Potential Intensity Change Areas

As an extension of the future land use categories, specific redevelopment areas have been identified for the Village. Many of the Village’s options are defined and fixed by regional forces over which the Village has limited control. However, the purpose of this Plan is to identify those areas where the Village can realistically affect change. In considering the various redevelopment options presented, the Village needs to consider the relative difficulty of an option and the ability of an option to be supported by the market alone, or whether financial and administrative assistance will be required. It must also be acknowledged that for the Village to effectively address the underlying fundamental issues that are associated with redevelopment, options must extend beyond traditional, status quo approaches.

Today, Cass City is at an important “life” stage. It is vital that redevelopment occurs in a planned fashion that addresses these factors to meet the needs of both existing residents and to attract additional populations. The redevelopment or reuse of underutilized areas, which often have a detrimental effect on surrounding areas, has the potential to increase local economic benefits. The main areas targeted for such redevelopment are considered “Potential Intensity Change Areas” and are defined below.

DEFINING A POTENTIAL INTENSITY CHANGE AREA

A Potential Intensity Change Area is any spatial area that is a candidate for a “change in intensity” within the planning period of five, 10, or 20 years. PICAs can be large, spanning an entire corridor or neighborhood or smaller, such as a collection of a few parcels or even a single parcel.

The change in intensity of an area can be based on one or several of the following:

- Future competitiveness;
- Physical or economic patterns;
- Conditions or the arrangement of land, buildings, lots, or blocks;
- Land use of adjacent parcels; and/or
- Existing inappropriate intensity of use.

PICAs are critical to identify during the master planning process because they suggest places for more or less intensity of use, which impacts factors such as density, the environment, traffic, infrastructure, and so on.

IDEAS FOR PICAS IN CASS CITY

The following is a list of PICAs in Cass City where changes in intensity are recommended or expected to occur within the next 20 years. Each PICA is characterized by its existing conditions, challenges, opportunities and future land conditions.

1. Main Street;
2. Cass City Industrial; and
3. The golf course property along Hospital Road. The entire property is in Elkland Township; but about half of the property also lies within the Village boundaries.
Existing Conditions
Main Street/M-81, is the focus of commercial activity in Cass City. Currently, most traffic passes through town. There are a number of vacant tenant spaces that could be redeveloped for neighborhood commercial uses, including the former Fairway Discount store building in the middle of town and the Curtis Auto building and site at the east end of town on Main Street.

Potential Redevelopment Opportunities
The Village of Cass City has several potential redevelopment opportunities with good locations. Some examples that are ripe for redevelopment are:

- **The former Fairway Discount store next to the Cass City Municipal Building.** The location of this building is ideal for a retail or service establishment; being located right next to the Municipal building and associated pedestrian traffic, as well as at the center of town.

- **The Curtis Auto building and site at the east end of town.** This location benefits from fronting on the main street at the edge of the downtown, with plenty of property and easy accessibility to the neighborhood behind it.

- **The Village also has other opportunities for redevelopment with existing buildings, as well as potentially new ones.** Because of the wide streets and sidewalks, additional three-story buildings would be possible without destroying the sense of openness in the downtown.

Some means of encouraging downtown redevelopment are:

- **Placemaking.** One way to help increase the occupancy of the downtown buildings is through placemaking. Placemaking is creating public spaces that draw people to an area. There are many ways to accomplish this, but three ways are through public spaces, public art and green spaces.
• **Public spaces can be any place that is open and accessible to the public.** The Village of Cass City’s downtown has an abundance of public space with the Village’s wide streets and sidewalks. These public spaces lend an air of openness to the downtown and are particularly suitable for celebrations, temporary markets/arts fairs, gardens and other public uses; especially if the Village decides to install medians or otherwise indicate through design that the streets can be shared with pedestrians and shoppers.

• **Art installations in downtown Cass City can also encourage a sense of place.** Sculptures and murals, can greatly accentuate the transportation network and improve the value of a place. Art can be effective for traffic calming and can be used for wayfinding and as gateway attractions. Public green spaces can provide an attraction and gathering spot for people in the downtown. As more people visit downtown Cass City, they will be able to enjoy and support the local businesses.

• **Wayfinding.** Signs are an effective way to welcome, alert, inform and direct users, especially at transition points. Sign branding for downtown Cass City should be used to enhance the character of the downtown and its regional recognition. Distinctive directional signs, monument signs and banners will provide user information and convey a sense of local identity.

• **Low Impact Development.** Low Impact Development (LID) is incorporating green infrastructure into project to manage storm water in an environmentally sensitive way. Utilizing LID strategies during the development design phase can improve water quality and aesthetics, and reduce costs. LID strategies include using permeable pavement, rain gardens, and bio-swales.
CASS CITY INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT

Existing Conditions
The area south of M-81 and west of Doerr Road within the Village limits and zoned for general industrial, has both vacant property and existing development that is an outstanding location for new industry.

The Village of Cass City Industrial District Objectives
The Village of Cass City, to proactively enhance the well-being of Village residents, has developed a set of general goals. These goals provide a framework for planning, and implementation is a continuous process tailored to current needs. Village goals supported by the Industrial District include:

- Cluster industries to minimize impacts on less intensive uses, minimize need for utility expansions, and provide for more efficient use of land.
- Encourage the type and amount of industrial operations proved by market analysis, historical performance, consumer desires, and those deemed as overall assets to the community.

Facilitate Infrastructure
The successful development of the industrial areas of Cass City is dependent on having reliable energy services. Disruption in service can lead to manufacturing shutdowns and delays, preventing businesses from locating in the Village. Cass City is working with DTE to continue to provide sustainable power for the industrial district.
**GOLF COURSE PROPERTY – HOSPITAL ROAD**

*Existing Conditions*
A small golf course / country club lies along Hospital Drive, down the road from Hills and Dales General Hospital and not far from the Village. This property is located within Elkland Township and roughly half lies within the Village. The property has water features, is close to a couple of residential developments, overlooks farm fields and could link with the downtown. The Village could work with the property owner to attract additional potential opportunities.

*Potential Development Opportunities*
This site could allow for the expansion of event business opportunities in and around the Village, and could possibly even encourage some agri-tourism. Additional uses along with current golfing could include:

- Events
- Farm to Table dining
- Gazebo/ pavilion rental
- Trails and pathways linking to downtown, the community park and residential areas.