

PENINSULA TOWNSHIP

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MASTER PLAN UPDATE STEERING COMMITTEE

13235 Center Road Traverse City, MI 49686

July 6, 2020, 6:00 p.m.

Note - Meeting to be held at the Township Hall (Not Zoom)

AGENDA

1. Study Session Discussion Items

- A. Review Packet Material
- B. Committee Discussion Regarding Next Steps.

2. Public Comment

3. Adjournment

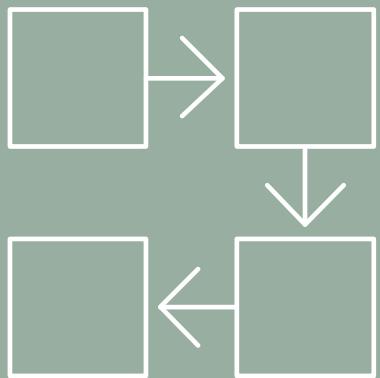
Peninsula Township has several portable hearing devices available for audience members. If you would like to use one, please ask the clerk. Please wear a mask when entering and exiting the building and keep six feet between you and others. If you are comfortable removing your mask once you are seated, feel free to do so until the meeting adjourns.



Randy Mielnik, AICP

Planning Director

Posted: July 2, 2020



Peninsula Township Master Plan Framework

PROCESS



GENERAL MASTER PLAN OUTLINE



Peninsula's Past

- The local story
- Features that create a unique sense of place

Peninsula's Present

- Current conditions
- Recent events/accomplishments
- Challenges and issues

Peninsula's Future

- Vision and goals
- Land Use, transportation, public facilities, & other.

GENERAL MASTER PLAN OUTLINE



Peninsula's Past

- The local story
- Features that create a unique sense of place

Peninsula's Past

- The story of Peninsula Township (concise as possible with references to other documents and appendix as applicable)
- Include historical photos
- Focus on what makes Peninsula Township unique, highlighting relevant history
- Include Native American history
- Describe how historical and cultural features contribute to a sense of place today
- Provide greater context and meaning to place names (Neah-Ta-Wanta, Bowers, Haserot, Dougherty, etc.)

GENERAL MASTER PLAN OUTLINE



Peninsula's Present

- Current conditions
- Recent events/accomplishments
- Challenges & Issues

Peninsula's Present

- Describe the current circumstances as briefly and clearly as possible.
- Describe the present moment in time.
- In 2021, Peninsula Township finds itself looking forward from a perspective of recent accomplishments and apparent challenges.
- Recent accomplishments include:
 - *Old Mission Peninsula School & new library*
 - *Completion of second round of PDR*
 - *Expanding local wine industry*
 - *Increased prominence as a tourist destination*
 - *Increased property values*
 - *Bowers Harbor Park expansion*
 - *Signing of a 99-year lease with the DNR to manage Kelley Park and build a boat launch*
 - *Substantial steps toward fire station #3.*
 - *More?*

(Generally Relates to Chapter 2 of existing Master Plan)

Peninsula's Future - *For residents to decide*



Peninsula's Future

- Vision & Goals
- Challenges and Issues

- *Refreshed overarching community goals*
- *A general vision for motorized and non-motorized mobility*
- *What role alternative energy systems will play on the peninsula*
- *Greater water quality/shoreline protection measures (regulations/education)*
- *Identification of steps to support agritourism, rural character, and lodging options*
- *How local history and culture can be better showcased to create an enhanced sense of place*
- *The merits of a town center concept*

Planning Framework for Challenges and Issues

Land Use



Mobility



Public Facilities, Places and Character



GENERAL MASTER PLAN OUTLINE



Challenges and Issues - Land Use

- *The township has done an outstanding job of preserving agricultural land but continues to wrestle with how to support agritourism in ways that do not diminish rural character.*
- *There is no local strategy for lodging (apart from B&Bs and guest rooms at wineries). Demand for guest accommodations in this tourist destination is strong and will likely remain so. Lodging could be one element of a strategy to support agricultural operations.*
- *The shoreline and water quality are precious to residents, but we are not certain we are doing all we can to preserve and protect through regulation and education. Erosion and other problems associated with recent high water were probably made worse by insufficient action in the past.*

Peninsula's Future

- Vision and Goals
- Challenges and Issues

GENERAL MASTER PLAN OUTLINE



Challenges and Issues - Land Use

- A town-center concept is an idea that continues to attract interest. Past efforts have introduced ideas, but development concepts need to be more fully explored.
- The survey suggests modest support for allowing more alternative energy options (wind and solar equipment) for homes, agricultural operations, and other uses. Technological improvements have made wind and solar attractive economically, but questions remain about visual impacts in viewsheds and agricultural areas.

Peninsula's Future

- Vision and Goals
- Challenges and Issues

GENERAL MASTER PLAN OUTLINE



Peninsula's Future

- Vision and Goals
- Challenges and Issues

Challenges and Issues - **Mobility**

- *While the survey clearly tells us that residents want the township to plan for more non-motorized transportation options, no plans, policies, or general concepts exist. At the same time, we live in a region with an expanding non-motorized transportation system – along with growing interest in biking, walking, fitness, and healthy living. Somewhere between 7 and 8 out of 10 residents support planning for non-motorized transportation.*
- *The status of M-37 is not clear, making motorized and non-motorized corridor planning difficult. Among those residents who think the quality of life has gotten worse, traffic congestion is one of the main reasons why.*
- *There are obvious interrelationships between non-motorized and motorized transportation planning (road crossings, pedestrian/bike safety, etc.).*

GENERAL MASTER PLAN OUTLINE



Challenges and Issues - **Public Facilities, Places, and Character**

- *There is a desire to better identify cultural anchors and explore ways to develop synergy.*
- *More could be done to showcase and celebrate local history in order to create a stronger sense of place.*
- *The local story of native culture and early settlement is not as evident as it could be.*

Peninsula's Future

- Vision and Goals
- Challenges and Issues

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

For Next Steps

On-Line Tool
General Feedback
Tool (essential
given COVID-19)

Meeting #1
General Visioning/
Refresher on
Existing Township
Goals

Meeting #2
Scenario and
Alternatives to
Development

Meeting #3
Evaluation,
Refinement, and
Preferences



FRAMING THE ISSUES FOR PUBLIC INPUT

Meeting #1 General Visioning /Refresher on Existing Goals Framework

Environment

- Protect wetlands
- Protect steep slopes
- Preserve environmentally sensitive areas

Commerical

- Plan commercial enterprises on existing commercial land
- Continue to support agricultural tourism and agribusiness

Shoreline

- Conserve and protect the shoreline

History

- Identify and preserve historic structures and historic character of Peninsula Township

Industrial

- Ensure that all proposed industrial activities are compatible with the character of Peninsula Township

Residential

- Reevaluate residential zoning districts
- Plan new residential development in a way that preserves prime agricultural land
- Preserve single-family character of existing neighborhoods
- Provide senior housing opportunities
- Preserve neighborhoods with special or unique characteristics
- Reconsider the need for a village center

Agriculture

- Preserve 9,000 acres of prime, unique, and contiguous farmland
- Retain and attract growers and agricultural entrepreneurs
- Ensure complimentary and harmonious existence between residential and agricultural uses
- Update the Rural Agricultural District
- Encourage access to a public transportation system
- Provide for pedestrian movement in areas of higher density
- Provide efficient township services
- Assure supply of electricity and gas
- Enhance communications within the township
- Identify the need for future water/sewer districts
- Adopt measures to ensure that septic systems do not degrade water quality
- Develop convenient economical methods of solid waste disposal

Public/Semi-Public



Reorganize, Refocus, and Sharpen Overarching Goals

(SMART GOALS)

- S Specific
- M Measurable
- A Attainable
- R Relevant
- T Time-Based



Land Use



Mobility



Public Facilities,
Places and
Character



FRAMING THE ISSUES FOR PUBLIC INPUT

Meeting #2 Scenarios and Alternatives for Key Issues

Key Land Use Issues

Agri-Tourism, Rural Character, and Lodging

Premise:

Peninsula Township has done a good job of preserving agricultural land but the profitability of farming frequently comes into question. This often drives the conversation toward allowing more options to make the land more profitable while maintaining rural character.

Questions to Pose to Residents:

1. Besides farm stands, existing opportunities to sell products gown on site and value-added agricultural products seem limited to some. **What does an ideal pattern of farm stands and agribusiness look like to you?**
2. Presently, there are strict limits on outdoor events at rural venues. **Does this policy continue to make sense?**
3. Peninsula Township is a desirable destination, but we lack a clear strategy for how to accommodate people. **Should steps be taken to encourage more B&Bs, country inns, or similar facilities?**



OTHER INSIGHTS – Committee Members and Planner

- There is general agreement on the need to strike a balance regarding allowed activities at wineries and farms so as to enhance the viability of farming and maintain our rural character. These include reconsidering scheduled events, expanded farm stands or farm markets, a town center concept, and some form of allowed lodging beyond B&Bs. A combination of expanded farm-related revenue-generating activities should be discussed.
- More input on what type of events should be allowed at B & Bs/farms?
- PDR support: do people want working farms or just open land?
- Other options for farmland uses – lodging/events/restaurants/dinners/weddings/farm markets/short-term rentals (need for “farm market” ordinance to include smaller acreages/buildings allowed in between roadside stands and farm processing facilities)
- Disconnect between citizens and wineries (wineries are ag)
- This is an ideal time to engage residents with the use of input sessions (virtual, online, or in-person when that is allowed).
- More input on what type of events should be allowed at B & Bs/farms?
- Master plan goals should include promoting and encouraging (not limiting) agriculture (especially to new and younger farmers) on Old Mission to help keep farms operating.

FRAMING THE ISSUES FOR PUBLIC INPUT

Meeting #2 **Scenarios and Alternatives for Key Issues**

Key Land Use Issues

The Shoreline and Water Quality

Premise:

The shoreline and water quality are precious to residents, and current high water levels produce obvious concerns due to erosion. Consideration of additional regulatory measures, along with educational efforts, seem necessary. Erosion and degraded water quality were probably made worse by insufficient action in the past.

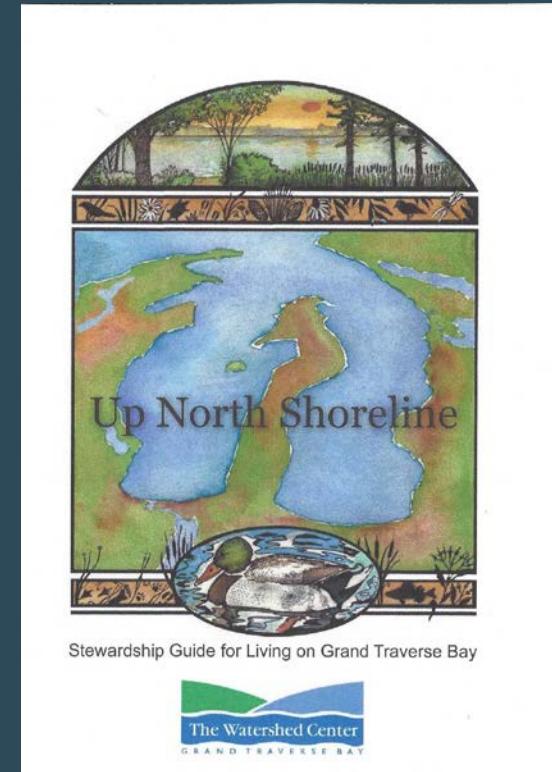
Questions to Pose to Residents:

1. An important element of water quality and shoreline protection is control over the removal of trees and vegetation that hold the natural shoreline in place. **After considering existing and best practices, what new regulatory steps and/or educational initiatives make the most sense?**



OTHER INSIGHTS – Committee Members and Planner

- Shorelines are ever changing with high and low water levels.
- Natural solutions to shoreline treatment are preferred. The Watershed Center encourages property owners to aim for natural shorelines instead of "hard armoring" shorelines with seawalls and rip rap.
- Hard armoring shorelines can deflect wave action to neighbors.
- Recent high water levels make this a timely discussion as erosion is threatening many residents and exposing recurrent past oversights in shoreline and watershed protection guidelines. Township resident Monnie Peters has forwarded some useful information to the group and is an excellent resource. Again, we will plan more with input from a variety of sources.



FRAMING THE ISSUES FOR PUBLIC INPUT

Meeting #2

Scenarios and Alternatives for Key Issues

Key Land Use Issues

Town/Village Center

Premise:

Considerable work went into past studies of a town/village center in the 1990s. The 2011 Peninsula Township Master Plan recommended reconsidering this center. A town/village center is potentially a mixed-use area with buildings containing small format retail and consumer service stores, housing, and offices. The appeal of the concept includes the potential to offer greater local housing choices and opportunities to provide limited goods and services and to showcase local culture, art, food, agricultural products, and community identity.

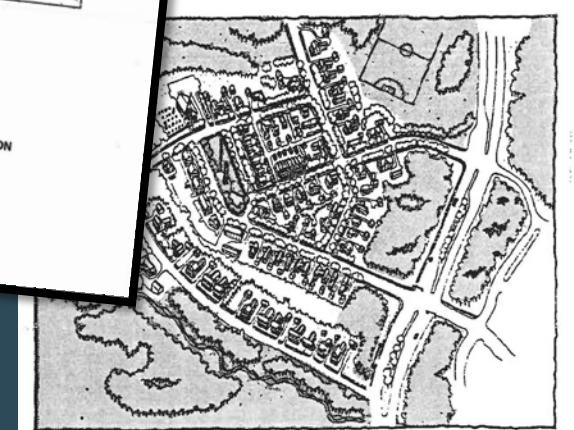
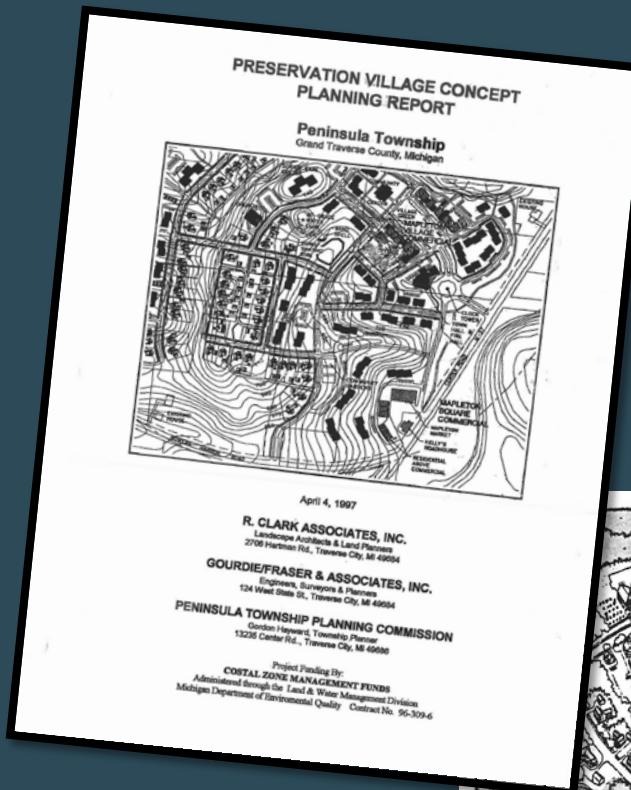
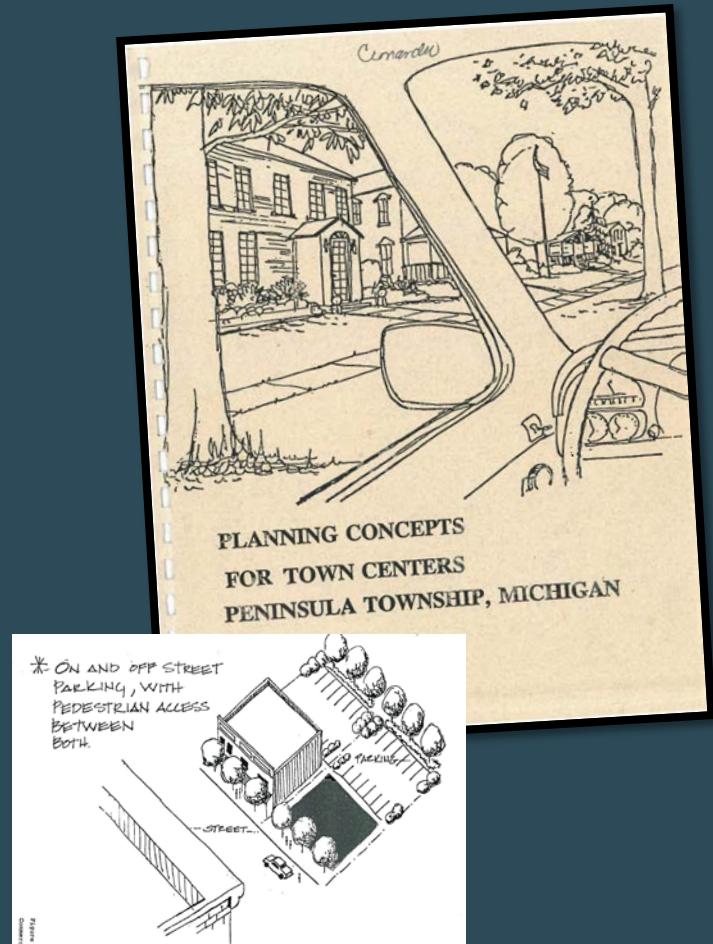
Questions to Pose to Residents:

1. What are some of the benefits and drawbacks of this concept?



OTHER INSIGHTS – Committee Members and Planner

- At least two key reports are available from the past regarding the town/village concept.



OTHER INSIGHTS – Committee Members and Planner

- While there was limited support for this concept on the survey as a narrow question, a clearer idea of what this concept would entail would help increase public support. Include the desire for affordable housing.
- Would it be done through zoning and public vs. private?
- Designate existing commercial area or create new location?
- Town/village center: opportunities might exist to address several needs such as services and affordable housing, but location is critical. Mapleton seems to be the only clear choice despite issues with slopes and access. Bringing such a center closer to town doesn't make sense because then why not just go to town? Where and how it would be embraced are big questions.

FRAMING THE ISSUES FOR PUBLIC INPUT

Meeting #2

Scenarios and Alternatives for Key Issues

Key Land Use Issues

Alternative Energy

Premise:

Roof-mounted solar panels and small free-standing panels are currently allowed in Peninsula Township. More could be done to allow larger alternative energy (wind and solar) in agricultural areas to help power farms. Potential also exists for larger community-scale installations. Concerns over alternative energy equipment and fixtures often center on potential visual impacts and diminished rural character.

Questions to Pose to Residents:

1. How do residents view the tradeoffs between the environmental and economic benefits of alternative energy and the preservation of viewsheds and rural character?



OTHER INSIGHTS – Committee Members and Planner

- Solar energy system installation costs have decreased dramatically in recent years. Senate Bill 597 (now under consideration in Michigan) removes a 1% cap that limits the number of people and small businesses that can install a solar energy system.
- Allowing small to moderate solar installations with viewscape-related restrictions might be an additional source of income for farms, wineries, neighborhood associations, and small businesses.
- Last year, Peninsula Township amended its zoning ordinance to allow free-standing solar panels up to 10kW (about enough to serve a single-family dwelling). Roof-mounted solar panels of any size are allowed.
- Alternative energy: ag land might present opportunities for larger systems. The school is evaluating an option. Smaller individual or community options might be most likely for residential. Concerns about appearance are in the mix. Several model programs exist in the region.



OTHER INSIGHTS – Committee Members and Planner

- From EPIC-MRA: "There is receptivity to the idea of some form of wind and/or solar energy sourcing on the peninsula. While the survey only briefly touched on the issue, the greatest receptivity is for small-scale systems serving a single property followed by systems capable of serving a limited collection of properties or a small neighborhood. The least preferred of the options is for utility-scale systems integrated with a regional grid." Additionally, it may be worthy to note that only 11-12% of those surveyed indicated that they were opposed to the use of any form of alternate energy on Old Mission Peninsula.
- Survey results suggest that residents of Peninsula Township might be open to supporting more extensive use of solar panels provided that it is done in a way that does not detract from the natural beauty and/or rural character of the peninsula. As a result, in the process of revising the master plan, consideration should probably be given to the articulation of policy and regulatory parameters concerning the further development of such commercially-based solar fields within Peninsula Township. Such considerations would likely include issues involving "setbacks," etc.
- The next series of considerations involves the possible use of wind turbine technology. The results of the recently conducted Peninsula Township survey suggest that those polled are least favorable toward utility-scale-sized wind turbines. This finding would appear to rule out the use of Horizon-Axis Wind Turbines on Old Mission Peninsula. However, smaller, scaled-down versions of Vertical-Axis Wind Turbines could be an option that residents of Peninsula Township might consider. Such smaller wind turbines, with energy ratings below 100 kilowatts, are currently being used in other locales to directly power homes, farms, and small businesses without being connected to the grid. If this alternative energy option is to be pursued any further, it would be highly advisable to provide visual and dimensional information concerning VAWT to township residents during the "town hall"/information-sharing phase of the master plan revision process. Hopefully, this would both provide residents of the township with information concerning smaller, scaled- down versions of wind turbines and also determine if there is sufficient interest to consider amending the current master plan to include wind as a viable alternative energy option for Peninsula Township.
- Basically, wind is a great renewable energy source at a large scale, but if you're looking for small- to medium-scale production, solar is the most recommended.

OTHER INSIGHTS – Committee Members and Planner

- Acme Township had a Solar Suitability Assessment prepared. They used a digital elevation model of the township to determine areas that received at least six hours of solar radiation at the winter solstice. They also used this elevation model to determine the township lands that had a slope within 30 degrees of south. Spatial analysis determined that most land within Acme Township met the minimal exposure standards to support the use of solar power. Given that Peninsula Township is adjacent to Acme Township, it seems reasonable to assume that similar findings and conclusions might apply to the landscape within our township.

FRAMING THE ISSUES FOR PUBLIC INPUT

Meeting #2 **Scenarios and Alternatives for Key Issues**

Key Mobility Issues

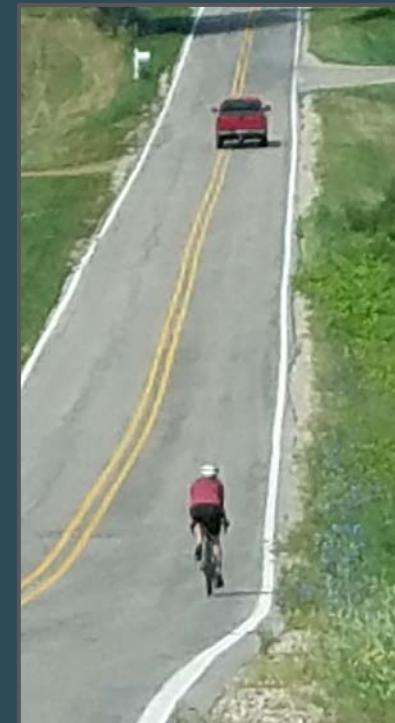
Motorized and non-motorized transportation

Premise:

In the survey, residents spoke loudest when it came to the need to plan for non-motorized transportation. However, no plans, policies, or even general concepts exist. At the same time, we live in a region with an expanding non-motorized transportation system coupled with a growing interest in biking, walking, fitness, and healthy living.

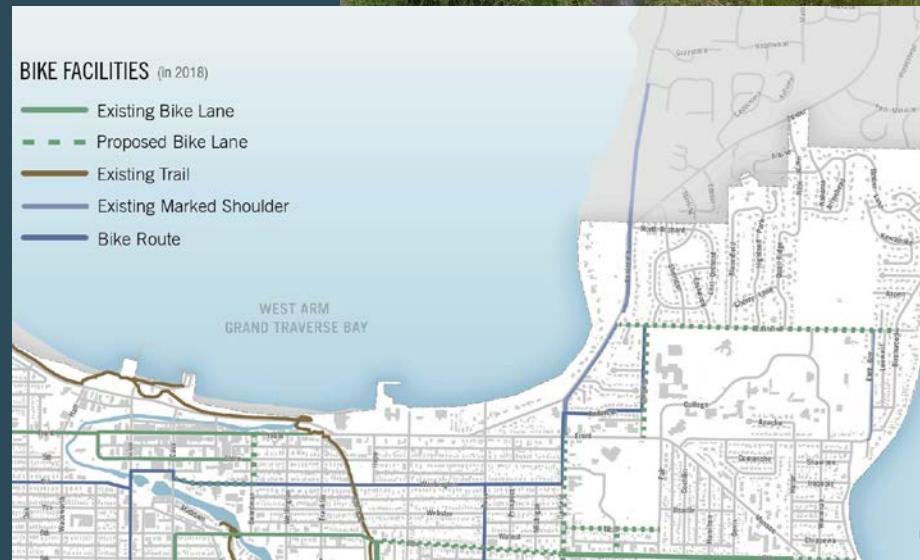
Questions to Pose to Residents:

1. In general terms, define what an aspirational yet achievable non-motorized plan looks like to you. This could include connections between facilities and attractions in Peninsula Township as well as connections to the larger TC region.
2. Identify possible projects that represent “low-hanging fruit” to the extent that they could be constructed inexpensively and quickly.



OTHER INSIGHTS – Committee Members and Planner

- TART, a non-profit organization with a large membership in the region, has been involved in similar non-motorized planning and has many members who are also township residents.
- NORTE is also a relevant organization to reach out to. Norte is a youth-focused 501c3 advocacy organization whose mission is to build a stronger, better connected, and more walk/bike-friendly community.
- Traverse City is actively planning for non-motorized transportation in adjacent areas.



Traverse City Street Design Manual - 2018

OTHER INSIGHTS – Committee Members and Planner

- The non-motorized transportation system is growing regionally.



OTHER INSIGHTS – Committee Members and Planner

- Survey results indicate traffic concerns. There could be a number of reasons why traffic has increased in Peninsula Township, including residents who reside outside of the township coming to use township parks, promotion of the lighthouse for tours/visits, winery growth, M-37 being named a scenic route, and so on.
- Perhaps a good motorized transportation plan will help manage traffic patterns. I have heard concerns from a number of residents within the ag community about keeping M-37 flowing smoothly to town and back to ensure delivery of farm products to processors/wholesalers/retailers.

FRAMING THE ISSUES FOR PUBLIC INPUT

Meeting #2 **Scenarios and Alternatives for Key Issues**

Key Public Facilities, Places, and Character Issues

Premise:

Peninsula Township is rich in history, but the local story of native culture and early settlement is not as evident as it could be. The 2011 master plan suggests the need for additional steps to identify and preserve unique structures and areas.

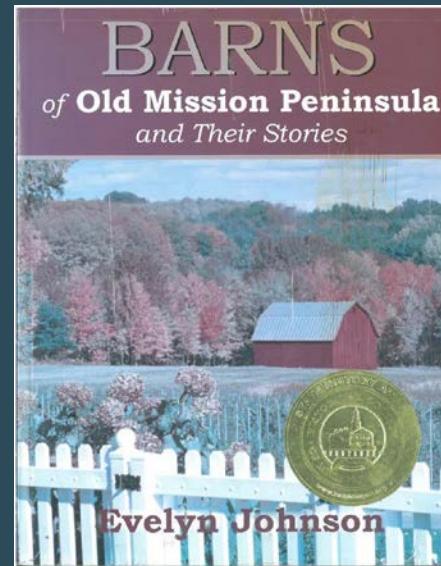
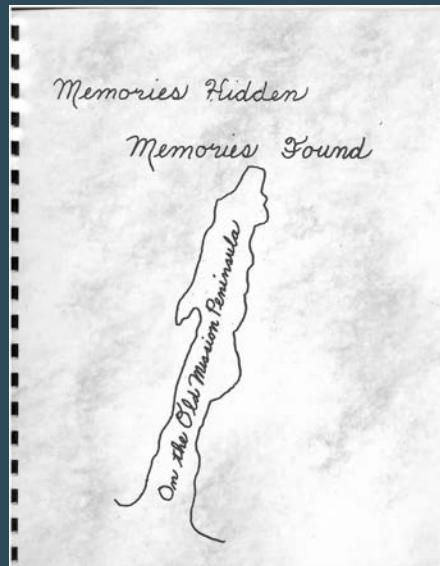
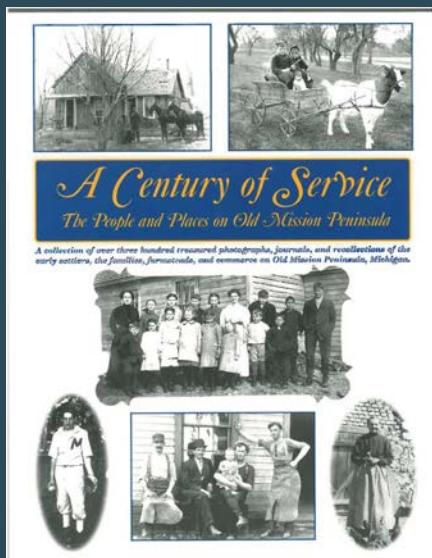
Questions to Pose to Residents:

- 1. What could be done to draw more attention to local history and culture?** Some ideas evident in other areas include a heritage trail, narrated vehicular route, development of promotional material, improved signage, festivals and events, local art and craft establishments, etc.



OTHER INSIGHTS – Committee Members and Planner

- Cultural anchors: many sources of information are available as we explore preferences for preservation and limited expansion of our parks and historic sites. Contacts at the Old Mission Peninsula Historical Society and residents Jane Boursaw, Chris Reiser, and others are key. Resident Todd Wilson has volunteered to assist building on past involvement with the lighthouse and the Dougherty House groups.
- Many resources are available.



FRAMING THE ISSUES FOR PUBLIC INPUT

Meeting #3 Evaluation, Refinement, and Preferences

Key Land-Use Issues

Agritourism, Rural Character, and Lodging

Questions to Pose to Residents:

1. Building on the prior discussions and alternatives identified, what general policies should the township adopt on farm stands, agribusiness development, rural events, and lodging?

Town/Village Center

Questions to Pose to Residents:

1. What key features and characteristics would a town/village center have to have in order to be a positive addition to Peninsula Township?

The Shoreline and Water Quality

Questions to Pose to Residents:

1. What new regulatory steps and/or educational initiatives are needed to better protect shorelines and water quality?

Alternative Energy

Questions to Pose to Residents:

1. What changes in regulations and policy are desirable to support alternative energy?

FRAMING THE ISSUES FOR PUBLIC INPUT

Meeting #3 **Evaluation, Refinement, and Preferences**

Key Mobility Issues

Motorized and non-motorized transportation

Questions to Pose to Residents:

1. Building on prior discussions and identified alternatives, describe an ideal non-motorized transportation system for Peninsula Township in general terms.
2. Identify places that should be connected by a non-motorized transportation system.

FRAMING THE ISSUES FOR PUBLIC INPUT

Meeting #3 **Evaluation, Refinement and Preferences**

Key Public Facilities, Places, and Character Issues

Local History and Culture

Questions to Pose to Residents:

1. Among the possibilities previously identified, what could be done to draw more attention to local history and culture?

Steering Committee Discussion

Comments/Agreement/Thoughts?

Next Steps/Funding

Meeting Notes
June 16, 2020
(Corrected 6/23)

Attendees - Dave Murphy, Mary Beth Milliken, Chad Hartley, Isaiah Wunsch, Julie Clark, Chris Kushman, Randy Mielnik

The meeting was an informal gathering of a few members of the Master Plan Steering Committee interested in non-motorized transportation. Julie Clark and Chris Kushman from TART also attended. TART Trails, Inc. is a local non-profit organization created to support and develop non-motorized transportation in the region. Some major takeaways from the meeting included:

- General background regarding the formation of the Master Plan Steering Committee was provided, and community survey results were shared. The fact that recent community survey results indicated overwhelming community support for more non-motorized transportation was highlighted and discussed.
- Julie and Brian briefly shared information with regard to their membership and involvement in projects around the region. Related project experience and involvement includes the Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail, Tart Trail, and current work to connect Traverse City with Charlevoix.
- TART is a 501c3 organization and many members live in Peninsula Township.
- Norte is also a relevant organization to reach out to. Norte is a youth-focused 501c3 advocacy organization. Its mission is to build a stronger, better connected, and more walk/bike-friendly Traverse City by inspiring the young and young at heart through bicycles.
- There was conversation about the next phase of the planning process and the need for community engagement. Julie and Brian described past experience with neighboring jurisdictions. It was noted that early community engagement should not focus on site-specific routes for trails or specific project design. The focus of early community engagement should be toward developing a general “broad-stroke” vision and consensus on the value of creating non-motorized connections between local destinations.
- TART does not directly develop non-motorized plans for communities. Rather, it is a partner in local and regional efforts to develop and implement plans.
- Isaiah shared the observation that a small number of people control much of the agricultural acreage in Peninsula Township and there are reasons to suggest openness to the idea of non-motorized linkages through agricultural properties. While such linkages would not directly benefit a farmer, the idea of generally helping residents and visitors appreciate agricultural operations might have some merit. It might also indirectly help support the notion of PDR.
- There is also evidence to suggest that wineries would be supportive of efforts to develop a non-motorized trail system.
- Additional conversation about community engagement included considerations such as number of meetings and meeting format. It was estimated that a well-publicized and well-organized event could draw 100-200 people based on past experience elsewhere in the region. This suggests the need for a large event venue. The need for professional assistance with meeting facilitation was also described. Private consultants and organization such as Networks Northwest should be engaged to help organize and conduct a workshop. This has been done

elsewhere. Having a third party engaged in meeting facilitation supports the goal of creating an atmosphere of collaboration, openness, and shared discovery.

- Funding for engaging a consultant was discussed along with opportunities to obtain a grant from Rotary. TART can assist with developing an RFP for consulting services and a general scope of services.
- The need for funding to support community engagement extends beyond the issue of non-motorized transportation and into other areas of the master plan process.