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MEMORANDUM

To: Village of Ravenna Planning Commission

From: Kevin Yeomans

Date: 9/17/2026

Re: Master Plan Review – Industrial, Recreation and the Environment, Utilities, Transportation, and Public Facilities

Attached is the first draft of chapters 7, 8, and 9 of the Master Plan. We seek the Planning Commission's review, feedback, and questions on all items.

- Chapter 7: Industrial Policy: Provides overall goals for industrial land uses in the Village and provides recommended actions for the Village to take to meet these goals.
 - This chapter includes designations designed to differentiate between light and heavy industrial. These designations will be highly important in reviewing special land uses and determining which light industrial uses may be appropriate in commercial areas.
- Chapter 8: Recreational and Environmental Policy. Provides overall goals for the recreation, protection of the natural environment, and how recreation and the natural environment may be connected. It's important to note that the goals and recommendations in the master plan are intended to be broad, with more specific recreation plans being created through the development of a recreation plan.
- Chapter 9: Utilities, Transportation, and Public Facilities. Provides goals for the improvement and maintenance of public water, public sewer, roads, non-motorized pathways, and public facilities within the Village. It also includes goals which relate to the expansion and improvement of private / quasi-public facilities.

The improvement and maintenance of infrastructure is crucial to long-term public health and safety. A copy of this chapter has been provided to the Public Works Supervisor. Once his comments are received, they will be passed along to the Planning Commission.

The Planning Commission previously reviewed the following chapters.

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Community Preferences
- Chapter 3: Agricultural Goals
- Chapter 4: Residential Policy
- Chapter 5: Commercial Policy
- Chapter 6: Downtown Policy

We will be prepared to go over the draft chapters in more detail at your September 22, 2026, meeting. If you have any questions before then please let us know.

Next Steps

With the completion of these chapters the Master Plan is mostly complete. Below we provide a general outline of the steps that will be taken prior to the master plan being adopted to the Planning Commission.

1. Public Workshop: At the October 10 Movies in the Park, Fresh Coast Planning will be hosting a table to present the draft Master Plan to the public and seek their feedback.
2. Commission Review of Public Feedback: We will compile the public feedback and present it to the Planning Commission at the next available Commission meeting. The Commission will determine if any updates to the Master Plan are necessary to address the public feedback gathered.
3. Legal Counsel Review: A copy of the draft Master Plan will be provided to legal counsel for review. Legal counsel will provide recommend edits to ensure the language used is prepared in such a way that it is legally defensible, should elements of the Master Plan be challenged.
4. Commission Review of Legal Feedback: Legal Counsel's feedback will be presented to the Commission. You will determine what recommended edits or changes to accept.
5. Village Council Review: The draft Master Plan will be presented to the Village Council for review and comment.
 - a. If the Village Council determines that any changes should be made the Master Plan will be sent back to the Planning Commission for review.
 - b. If the Village Council determines that no changes are needed, they will approve the Master Plan for distribution.
6. Distribution: The Michigan Planning Enabling Act requires the Master Plan is distributed to surrounding communities, utility providers, and other agencies for review. The distribution/public comment period is required to last for 63 days.
7. Presentation of Master Plan: Once the distribution is completed the Master Plan and any comments received will be presented to the Commission for review and consideration.
8. Public Hearing: Lastly, the Planning Commission must hold a public hearing for the Master Plan prior to adoption. Once the public hearing is complete the Commission can adopt the Master Plan.

Kevin Yeomans

Kevin Yeomans
Planner

Attachments

cc: Emily Carrigan, Village Clerk

Chapter 7: Industrial Policy

Purpose

Due to constraints in land availability, public utility capacities, and regional transportation access, the Village of Ravenna adopts a targeted approach to industrial land use. The intent of this policy is to sustain established local operations, accommodate low-impact light industrial growth, and discourage heavy industrial development that could overburden municipal infrastructure or community resources.

Industrial Designations

Light Industrial

The Light Industrial designation accommodates clean, low-intensity manufacturing, processing, assembly, warehousing, and technology operations that take place entirely within enclosed structures. Characterized by attractive architecture, minimal outdoor storage, and controlled traffic generation, Light Industrial produces virtually no off-site noise, dust, vibration, or odor.

Because of these low-impact characteristics, Light Industrial functions as a compatible neighbor to commercial districts. Uses like craft beverage production, specialized food processing, agricultural research labs, artisan trades, and boutique assembly operate harmoniously alongside commercial corridors—sharing access roads, fostering daytime economic activity, and integrating into pedestrian-friendly business environments without disrupting retail trade or visitor experiences.

Heavy Industrial

The Heavy Industrial designation applies to high-intensity operations involving raw material extraction, chemical processing, large-scale metal fabrication, outdoor processing, and heavy equipment storage. These uses inherently produce significant off-site impacts, including heavy truck traffic, elevated noise levels, potential environmental hazards, and visual disruption.

Unlike Light Industrial, Heavy Industrial uses are fundamentally incompatible with commercial and residential districts. They require complete spatial isolation, dedicated freight corridors, heavy utility capacities, and extensive physical buffering to prevent property devaluation, safety hazards, and land-use conflicts.

Goals

- Support light industrial developments that complement local farming, including agricultural processing, cold storage, packaging, craft beverage manufacturing, and value-added food production.
- Promote clean, light industrial uses that diversify the local economy and strengthen the municipal tax base without compromising quality of life.
- Direct new industrial growth toward the reuse, infill, or redevelopment of existing underutilized sites before converting undeveloped greenfield lands.
- Ensure that industrial development occurs in such a way that protects the small-town visual character of the community.

- Require industrial growth to locate where existing public water, sanitary sewer, and transportation networks have adequate capacity to support demand.
- Ensure that capital costs for utility expansions, system upgrades, or road repairs required by new industrial operations are borne by the developer rather than existing taxpayers or utility ratepayers.
- Discourage heavy industrial uses that generate excessive traffic, pollution, or oversized demands on public utilities and natural resources.

Land Use Classification

Industrial

The Industrial classification accommodates manufacturing, agricultural processing, warehousing, and specialized trade facilities that require dedicated site footprints and utility infrastructure. Situated in the southeast quadrant of the Village along the B-35 corridor, these lands capitalize on proximity to existing public sanitary sewer and key transportation routes. This designation ensures appropriate spatial separation and buffering between higher-intensity operations and noise-sensitive residential or commercial districts.

Recommendations

- Update Zoning Ordinance provisions for site plan review, outdoor storage, screening setbacks, dark-sky compliant lighting, and off-street parking/loading to eliminate off-site nuisances.
- Consider adopting design and landscaping guidelines for industrial properties to ensure new construction aligns with Ravenna's small-town visual character.
- Review industrial land uses to clarify by-right versus special land uses, ensuring higher-impact operations receive rigorous discretionary review.
- Review industrial land uses to clarify light industrial versus heavy industrial and further clarify which light industrial uses may be appropriate in commercial areas.
- Enact zoning standards requiring new industrial developments to have direct frontage on or designated access to All-Season roads.
- Consider adopting a dedicated municipal truck route ordinance to steer heavy freight traffic onto designated arterial roads and away from residential neighborhoods and downtown Ravenna.
- Coordinate with the Public Works Department to map, budget, and schedule water, sanitary sewer, stormwater, and road capacity upgrades supporting targeted industrial growth within the Capital Improvement Program.
- Coordinate with Ravenna Township to align zoning, future land use, and utility extension policies for industrial land along shared village borders.
- Maintain active partnerships with the local Chamber of Commerce, Muskegon County economic development organizations, and regional agencies to retain local companies, foster entrepreneurship, and attract compatible light industrial investments.

Chapter 8: Recreational & Environmental Policy

Purpose

The Village of Ravenna cherishes its distinct small-town identity and deep connection to the natural environment. The purpose of this chapter is to establish a clear strategy for expanding year-round recreational opportunities, safeguarding unique landscapes, and stewarding the ecological resources that sustain Ravenna's rural heritage, local economy, and quality of life.

Goals

- Preserve, expand, and link Ravenna's recreational assets and natural features.
- Enhance recreational opportunities throughout the Village.
- Maximize the connection between the Musketawa Trail and Ravenna's Downtown area.
- Maintain and enhance non-motorized pathways throughout the Village.
- Enhance low-impact public access to Crockery Creek.
- Preserve wetlands, mature tree canopies, and open spaces to maintain a balance between Village growth and natural ecosystems.
- Require new residential and commercial developments to build direct links to existing and planned non-motorized pathway networks.
- Require new development proposals to demonstrate the protection of local natural resources, watershed drainage, and wildlife habitats during site plan review.
- Require new land developments to incorporate usable recreation areas, parks, or protected natural space.

Land Use Classifications

Recreation

The Recreation classification is established to protect publicly accessible open spaces, active recreation facilities, and natural leisure areas. Designed to evolve alongside shifting community priorities, this designation ensures flexible, multi-generational recreational opportunities. This classification encompasses Conklin Park and is intended to safeguard all current and future municipal parklands for permanent public use and enjoyment.

Natural Preservation Overlay (NPO)

The Natural Preservation Overlay is designated to safeguard sensitive ecological features, protect Ravenna's rural character, and support low-impact public recreation along the Crockery Creek corridor. Delineated by the 100-year floodplain and associated wetland systems, this overlay prioritizes water quality, flood storage, and riparian habitat conservation. While passive recreation (such as non-motorized trails, boardwalks, and kayak launches) is encouraged, any site development within this corridor must incorporate natural resource preservation, native buffer protection, and minimal land disturbance.

Recommendations

- Draft and adopt a municipal overlay zoning district for the Crockery Creek corridor to protect riparian buffers, control stormwater runoff, preserve native soils, and restrict detrimental site clearing.
- Consider amending the zoning ordinance to require new residential and commercial developments to set aside dedicated usable open space, parkland, or direct non-motorized trail easements.
- Review and, if necessary, update site plan review standards to ensure adequate environmental controls, emphasizing native landscaping, erosion control, and tree canopy retention.
- Consider developing designated bike lanes, sidewalks, and multi-use paths linking neighborhoods directly to downtown Ravenna, local parks, and schools, incorporating safe pedestrian crossings along major corridors (Main St., Mortimer St., and Heights Ravenna Rd.).
- Establish a multi-year CIP schedule to budget for routine maintenance, surface repaving, equipment replacement, and security enhancements across all village-owned recreational assets.
- Investigate the integration of year-round capabilities into existing and planned facilities, such as covered multi-use pavilions, winter trail staging areas, and designated space for outdoor ice skating.
- Conduct an annual review of the Parks and Recreation Plan to track implementation progress, reprioritize projects, and maintain compliance for state grant eligibility.
- Coordinate with Ravenna Township, Muskegon County Parks, the MDNR, and local organizations (such as the Friends of the Musketawa Trail) to coordinate regional connectivity, share maintenance resources, and joint-apply for grant funding.

Chapter 9: Utilities, Transportation, and Public Facilities

Purpose

Essential infrastructure forms the backbone of the Village's public health, safety, and economic vitality. Municipal utilities—including public water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater management systems—are directly operated by the Village to protect natural resources and support development. Complementing these services are private and quasi-public utilities, such as electric, natural gas, telecommunications, broadband, and solid waste disposal providers.

The Village's transportation network shapes local land use patterns and dictates both internal mobility and regional connectivity. To ensure long-term accessibility, this network must safely accommodate diverse modes of travel, including passenger vehicles, agricultural equipment, freight, bicycles, micro-mobility options (e-bikes), Off-Road Vehicles (ORVs), and pedestrians.

Finally, municipal public facilities—including civic buildings, public safety infrastructure, and public works sites—must be strategically maintained and expanded to deliver high-quality services to Village residents.

Goals

- Develop, expand, and maintain Village-owned water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater systems in an orderly, cost-effective, and environmentally sustainable manner.
- Safeguard municipal drinking water sources and surface water bodies from stormwater runoff, agricultural discharge, and legacy pollutants.
- Ensure all public roads are designed, improved, and maintained to provide a safe, reliable, and well-connected vehicular network throughout the Village.
- Design transportation corridors that safely and efficiently accommodate multi-modal traffic, facilitating safe co-existence among motor vehicles, non-motorized users, micro-mobility, and ORVs
- Coordinate with private and quasi-public utility providers to ensure residents and businesses have access to high-quality, reliable, and affordable energy, broadband, and waste management services.
- Maintain modern, accessible, and functional municipal facilities capable of supporting local government operations and community needs.

Recommendations

- Adopt comprehensive public works and land development ordinances establishing clear design, construction, and performance standards for public roads and sidewalks.
- Maintain active coordination with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Muskegon County Road Commission (MCRC) regarding pavement management, access management, and capital improvements along major corridors connecting to the broader regional network.

- Evaluate heavy vehicle traffic flows and consider adopting a local Truck Route Ordinance to direct commercial freight onto designated arterials, protecting residential streets and preserving road pavement infrastructure.
- Maintain and update a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to schedule funding for the maintenance, repair, and expansion of public roads, water lines, sanitary sewers, stormwater infrastructure, public parking, and village facilities.
- Audit and update local off-street parking requirements to right-size minimum parking mandates, encourage shared parking, and optimize public parking facilities—maximizing developable land for commercial and residential growth.
- Develop a dedicated non-motorized transportation plan to expand sidewalk connections, crosswalk safety, and multi-use trails throughout the Village.
- Implement policies requiring developers to fund or construct the necessary utility and transportation infrastructure upgrades directly necessitated by their projects.
- Consider establishing a Right-of-Way Management Policy and permitting process governing work conducted by private and quasi-public utilities within Village road rights-of-way to protect public infrastructure investments.