continues to be the most heavily traveled road in Benzie County. M-115 and Homestead Road along with Crystal Drive are the more heavily traveled roads in Benzonia. While Indian Hill Road and M-22 are the most heavily traveled in Platte.
- In review of the public survey comments many of the concerns regarding traffic had to do with bicycle and pedestrian safety. There are almost no bicycle facilities in the County beyond the off-road trail systems. There were major safety concerns in the responses and seems to be great opportunity and interest in improving bicycle and pedestrian facilities. They should be considered in all new development, planning and regulations.
- There were many comments and concerns on the lack of sewer facilities across the board in the public feedback. Especially in Benzonia Township, and the effect that it has on limiting development opportunities. There is also concerns about increases residential development around both lakes and the effects that many individual septic systems may have on water quality.
- There was concern regarding blight in the Townships during all facets of the public input, this should be an area that is continuously reviewed and updated to make needed revisions to the ordinance or other policies and procedures are made to support blight control. This may also be an area where coordination, cooperation and sharing of resources across jurisdictions may be beneficial to the entire community.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

- Stakeholder and public survey supports the desire for additional single family housing options, in particular smaller scale options. There was support for small multi-family developments, senior options and accessory dwelling units.
- There were many comments and concerns raised about that minimum lot sizes and required structure sizes may be limiting residential housing options, these seemed to primarily be for areas in Benzonia Township.
- Many responses during the public comment and surveys supported the existing Residential Preservation (RP) zoning in Platte Township and there seems to be little desire for change in the residential zoning in Platte Township.

6. Public Participation

- There was strong support for the use of local tax incentives to help provide and support housing options. These were seen in the comments on several different questions in the public survey.
- There was discussion of a STR (short term rental) tax at a regular public meeting. The State of MI charges a 6% tax on STR's (stays of 30 days or less), however there are no current local taxes added to STR property rental in Benzie County. AirBnB lists Kent and Genessee County as the only Counties in Michigan that charge an additional 'occupancy' tax on STR's, both at 5%. There is currently (May 2022) a proposed 6% tax on STR's for all Upper Peninsula counties that (if implemented) is estimated to generate 7-10 million dollars (annually) in funds for UP Counties, to be used for things like police/safety and local housing needs. There was about 50% support for some type of local STR tax in the public survey for this master plan.
- While there was strong support for some regulations for STR's in the Townships, there were varied degrees of what people felt the potential regulations should entail.

GENERAL DEVELOPMENT

- There was some support for the increase in non-residential development in the Townships, however generally, most of the responses during the public feedback thought the amount of commercial development was about right.
- Most people did not want to see any increase of development in Platte Township (particularly non-residential development).
- There was a somewhat large response that did not agree with the current look and feel of commercial development, indicating that there is likely support to improve development standards in the ordinances or other design standards whenever possible.
- When discussing types of development it was clear that smaller local retail type development would be desired over larger chain-type retail/commercial options. In general, there seemed to be support of mix-use type development as a way to include residential into development projects.
- Most people felt that new commercial/retail development (including mixed use) should be concentrated in areas near US-31 or areas of denser development patterns.
- There is strong support for the preservation of agricultural lands and supporting local food resources.

PARK AND RECREATION

- There is great access to park and recreation facilities within a short distance of all residents of the Townships, even if they are not "Township" controlled park lands. Lack of recreation facilities is not a major issue for area residents.
- There seems to be a lack of communication and community participation in some areas of park and recreation. This may indicate too many local jurisdictions having to coordinate and communicate various programs to the community which may be losing the effectiveness to users. This should be studied further. Continued communication with residents regarding park and recreation matters should be a focus.
- Many of the park and recreational comments were focused on trails. There does seem to be strong support and interest for trail use – in both walking/hiking and bicycling. There are likely great opportunities to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety and provide for missing connections. Because of this support and high interest these types of facilities should be a focus of recreation development efforts.

Opportunities and Constraints

Opportunities:

- **Location:** Benzonia Township is well situated as a central location in the County with direct access to the 2 most major highways - there is great opportunities for economic development.
- **Location:** Platte Township with the amount of state and federal land, agricultural uses and with large residential lots is well suited to support the rural way of life that seems to be greatly desired for residents of that community.
- **Environment:** It is well documented in this report that there is strong desire to protect the natural features of both Townships with support from local agencies such as the Crystal Lake Watershed, Conservation District, Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, etc.
- **Cooperation:** There are great opportunities for the Townships and Villages to work together which can be incredible beneficial for small communities with limited resources. The 2020 Comprehensive Plan discussed that when jointly engaging with other jurisdictions on larger issues (housing, resource protection, trail systems, etc.) common ground can be found for the most effective and efficient solutions.

Constraints:

- **Infrastructure:** The lack of sewer system, particularly in Benzonia Township is continuously recognizes as an issue that is holding back development and poses potential environmental threats to the area's water resources.
- **Environment:** While there are tremendous natural resources, providing the proper protection and preservation of those resources and assuring the compatibility with new development will always be a delicate balancing act moving forward.
- **Housing:** The lack of housing options has been a hurdle for many years. Providing the right amount of smaller, transitional type housing will continue to be a challenge. It will need to be balanced with the needs to support an adequate labor force along with an aging demographic.
- **Rural Community:** While this can be seen as both a strength and a weakness, living in a rural community presents unique challenges. In particular things are further away and typically require vehicular travel. However, there seems to be a great interest in bicycling and trails. Proving safe and adequate facilities on roads and intersections is desired and will be important considerations moving forward.

7. Looking Forward

VISION STATEMENT

We strive to protect the culture, history, natural resources, the beauty and the quiet way of life in the Townships, while allowing responsible development that respects these qualities we love, while also supporting a healthy, sustainable and economically viable community. *-West Benzie Joint Planning Commission*

The primary function of this Master Plan is to guide future development and growth within the Townships. The Master Plan identifies a vision for the future and a series of goals and objectives to guide decision making. The goals and objectives in this chapter provide guidance for the future planning, and are based on the input gathered during the public planning process, stakeholder input, public survey feedback, discussions with the Planning Commission, and review of previous community planning efforts.

Goals provide statements that describe the desired future for the Townships and provide general direction for local decision makers. Objectives are more detailed descriptions of actions needed to achieve the goals. The following pages identify the goals and accompanying objectives of the West Benzie Joint Master Plan.

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.

Oftentimes during master planning efforts the word 'character' is tends to be thrown around frequently. People may think it as an overused or meaningless term, however when in the throes of a master planning effort - it is an important tool or piece of the puzzle that provides insight into how residents view themselves and helps to prioritize the goals and objectives.



7. Looking Forward

Goals & Objectives

COMMUNITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE GOALS

- 1.** *GOAL 1: The West Benzie Joint Planning Commission (WBJPC) will be a leader in working with other units of government, state agencies, schools, and special authorities to manage growth and service to the residents and businesses of the community in the most efficient and transparent manner possible.*

OBJECTIVES:

- 1.1 Coordinate planning efforts with surrounding municipalities to create and promote well-planned and cooperative communities.
- 1.2 Cooperate with other area communities in the evaluation and implementation of any feasible joint approach to service delivery.
- 1.3 Work with the County Board of Commissioners to determine efficient methods to deliver county services within the Townships.
- 1.4 Consider partnerships with the Villages (Beulah and Benzonia) where possible to increase economic vitality and opportunities for residents and businesses.

- 2.** *GOAL 2: WBJPC and the Townships will preserve valuable natural resources, and the shorelines along the lakes and waterways. These natural assets provide a cultural identity and add economic value to the community.*

Crystal Lake near Railroad Point



OBJECTIVES:

- 2.1 The sensitive natural resources that distinguish the Benzonia and Platte Township landscape will be identified and protected, which include but are not limited to: wetlands, high risk erosion, steep slopes, floodplains, key watersheds and all water resources.
- 2.2 Develop and implement shoreline protection standards such as riparian buffers, erosion protection with native vegetation plantings, and low-impact development. Begin by adopting the updated Crystal Lake Watershed Overlay Ordinance and consider other similar protective ordinances in the future.
- 2.3 Limit the amount of impermeable

surface with all new development to minimize surface runoff and maintain infiltration.

2.4 The Township will take thoughtful measures to ensure residents will have long-term sustainable water sources, consider updates to the zoning ordinance to include wellhead protection areas.

2.5 Develop best management practices to prevent the introduction, and spread, of invasive species and diseases transmitted by flora and fauna.

2.6 Encourage forest stewardship practices through public education. Consider additional tree protection measures such as limited removal policies and tree replacement programs.

2.7 Work with county and/or state departments and to effectively administer and enforce regulations such as soil erosion and sedimentation control and adopt needed ordinances such as storm water controls in order to best protect sensitive environmental resources.

GOAL 3: The preservation and enhancement of natural features of the community will be a central consideration in all municipal decisions for WBJPC and the Townships. Buildings and infrastructure will be planned, constructed and maintained to protect and improve the quality of the natural environment while serving the needs of the population and allowing residents and visitors appropriate access to enjoy natural features.

3.

OBJECTIVES:

3.1 Utilize environmentally friendly design and construction standards, including Low Impact Development (LID) techniques and stormwater best management practices when making improvements to Township parks and facilities, and during the private sector development process.

3.2 Strive to protect and restore water quality, stream channels, and riparian corridors in public parks by implementing erosion control measures, soft shoreline stabilization techniques, and “no mow” areas.

3.3 Encourage the proper maintenance and preservation of open space and wooded areas.

3.4 Preserve the critical view-sheds of the Townships by minimizing encroachment into riparian areas, floodplains, and steep slope areas within the Townships. These have been identified in previous planning efforts.

3.5 Recognizing the importance and value of tree coverage the Townships will evaluate the need and feasibility of implementing a tree planting policy in addition to tree protection and replacement ordinances.

3.6 Incorporate the use of renewable energy whenever feasible.

GOAL 4: WBJPC and the Townships will strive for transparency and efficiency within leadership and improved communication with residents to support an inviting and safe lifestyle for all residents.

4.

OBJECTIVES:

4.1 Continue to prioritize leadership by operating in an open and financially stable manner, focusing on maintaining high levels of public involvement and communication with residents, reviewing and changing as needed to achieve measurable results.

7. Looking Forward

4.2 Review the zoning ordinance (at least annually) and make updates when required and continue to require proper site plan review and approval for all uses.

4.3 Adequately review and support appropriate amendments of the Township Zoning Ordinance to ensure conformity and ultimate alignment with the goals and strategies of the Master Plan.

4.4 Ensure that all government units, including the Township Board of Trustees, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals and Township staff are aware of the goals and objectives of the Townships and are working toward the same goals.

4.5 Improve upon the enforcement procedures of existing and new ordinances to ensure compliance with the zoning ordinance and harmony within the Townships.

5. GOAL 5: WBJPC and the Townships will adopt appropriate development requirements to ensure that the qualities that make Benzonia and Platte Townships a desirable place to live, including its open spaces, natural beauty, clean air and water, stable property values, and a sense of community, are maintained.

Example Of Conservation Development¹



OBJECTIVES:

5.1 Support a Township land use policy and ordinances that results in a well-balanced, but diverse pattern of land uses that incorporates sustainable growth principles to achieve the targeted growth that is aligned with the future land use plan.

5.2 Preserve the desired rural and small town character of the Township by implementing development regulations to protect the natural resources, thriving agricultural operations, and successful agri-businesses, which include roadside stands and farmers markets.

5.3 Refine and enhance (or create) the Planned Unit Development (PUD) and other residential development ordinance measures to ensure that larger residential developments are designed to meet the desires of preservation and resource protection noted by community feedback in this Master Plan,

¹Growing Greener, Conservation by Design. Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and Natural Lands Trust, 2009

Goal 6: The Township's public facilities, including its roads, utilities, parks, and public buildings will be carefully planned, constructed and maintained to efficiently serve the needs of current and future generations.

6.

OBJECTIVES:

- 6.1 Establish a policy to ensure public participation and feedback in the development of all public projects.
- 6.2 Maintain effective communication with the public through news media, social media or other proactive methods to ensure public awareness and engagement of any public facility development project.
- 6.3 Encourage the continued development of public and alternative transportation options for the benefit of township residents.
- 6.4 Continue to support the County Government and other adjacent jurisdictions; particularly in the development of high speed Internet connectivity for the entire county, and the development of sewer infrastructure.

GOAL 7: Land use and development within the Township's most environmentally fragile areas such as its lakes and streams and wetlands, and near other natural resources, will take into account the need to maintain water quality and views to these features, as well as ensuring adequate setbacks and preserving sensitive features.

7.

OBJECTIVES:

- 7.1 Utilize buffers, recreation areas and other preservation areas to maintain forest cover and minimize disturbance of sensitive ecological areas.
- 7.2. Work cooperatively with adjacent communities, agencies, and organizations to develop studies and institute programs that address watershed, woodlands, wildlife, and ecosystem management.
- 7.3 Support studies that identify techniques to protect critical resources, wildlife habitat, water resources, ecological corridors, scenic areas and vistas, and other important ecological resources.
- 7.4 Encourage the adoption of zoning ordinance language to protect greenbelts, farmlands, forestlands, groundwater, and surface water.
- 7.5 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.
- 7.6 Support natural resource education and technical programs to assist landowners, businesses, and communities.
- 7.7 Determine effective methods to work with other local governments for natural resource protection.

GOAL 8: The Township will recognize the need for areas of rural living where natural areas can be protected and enjoyed, privacy maintained, and larger lots preserved.

8.

OBJECTIVES:

- 8.1 Preserve the integrity of existing neighborhoods by protecting them from the intrusion of incompatible uses.

7. Looking Forward

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

8.3 Encourage the preservation of open spaces and agricultural lands at strategic locations throughout the Townships.

8.4 Maintain the Rural Preservation zoning in the Townships and review the ordinance as needed to assure that adjacent development remains compatible.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS

9.

GOAL 9: Support multiple housing options and mixed-use developments for all segments of the population that place users near daily services in areas of denser development patterns (US-31).

OBJECTIVES:

9.1 Support the development of diverse housing types to expand choices available to current, and new Township residents.

9.2 Examine the need, and viability, of increasing densities in certain segments of the Townships. Consider alternative minimum lot and building dimensional standards to allow for alternative developments in areas of denser development.

9.3 Support and encourage senior housing and assisted living facilities (i.e., aging in place) and other transitional type housing. Encourage alternative and/or reasonable minimum square footage options to promote affordability.

9.4 Consider incentives (tax or other) to encourage residential housing with either new development projects, redevelopment or rehabilitation of derelict properties.

10.

GOAL 10: Recognize multiple types of home ownership and how they affect the community - including those that use their property for primary residences, secondary residences, or provide either long or short term rental opportunities, in order to best support local and year-round residents.

OBJECTIVES

10.1 Examine the need for Short Term Rental (STR) regulations to help support long-term rental options and maintain housing stock for local residents.

10.2 Recognize the benefits of STRs, as they provide an important source of income for local property owners - consider requiring local or in-state residency as a requirement for the operation of STRs.

10.3 Consider incentives for local property owners that provide long term rental options for residents, as local residents support year round community amenities (school, emergency services and year-round small businesses).

GOAL 11: Higher density residential land uses will be directed to areas where adequate utility services are available, roads are sufficient to accommodate greater volumes of traffic, and where other community services are conveniently located. 11.

OBJECTIVES

11.1 Encourage commercial and industrial development where utilities already exist or where utilities could be easily extended.

11.2 Explore reuse options or redevelopment incentives for vacant and blighted properties throughout the Townships.

11.3 Review zoning regulations so small and home-based businesses are encouraged within the Township.

GOAL 12: Support existing residential housing with adequate public services, financial assistance options and zoning regulations in order to maintain and/or increase property values. 12.

OBJECTIVES:

12.1 Pursue and promote grant and financial assistance to improve existing houses.

12.2 Encourage owners and/or occupants to maintain dwellings and yards properly so as to avoid blighted or unsafe conditions.

12.3 Consider design review standards by ordinance for residential subdivisions, multiple-family developments or for other affordable type modular homes to maintain quality and integrity of community character.

RP-10 Zoning District in Platte Township



7. Looking Forward

GENERAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS

13. *GOAL 13: The Township will encourage the preservation of active farmland as a valuable resource for the community by supporting the desires of individual property owners who wish to keep their land in active agricultural production.*

OBJECTIVES:

13.1 Promote agricultural growth and recognize the importance of all agricultural farms in the Townships, and discourage residential and farming land use conflicts.

13.2 Encourage and support the preservation of farmland and woodlands, where feasible. Discourage the conversion of farmland into other more intensive uses. Recognize farmland as contributing to the scenic and rural character of the overall County.

13.3 Consider the use of “Purchase of Development Rights”, “Transfer of Development Rights”, Clustering, and Conservation Easements to help farmers retain their agricultural acreage.

Roadside Farm Stand in Platte Township



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

13.5 Support the maximum potential for use of agricultural lands, while encouraging environmentally sensitive farming practices to protect water quality without unnecessarily limiting the economic rights of agricultural landowners.

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

13.7 Encourage farmers to produce, process, and market wholesale and retail products grown on their property and continue to support roadside stands and small markets on their farm lands.

13.8 Support programs that educate residents and local officials on Michigan’s Right to Farm Act and encourage the use of Generally Accepted Agricultural Management Practices (GAAMPs), update ordinances as needed to support.

GOAL 14: Continue to recognize that commercial development in Platte and Benzonia Townships are different. Benzonia Township will continue to be a vital economic center that includes a balance of small local retailers, professional and personal service, light industrial uses, the arts, hospitality, retail, commercial, and institutional employment.

14.

OBJECTIVES:

- 14.1 Research the viability of creating future development plan (corridor management or other incentive based plans) for all land uses that may incorporate future utilities, mixed uses, trail and pedestrian connections to best support economic development.
- 14.2 Identify and support areas that are suitable for commercial or light industrial development but will not adversely impact adjacent land uses.
- 14.3 Support the expansion, and improved access, to high-speed and reliable wireless broadband service.
- 14.4 Continue to support the development of a sewer system, in particular along US-31 and the lake shores.
- 14.5 Research the potential of alternative energy systems, in various scales, such as solar farms and consider revisions to the zoning ordinance to support the development of local alternative energy sources.

GOAL 15: Preserve the community's historic and rural character while supporting future development that promotes an establishment of place and a quiet rural community.

15.

OBJECTIVES:

- 15.1 Require high-quality design standards that contribute to the positive image of the Townships, this includes requiring building material and architectural standards for new developments, parking, landscaping and screening standards.
- 15.2 Enhance understanding of the Township's historic and historic character. Support projects which incorporate local history, historical markers, and public installations about the Township's history.
- 15.3 Encourage adaptive re-use of buildings by promoting rehabilitation and reuse of existing structures and considering development incentives for these types of projects.
- 15.4 Avoid locating commercial uses at every intersection of major roads. Commercial development should not be located in an area which could negatively impact residential developments or the areas rural character.
- 15.5 Avoid unchecked "strip commercial" development, as it is not in the best interest of the public health, safety, and welfare because it may result in increased traffic conflicts/accidents, excessive hard surface parking areas and signs, and impairment of land values for existing and future residential areas.
- 15.6 Consider the development and regulation of streetscape improvements that improve safety, promote walkability, connectively and economic development.
- 15.7 Require that Township-owned facilities exemplify the design standards that are required of the private sector and are well-maintained.

7. Looking Forward

PARK AND RECREATION GOALS

16. **GOAL 16: Provide quality of life benefits for Benzonia and Platte Township that promote active living, healthy lifestyles, and accessibility to recreation.**

OBJECTIVES:

16.1 Maintain this Parks and Recreation Plan for the Townships and conduct 5-year reviews of the plan to ensure that the existing and future recreation needs of the community are met.

16.2 Provide opportunities for a variety of recreation activities, both active and passive, throughout the Township and ensure the preservation of existing public and private parks.

16.3 Coordinate with the school district or other community programs to upgrade/improve the recreational potential, environmental qualities and connections to the existing and future school sites or other community centers.

16.4 Continue to seek out partnership opportunities for park and recreation facilities with adjacent jurisdictions.

17. **GOAL 17: Provide well maintained park and public facilities for Township residents and visitors.**

OBJECTIVES:

17.1 Continuously maintain current park facilities and other township owned public facilities such as cemeteries and buildings to ensure they are safe for public use.

17.2 Review park and other public facilities and building and associated amenities annually and maintain a list of items that need to be repaired or replaced in order to be accommodated in the annual budget.

17.3 Regularly review and evaluate maintenance requirements and assess the future maintenance and safety needs of the community,

17.4 Coordinate with park user groups to understand the needs for the most desired amenities or support facilities at each park facility for the desired programming.

17.5 Coordinate with other adjacent municipalities to provide the community with diverse programming and event opportunities that are efficient and cost effective.

18. **GOAL 18: Residents and visitors in Benzonia and Platte Townships will have safe and convenient access to multi-modal trails, bicycle and/or walking paths and where possible the trails will provide key connections to recreation areas, neighborhoods and commercial areas.**

OBJECTIVES:

18.1 Expand and improve the Townships' trail /pathway system to promote community health and to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety and mobility.

18.2 Consider partnership opportunities for trail planning efforts (as trail systems are often multi-jurisdictional). A multi-modal trail (bicycle and pedestrian) plan may be beneficial in the future.

18.3 Work with the County Road Commission to create a plan or policies to promote best practices for trail/road intersections, road signs for pedestrian and bicyclists, bicycle lanes or pathways in the right-of-ways.

18.4 Coordinate current and future development projects with the Benzie County Road Commission (BCRC) and Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). to provide for comprehensive and safe multi-modal facilities.

GOAL 19: Plan current and future parks, recreation services and cemetery services in a manner that is responsive to the needs of the community.

19.

OBJECTIVES:

19.1 Public input through citizen involvement shall be provided in all phases of park, recreation and cemetery services planning.

19.2 Encourage public feedback from a wider array of Township residents, including youth, young families, seniors and seasonal residents. Consider adding a comment section on the website to make it easy for residents to voice park and recreation thoughts and ideas.

19.3 Actively seek grants and outside funding sources such as Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund for community parks, land acquisition and recreational development.

19.4 Actively seek out alternative funding sources or other partnership opportunities for the maintenance of parks, cemetery, grounds, ROW's and public facilities.

19.5 Coordinate park planning, cemetery services and recreation or cultural programming with other local municipalities (Village or Township) and other local community outreach programs.

19.6 Encourage and support volunteer and other coordination efforts to maintain and enhance recreational and cultural programs, sites and facilities.

School Field Trip to the Historic Drake School



Photo Source: Benzie County Central Schools Facebook Page