

Corridor Goals and Objectives

This chapter presents the goals and objectives, developed by the Corridor Study Committee, that serve as the purpose and intent of the Corridor Plan. This plan covers a twenty year planning horizon and as a result, the goals are intended to reach beyond current physical, political and institutional constraints. The process of developing goals commenced with examining existing conditions including natural resources, available services and facilities, existing land use, traffic conditions, and status of community planning and zoning.

To aid in the development of goals and objectives corridor assets and problem areas were identified. On July 14th, the Corridor Study Committee met at the NEMCOG offices to embark on an information gathering bus tour of the M-32 & Old-27/I-75BL corridors. The entire eastern M-32 corridor from Gaylord to the Montmorency County border was traveled, along with several other segments as time allowed. There was a “Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats” (SWOT) exercise, in which Committee participants were asked to record their observations and ideas about conditions within the corridors.

Separate from the tour, several committee members individually completed a visual resource photo exercise. They were asked to document assets to preserve and problems to address. Information from the tour and the photo exercise were compiled into a master SWOT list that identified current strengths and weaknesses and future opportunities and threats. The SWOT list can be found in Appendix B of this study.

Note: These goals and objectives were developed by consensus of the committee members. Present constraints such as existing right-of-ways, funding, and agency/department policy were considered but were not the over riding factors when developing the goals and objectives.

Goals And Objectives

Inter-governmental Cooperation

Goal: Support intergovernmental cooperation between all local jurisdictions in the project area as well as local, regional and state agencies.

Objectives:

Encourage Gaylord, Vanderbilt, Otsego County and Township Planning Commissions to adopt the Corridor Plan.

Otsego County Coordinated Land Use Committee should continue to meet to discuss issues and concerns and to foster intergovernmental cooperation.

Expand the Otsego County Coordinated Land Use Committee to include other groups such as area schools, local businesses, and appropriate state agencies.

Develop guidelines, consistent between communities, on site development to assist landowners in designing plans.

Provide criteria, consistent between communities, to assist city, village, township and county officials in decision making, specifically site plan reviews and rezoning requests.

Access Management

Goal: Preserve roadway capacity and the useful life of roads, reduce crashes and crash potential, decrease travel time and congestion, coordinate land use and transportation decisions by regulating safe and reasonable access between public roadways and adjacent land.

Objectives:

Implement the corridor plan by adopting zoning and access management standards compatible with the corridor plan recommendations that regulate driveway design and location; and shared access through frontage roads, rear service drives, shared driveways and connected parking lots.

Improve and communicate procedures for Michigan Department of Transportation and the Otsego County Road Commission to review and comment on site plans prior to planning commission's public hearing and approval.

Control highway access in existing commercial areas of Gaylord, Vanderbilt, Charlton Township, Bagley Township, Livingston Township and Otsego Lake Township when highway improvements and redevelopment of parcels occur.

Educate business owners on the need and benefits of access management.

Capacity

Goal: Maintain and enhance the efficiency and capacity of the developed and undeveloped segments of the corridors.

Objectives:

Promote a land use pattern that is consistent with the capacity of roadway networks.

Regulate the number, location and type of access points by implementing access management standards.

Remove local traffic from through traffic lanes to reduce the speed differential of through traffic lanes.

Minimize the delay impact of traffic signals at intersections by setting the phase timing of the traffic signals to maximize capacities.

Improve the traffic movement at the M-32 and northbound I-75 interchange.

Coordinate with the Michigan Department of Transportation, Otsego County Road Commission and local communities to study the feasibility and location of a M-32 alternate route around Gaylord and another overpass over I-75.

Continue to monitor capacity, speed and safety along the M-32, Old 27 and I-75 Business Loop. Information will be reviewed jointly by Michigan Department of Transportation and local jurisdictions.

Safety

Goal: Maintain and improve the safety of the urbanized and rural corridor segments.

Objectives:

Reduce the number of potential conflict points in all lanes through examining the use of raised medians; right turn lanes and right by-pass lanes; shared driveways; frontage roads and/or rear access drives, and connected parking facilities.

Support the development of safe pedestrian & bicycle facilities through examining the use of bulbouts, medians and median islands; pedestrian 'safe' walk paths in large parking lots; green buffers with sidewalks; and bicycle lanes within and outside the right of way.

Reduce the speed of traffic in urbanized areas with traffic calming practices such as green buffers with sidewalks, landscaping, green median islands, and street trees plantings.

Redirect through traffic to a alternate route, rather than on the downtown Main Street of Gaylord.

Land Use Planning

Goal: Preserve, protect and enhance the character of the corridor, property values and the economic viability along the corridors by managing for growth and development.

Objectives:

Coordinate access management with local land use planning.

Encourage higher density residential, commercial and industrial development in areas with minimal environmental constraints and where needed infrastructure such as water, sewer, and roadway network can be provided.

Encourage cluster development and development served by internal roadways to reduce demand for access points onto M-32, Old 27 and I-75 Business Loop.

Guide new development in a manner that conserves natural features and environmentally sensitive areas and meets the long term needs of the community.

Discourage strip commercial development along highways and direct development to commercial nodes with managed access points by amending community master plans and zoning ordinances.

Educate local units of governments, businesses and general public on importance of coordinating access management with land use planning.

Natural Features

Goal: Protect environmentally sensitive areas such as ecological corridors, agricultural lands, wetlands, streams, inland lakes, steep slopes, and groundwater recharge areas from impacts of incompatible development.

Objectives:

Encourage the integration of wetlands, woodlands and meadows into site development as aesthetics and functional features.

Encourage the retention of agricultural lands, forest lands and ecological corridors through available mechanisms such as open space and farmland agreements, forest stewardship programs, and conservation easements, as well as zoning incentives.

Encourage the use of native plant species and naturalized landscape designs, where appropriate, to enhance the communities' existing character.

In recognizing the importance of trees in the suburban environment, encourage the retention of existing native trees and the establishment of street and shade trees in residential neighborhoods and commercial developments.

Preserve topography such as slopes, valleys and hills by limiting the amount of cut and fill during site development.

Scenic Values

Goal: Preserve and improve the scenic quality along the corridors including urbanized, lake resort, rural residential, agricultural and natural areas .

Objectives:

Incorporate corridor plan recommendations into zoning and general law ordinances to address highway setbacks, signs, billboards, parking lots, screening, greenbelts, landscaping, lighting, blight control, deteriorating structures and dangerous buildings.

Encourage all communities to regulate size and location of signs and billboards to minimize clutter, confusion, aesthetic degradation, and limit traffic hazards.

Implement open space residential and commercial development design standards to preserve scenic views, rural character, farmland, meadows, woodlands, steep slopes and wetlands with a target of preserving 50 percent of the land within a development.

Complete streetscaping projects along strip commercial areas and in the downtown's of Vanderbilt, Waters and Johannesburg.

Encourage the preservation of historic structures.

Encourage architectural design of structures consistent with local regulations and neighborhood character.

Support the retention and establishment of roadside parks like Irontone Springs and Otsego Lake State Park to preserve open space and provide outdoor recreational opportunities for residents and travelers.

Safely integrate scenic improvements Old 27, I-75 Business and Old 27 by examining the construction of tree-lined boulevards with "green" medians on Old-27 and M-32.

Develop a species list of acceptable street trees to be planted on both public and private properties when development and redevelopment occurs.