

## Chapter 5 SIGNIFICANT ISSUES AND TRENDS



## CHAPTER 5

### SIGNIFICANT ISSUES AND TRENDS

This chapter discusses issues and trends that are important to the future of Glen Arbor Township. It looks at significant issues in four broad categories:

1. Community character;
2. Infrastructure improvement needs;
3. Affordable housing;
4. Intergovernmental relations.

Within each category a variety of issues are addressed ranging from residential development and its relationship to commercial development, the limited amount of land available for new development, waste treatment, the protection of natural features and natural resources, and a suitable alternative location for the boat launch among others. Alternative approaches to address these issues are discussed and recommended actions are suggested here and summarized in Chapter 9.

#### **Community Character**

##### **Overview**

The most significant set of issues facing Glen Arbor Township relate to preservation of existing community character. The Township is a highly attractive tourist, recreation and second home destination, with private development concentrated on a limited area due to extensive public land holdings, and all of the lands and the natural resource attractions are sensitive to the impacts of development. This means that while there is pressure to intensify development in areas where, if development doesn't tread lightly, the very resources that attract people to the area—the lakes, woods and dunes—will be degraded. Thus, there is growing concern over development that is too dense with too much lot coverage and mass to be safe for the environment (especially for groundwater and surface water runoff). There are also aesthetic dimensions to this character. When building mass becomes too great relative to the parcel size and out of scale with development on land around it, then the northwoods community character, so cherished by residents and visitors, suffers as well.

In order to systematically examine this set of issues, it is necessary to break them down into component parts:

- Relationship between residential population and commercial development as part of a buildout analysis;
- Growing waste treatment problems in the village of Glen Arbor;
- Related natural resource protection issues;
- Bigfoot development: building height, mass and density issues;
- Exterior design of buildings.

**Photo 5-1**  
**Western Avenue in the Village of Glen Arbor on a Summer Day**



*Photo by Mark Wyckoff*

### **Relationship between Residential Population and Commercial Development**

One of the issues raised at the August 2003 Town Meeting was what could be done to increase the range of local businesses in the village of Glen Arbor, especially on a year around basis. See Photo 5-1. Glen Arbor Township has both a permanent, year around, residential population and a seasonal tourist and second home population. As the permanent residential population of Glen Arbor Township grows, there can be an increase in businesses to support that population. Conversely, either the year around residential population needs to grow or tourists need to come all seasons for the businesses to increase. Normally a Township uses planning and zoning to provide sufficient land for both residential and commercial uses to support a healthy balance. However, the market must be there for the new businesses to flourish.

Because the Township is constrained in how much the residential population can grow by the limited amount of undeveloped private land, an analysis was conducted on the potential relationship between private, developable land remaining in Glen Arbor Township and in the immediately surrounding jurisdictions. The question was, is there sufficient undeveloped residential land in the Township to support a wider range of businesses in Glen Arbor (such as a full service bank or dry cleaners). The answer for a number of reasons is no. That does not mean there will not be more businesses in Glen Arbor. There will

be. However, unless tourism becomes four full seasons, and/or nearly all the seasonally occupied housing is occupied on a year around basis (or equal shares of each), there does not appear to be a sufficient market to support a wider range of year around businesses in the village of Glen Arbor. A more detailed explanation follows.

Based on typical market standards, there are already more year around businesses in Glen Arbor than the year around population could support. That makes those businesses extremely dependent on tourists to supplement local business. For example, typically it requires a population of about 2,500 persons to support a small grocery store or drug store of about 30,000 square feet and a site area of about 3 acres (Urban Land Institute, 1977). There is an IGA as well as the Bear Paws grocery and a separate drug store already in Glen Arbor and another grocery store in nearby Empire. The 2000 population of the four-township area including Glen Arbor, Cleveland, Empire and Kasson Townships was 4,490. See Table 5-1. It is likely only a portion of that population shops in Glen Arbor. This example demonstrates that it will take many more people to support a wider range of year around businesses in Glen Arbor.

**Table 5-1 Population of Glen Arbor Township and Surrounding Communities, 2000**

<b>Community</b>	<b>2000 Population</b>	<b>Occupied Housing Units</b>	<b>Seasonal/Vacant Housing Units</b>
Glen Arbor Township	788	377	1,068
Cleveland Township	1,040	436	342
Empire Township including Empire Village	1,085	500	440
Kasson Township	1,577	557	108
Total Four Townships	4,490	1,420	1,958

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau*

An analysis of vacant land was made for Glen Arbor Township in order to estimate the number of residences that could be expected when the Township reaches “buildout,” or the point when all available land has a house on it.

It appears from the buildout analysis that, if current zoning regulations were to remain in effect, and ignoring for a moment the suitability of the land for a structure (i.e. whether it is wetland, or is not suitable for a septic system), then only 675 new residences could be built on land already divided, but not developed. Another 496 could be built on land that could be divided from current large parcels, and 65 additional units could be constructed at the Homestead and 96 at the Woodstone development (if the National Park Service purchases about



100 acres of the subdivision, otherwise there would be 194 new residences in the Woodstone). While this is a total of about 1332 new residences (and almost equal to the current number of dwelling units in the Township), the actual number of new dwelling units is likely to be about half of that, the equivalent year around population increase is probably not very great. This is because many of the remaining lots and undivided land have either wetlands, groundwater close to the surface, or steep slopes (up on Miller Hill). This will greatly reduce the total number of dwelling units that get built. In addition, there is a longstanding practice in the Township for the development of large lot family "compounds" that accommodate a large number of family members for short periods, but also involve more land than the minimum ordinance requirements. Many of the potential new residences calculated as splits from existing homes on large lots may never be built as the owners intend to keep larger properties as an amenity, choosing not to sell off a buildable lot. Plus, the ratio of year around dwellings to total dwellings has remained about 1 to 4, and if this trend continues, then at most a couple of hundred additional dwellings would be for year around occupancy. At just over two persons per household, this only adds a couple of hundred potential year around customers for businesses.

Most of the new residences will likely be second homes. Only if zoning density were significantly increased would the new development result in significantly more people. However, to do so would require public sewers, which are not likely cost effective with such a low density population spread as widely as it is at the present (this conclusion is explained in more detail in a few pages).

But perhaps more important, it is likely the Township will approach buildout over the next twenty years. The "Baby Boomer" generation is approaching retirement and a part of that generation has more disposable income than any generation before it, and could afford to buy or build a home in Glen Arbor Township. The Baby Boomer generation is familiar with the amenities of the area and has frequently visited here. That is probably why there was a mini land rush underway in Glen Arbor Township in 2004. This is despite a general economic malaise and uncertainty over America's economic future with a global war on terrorism, a war to establish a new democracy in Iraq and Afghanistan and a growing U.S. budget deficit. Survey stakes are visible along much of the undeveloped land on the north side of Northwood Drive, up on Miller Hill and west of Glen Arbor on M-109. New homes are under construction on undeveloped Lake Michigan lots and in the area between the Township Hall and Lake Michigan. It is likely most of the available and buildable land in the Township will be developed over the next twenty years.

So does that mean the Township should plan for less commercial development than land is presently zoned for, since more land is zoned commercial than is used commercially at present? No, other factors contribute to a decision on how much land should be planned for commercial development. These include:

- What portion of the population is year-around versus seasonal? If the year-around population can support a larger commercial area, sufficient

designated land should be provided. If the year-around and seasonal population is large enough, and the seasonal visitors enlarge the population in all four seasons, then there might be the equivalent of a year-around population, although the visitors' needs for support businesses may be somewhat different than that for only a year-around population. Glen Arbor's seasonal population is generally highest in the summer, next highest in the winter (if Sugar Loaf ski resort is open, otherwise fall is busier) and then relatively low in the spring.

- Age of residents. The average age of the population in Glen Arbor Township is substantially older than that of Michigan and of Leelanau County. This group may be retired, and less likely to shop outside the community because they do not travel to work and because of the increased effort to travel for shopping. Glen Arbor Township appeals to an older population as a retirement destination, and this is likely to continue and may foster an increase in a variety of appropriate businesses. The multiplier effect of retired persons on the local economy is very strong. A 1985 study found that \$4,000 of social security payments is sufficient to create a job in the local economy compared to \$91,743 in manufacturing payroll or \$65,516 in agricultural sales to produce one job. (Chesnutt, Lee and Fagan, 1993) No more recent data is available.

**Photo 5-2**  
**Sylvan Inn Bed & Breakfast**



*Photo by Terry Gretzema*

The exact relationship between the area of potential residential development in Glen Arbor and the appropriate related area of commercial development is

difficult to estimate accurately. Documented research on the market needed to support commercial development is targeted at more urban populations.

Communities are often easier to sustain with a mix of land uses. Research suggests about 78% residential and 22% commercial/industrial has been a target for some communities. (Ballance, 2002) While the large proportion of tax exempt National Park Service land in Glen Arbor Township may, over time, help limit the extent of residential growth to a manageable geographic area, there is very little nonresidential development. Glen Arbor Township's residential SEV is about 95% of total, while commercial is only about 5% and industrial SEV is zero (see Chapter Two). However, there is not much land available for commercial development, and the market is not presently there to support much more on a year around basis.

The land presently in the Business District in the village of Glen Arbor should remain zoned that way to accommodate new and expanded businesses that serve tourists and/or, tourists and year around residents. If the National Park were to attract anywhere near the 3 million visitors a year it was originally predicted to serve, there would be a demand for many more seasonal businesses in Glen Arbor. These additional businesses would help spread the tax base so that residential landowners did not bear almost all the burden for Township services.

### **Waste Treatment in Glen Arbor Township**

The treatment of sewage is a very important concern in Glen Arbor Township. If human and commercial waste is not properly treated, high quality surface waters and groundwater would be polluted. The Glen Lakes, the Crystal River and Lake Michigan are high quality surface waters that are important to the quality of life and economy of the community.

Surface waters and groundwater are vulnerable to pollution from improperly designed or poorly functioning conventional sewage treatment systems. Conventional septic tank and drain field systems can cause pollution and public health problems if the water table is too high, the soil too porous to filter waste, the soil too dense to allow percolation or the system too close to water supplies. Even though they may be functioning properly, the treated waste discharged by municipal treatment systems generally contain small amounts of contaminants. The accumulation of those minute (and accepted under state DEQ permit standards) amounts can, over time, negatively affect streams and lakes.

Glen Arbor faces three problems regarding the treatment of wastes. These are:

- Much of the village area has a relatively high water table, as little as 1' to 2' below the surface. This makes conventional septic treatment systems difficult or impossible to use as County ordinance requires a minimum of 4' between the bottom of the drain field and the water table. For lands closer to Lake Michigan, the water table fluctuates a considerable distance and is somewhat

related to the level of Lake Michigan. The District Health Department found no water at depths of 8' to 9' in 2003 when Lake Michigan was close to its record low level in locations where the water table was within 3' of the surface during the high Lake Michigan levels of the late 1980s. Property owners seeking permits to install septic systems during periods of lowered groundwater may not understand the need to design the system in consideration of potentially higher groundwater levels at some future year.

- Soils are sandy and are exceptionally porous. As a result, they perform very little cleansing of biological or nutrient contamination. Septic systems may be installed according to permit requirements, but still not be fulfilling their function, and yet not showing obvious signs, like backing up liquids to the surface.
- Many of the existing lots in the village are small, which limits the size of commercial and residential buildings that can be developed on existing parcels. Lots need to be large enough for an adequate separation distance from the potable water source as well as large enough for the drain field and a replacement field (which is required by County ordinance). This means that some lots (such as those 50' by 100' and 100' by 100') may be impossible to develop for commercial purposes. It may be necessary for a lot to be a minimum of 100' by 200' to develop a small retail business, which is about ½ acre. See Figure 5-1 for an illustration of how much space a septic system, parking, building and other requirements would take on a half-acre lot. There is little space for additional parking or amenities such as landscaping. A business requiring more space, such as a restaurant or larger retail establishment, will need an even larger parcel or combination of parcels in order to be able to build. A small retail establishment with about 8 employees would require an area of about 4,900 sq. ft. for the septic system, including initial and replacement drain fields and setbacks from lot lines. A very small retail operation may be able to utilize a smaller septic system requiring less space but would never be able to expand. A restaurant with about 40 seats would require a total of about 18,000 sq. ft. for the septic system and septic system setbacks or an area of about 120' by 150'. Altogether, about 40,000 sq. ft. is needed for the restaurant, parking, loading, setbacks and septic system. See Figure 5-2. A much smaller restaurant, with about 10-15 seats may be able to fit on a lot smaller than 40,000 sq. ft. if it could also gain the 50' well separation distance, loading and parking space and never enlarge.

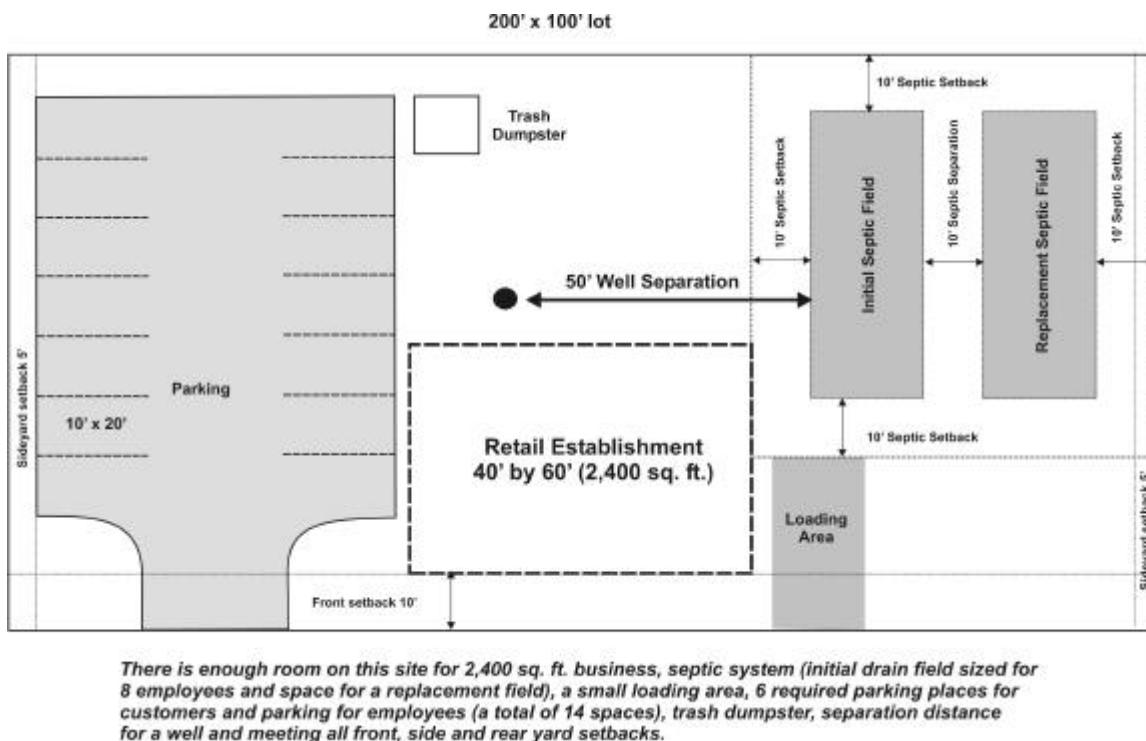
There are several potential solutions to these problems. These include:

- The use of single unit alternative treatment systems that have a different configuration than the conventional septic system. This option is not available for commercial development, only residential development.
- The use of group systems that permits multiple homes or businesses to be placed on one treatment system. Depending on the number of units, or types of businesses served, such a system could require an MDEQ discharge permit.



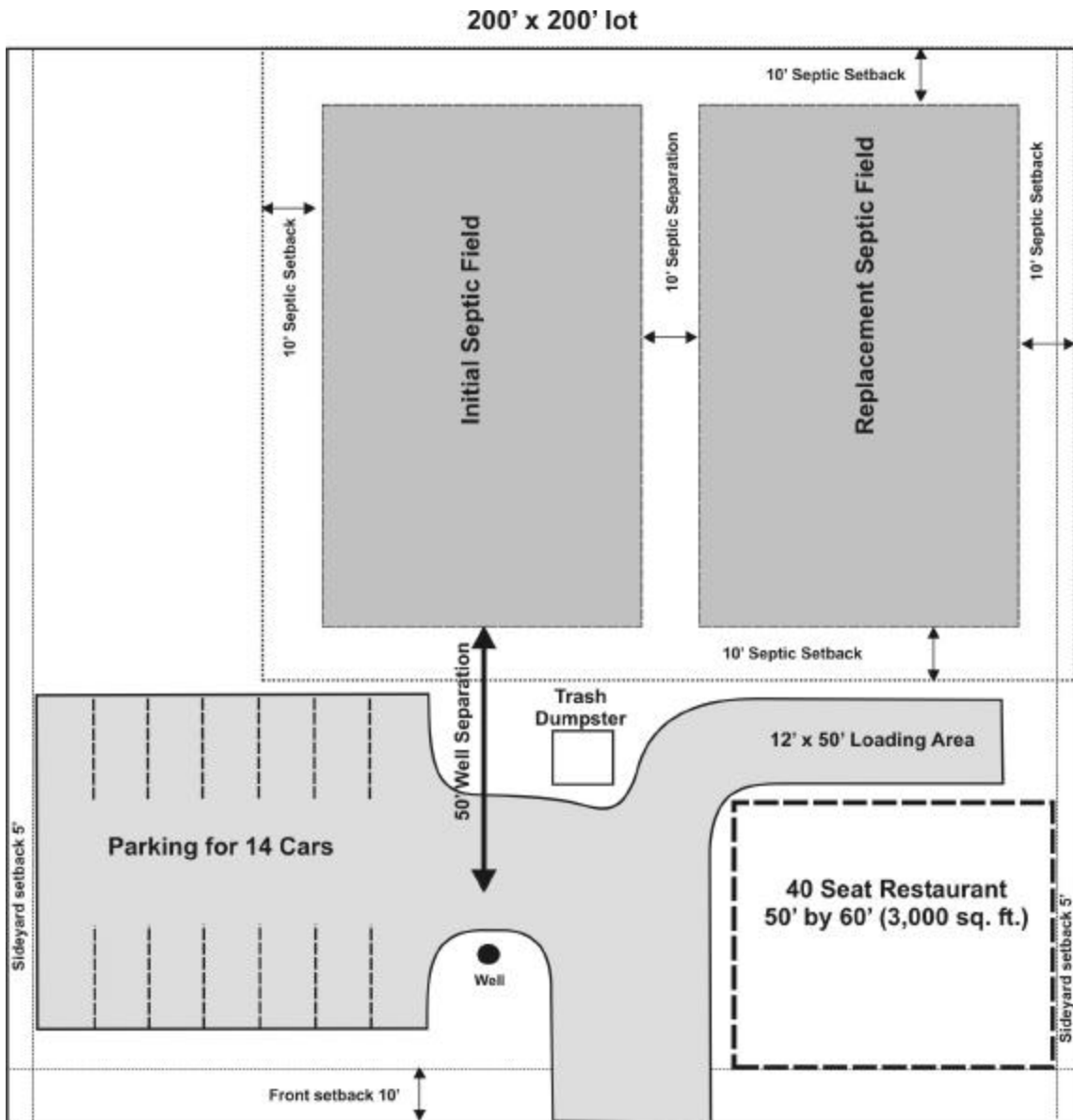
- Requiring future lot splits and subdivisions to maintain an adequate minimum lot size that would permit use of a conventional septic system. In most soils of Glen Arbor Township this would require a minimum lot size of at least an acre and probably larger for commercial developments, especially restaurants.
- Requiring prior to sale of property that every septic system be inspected and if substandard, brought up to code before the sale can be completed.
- Linking to the sewage treatment system at the Homestead. This is probably the least likely option as the Homestead must be willing, there must be available capacity or capacity must be able to be cost-effectively added, the cost of running lines with pumping stations must be acceptable, and a discharge location must be found to accommodate additional waste.
- Construction of a municipal waste treatment system with a waste treatment plant.

**Figure 5-1**  
**Septic System and Other Space Requirements for a**  
**Small Retail Establishment on a 200' x 100' Lot in Glen Arbor "Village."**



Graphic by John Warbach, Planning & Zoning Center, Inc.

**Figure 5-2**  
**Septic System and Other Space Requirements for a 40 Seat Restaurant on**  
**a 200' x 200' Lot in Glen Arbor "Village."**



*There is enough room on this site for a 3,000 sq. ft. 40-seat restaurant, septic system (initial drain field and space for a replacement field), a 12' x 50' loading area, 14 required parking places (1 per 3 seats), trash dumpster, separation distance for a well and meeting all front, side and rear yard setbacks. More parking would be needed for employees and bar patrons, which could require reconfiguring the septic fields and parking area.*

*Graphic by John Warbach, Planning & Zoning Center, Inc.*

Alternative Treatment Systems (ATS) are permitted in Leelanau County for residences, pursuant to County Environmental Health Regulations Article IV—Private Sewerage Systems, Section 2.459. This regulation provides treatment performance standards that the alternative system must meet, as well as the requirement of approval of the District Health Officer. ATS are permitted only on existing parcels of record, and not for commercial uses. New plats and land divisions must conform to conventional sewage treatment standards. As of early 2004, only a few alternative systems, generally bio-filter systems, had been constructed and none are yet in operation so that tests could be run to verify performance. These systems can cost between \$15,000 and \$30,000 per home to engineer and install.

One group system has been constructed for the Homestead's Woodstone subdivision. This uses a treatment wetland for purification and discharges its waste into a drain field in an area approved for conventional systems. The system is rated to handle over 10,000 gallons per day, which requires an MDEQ groundwater discharge permit. To date, only a few homes have been connected to the system.

Small group systems within the village area have been installed by residential developers for as few as 5 or 6 homes, according to the Benzie Leelanau District Health Department. Use of such a system for commercial establishments is possible in the village. The advantage would be that sharing can cut down on space requirements and well separation constraints. However, such a system would likely be larger than that for shared residential customers, requiring a large drain field. Business owners would have to calculate any possible future expansion before construction in order to be ensured of system capacity to handle higher use, otherwise business enlargement would not be possible. A DEQ permit would also be required that would ensure public safety and establish a mechanism for future care of the facility.

The County requirement that all new site condo, subdivisions and land divisions use a conventional system is based on the principal that a development should not be placed where the environment cannot handle it. Lot size, then, depends on the capacity of soils and water table to accommodate a conventional septic system. Typically, a single family residential lot requires about 40,000 sq. ft. as the minimum lot size for a 3 bedroom home (there is room for the original drainfield and a replacement field plus separation distance for a well). This can be less where soils are porous and the water table is deep.

A municipal waste treatment system could allay the concern that groundwater and lakes and streams will be polluted by poorly functioning conventional septic systems. However, such a system could effectively bypass the standard that links new development to site septic treatment capacity. Minimum lot size could

then be reduced and density increased. In fact, it would make the treatment system more cost-effective to do so as there would be more users to pay for it.

**Photo 5-3**  
**Pristine Waters of Big Glen Lake**



*Photo by Mark Wyckoff*

The cost of a municipal system to serve Glen Arbor is difficult to quickly estimate. The national standard cost for a gravity-fed, municipal waste treatment system is nearly \$9,500 per house. The village of Glen Arbor may be better served by a low pressure system due to topography and other factors. However, if public sewers were proposed around both Glen Lakes, then a combination of gravity and pressure sewer systems would be necessary. The cost would be high given the long distance it would run. A local engineering firm should be contracted for precise cost estimates. However, a major issue for a municipal treatment system in Glen Arbor is where would the treated waste be disposed of? Discharge into the Crystal River, Glen Lake or even Lake Michigan is almost unthinkable to many people. Ground discharge requires a large land area with suitable soils which is unlikely to exist in private ownership. The National Park Service would not enter into an agreement with the Township to discharge treated sewage on any land within the Park Service boundary. These problems and the limited potential for new development in the Township suggest that a municipal sewage treatment system is unlikely to be constructed and that conventional septic systems are likely to be the waste disposal system of choice for new development over the next twenty years. Similarly alternative systems, especially those serving a cluster of users, are likely to become more popular where there

is enough land to accommodate discharges. However, in order to protect drinking water supplies that are very close to many septic fields, it will be important to ensure that existing septic systems continue to function properly. The easiest way to do this is through a mandatory septic system inspection at the time of sale of property. Deficient systems would have to be improved prior to the closing. Benzie County has had such a system in place for about a decade and about 16% of all systems inspected were in failure.

### **Natural Resource Protection**

In overall area, Glen Arbor Township will forever have the majority of its natural landscape preserved in the National Lakeshore. If residents want to retain nature in the privately owned areas, to protect water quality of the lakes and rivers, and to sustain wildlife populations as part of the nature experience, they will have to be diligent in caring for the pure water and plant and animal ecosystems in the Township. See Photos 5-3 and 5-4. Glen Arbor ecosystems are highly sensitive, so will need special care.

The Glen Lakes Associations, the Leelanau Watershed Council, various conservancy groups and others are dedicated to monitoring the quality of Glen Arbor natural resources and are able to provide guidance on how to protect area natural resources.

Because nature is part of the scenery and quality of life in Glen Arbor Township, property owners need to plan to retain or enhance vegetation in the most visible places, such as along roads. This can be difficult as property owners often want to provide as much visibility of their home or business as possible. However, the construction of hundreds of new homes in the Township could drastically “suburbanize” the privately owned areas if property owners are not sensitive to their individual role in preserving Glen Arbor quality of life. One denuded property along a road does not destroy the north woods visual character, but the fifth property within a mile of each other will have a substantial effect. One small measure the Township can take is to require approval of a site plan for commercial development and a plot plan for single family development prior to any clearing of trees on a property. Clear cutting could be prohibited, and tree planting could be required if trees along the roadway were substantially removed as a part of the development process.



**Photo 5-4**  
**Hatlems Creek**



*Photo by Terry Gretzema.*

### **Bigfoot Development**

By overwhelming margins, the biggest issue of concern to citizens at the August 2004 Town Meeting was the negative impact of large buildings on small lots, especially when located on the waterfront. The impacts can include a reduction in light and air to adjoining properties, in some cases the large mass buildings cut off views of the lake from public roads, or adjoining properties. They also have the strong visual impact of a developed site in an area otherwise characterized more by nature than by buildings. There may also be impacts from additional cars, noise, light, and activity associated with more intensively used sites. This is especially significant when contrasted with single family homes, which in Glen Arbor Township are always nearby.

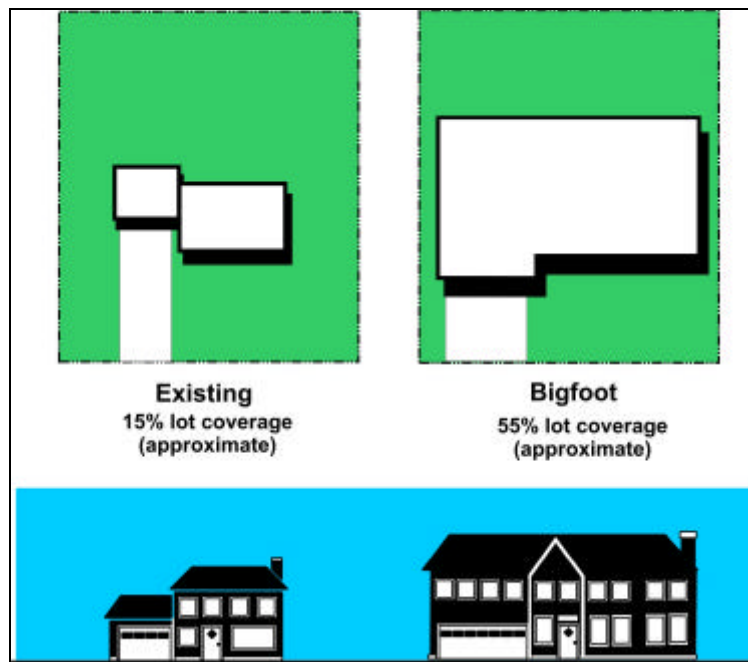
A single development at the end of Lake Street on Lake Michigan known as the LeBear development and several new large single family homes on small lots on Glen Lake are responsible for the major public concern over what is commonly called “bigfoot” (for big footprint) development. See Photo 5-5. The LeBear Development was constructed according to the zoning regulations then in effect. However, it has a height and mass that is much greater and a setback from the road that is much less, than any buildings nearby. This is characteristic of bigfoot development on individual single-family lots as well (see Figure 5-3).

**Photo 5-5**  
**LeBear Luxury Resort and Spa**



*Photo by Terry Gretzema*

**Figure 5-3**  
**Comparison of Regular and Bigfoot Development**



*Graphic by John Warbach*

In 2003, the Township amended zoning regulations to partially address the issue by establishing lot coverage requirements in the residential districts. However, it quickly became apparent this would not completely address the issue. As a result many drafts of a new “bigfoot” regulation were prepared before an approach was refined that prohibits building massing (relative to the lot size) while ensuring light and air for adjoining properties and reduces the risk of spread of fire. The new regulation seeks to ensure that the portion of buildings at the required side yard setback do not result in a solid mass up to the maximum permitted height of buildings. This is accomplished by preservation of an open plane above a 45 degree angle from a person standing near the side lot line to the top of the building. This provision does apply in all residential districts.

One action to prevent the kind of building massing associated with developments like LeBear, is to rezone properties zoned commercial in waterfront areas that are presently developed as residential. This will have the desired effect because multifamily development is a permitted use in commercial zones. Another is to reexamine waterfront areas zoned for multi-family development and reclassify into an exclusive single family zone. Both of these approaches are proposed in this Plan.

If these approaches do not have the desired effect, then reexamination of the current height limitation may be necessary. Currently the ordinance allows the roofline of buildings in all zones up to 40 feet in height. This is considerably higher than the more typical 28-35 feet maximum common in rural Michigan. As there are a number of residences that are presently built to the forty-foot maximum, there is some reluctance to change this requirement. Similarly, if the new “bigfoot” regulations do not adequately keep building mass proportional to the site and not overshadow abutting property on any side, then additional revisions to regulations may be necessary to preserve the northwoods character of Glen Arbor Township.

### **Exterior Design of Buildings**

In the same vein, the Township Planning Commission will give serious consideration to adding provisions to the Zoning Ordinance that discourages the use of some materials on the exteriors of commercial buildings, and which encourage continuation of northwoods design in new commercial buildings. See Photos 5-6 and 5-7. Exterior building materials to be discouraged would include:

- Sheet metal, flat metal and other metal surfaces over much of the exterior
- Mirrored glass and glass block as a major design element
- Concrete block
- Other similar materials more in keeping with an urban or suburban character.

Exterior building materials to be encouraged would include:

- Log, rough cut and finished cut wood
- Indigenous rock and stone
- Wood or aluminum siding that looks like wood



- Other similar materials in keeping with a northwoods character.

**Photos 5-6 and 5-7**  
**Typical Northwoods Designs**



*Photo by Terry Gretzema*



*Photo by Mark Wyckoff*

In addition to northwoods designs, traditional coastal American designs like cape cod or variations of colonial, federalist or mountain designs may also be appropriate. The Township may develop a set of guidelines with encouraged design features. The Grand Traverse Bay Region Development Guidebook should be consulted for ideas when preparing such a guidebook.

### **Infrastructure Improvement Needs**

#### **Reuse of the Old Fire Station**

In 2003, the Township Fire Department occupied the new Public Safety Building on State Street. That left the old station on Lake St. vacant and the building and/or property available for another use. See Photo 5-8. Deciding on an alternative use has become a substantial challenge, because of a variety of complex factors. These include:

- The existence of a cell tower on the property which has a contract requiring the tower to be moved if the fire station moves and the Township Board has requested it be moved ASAP (and that effort is underway);
- A small septic field that is inadequate for a business user;
- Contaminated drinking water;
- Adjoining landowners with similar problems.

**Photo 5-8  
Old Fire Station**



*Photo by Mark Wyckoff*



Add to this the desirability of having a pedestrian path between Lake St. and Pine St. to make it more convenient for people parking on Pine St. to get to businesses on Lake St., and the desirability of having a permanent public restroom in the center of the village, and it is no wonder that deciding among available options has become difficult. A number of people want the property sold to the public sector. Others want the old building torn down and the site converted to green space. Still others want the building converted to public meeting space.

This type of complexity lends itself to a multiple use option that should be given very serious consideration. While this option requires significant effort by the Township, it may be in the best interest of both the public and private sectors to investigate it fully. If this option is pursued, it must be pursued immediately as any number of other decisions by landowners involved will potentially eliminate the viability of multiple use of the property.

The multiple use option involves a little of all of the above options.

Fundamentally, the multiple use option would, if feasible:

- Solve the septic disposal problems of adjoining properties,
- Provide a handicapped accessible public restroom in a central location,
- Provide space for lease to a small business; and
- Provide both a path and greenspace connection between Lake St. and Pine St.

This multiple use option may be feasible because of the substantial underutilized property behind the fire station and the Cottage Bookstore (and other businesses on the south side of Western Ave.) east all the way to Pine. The installation of a single common septic system and drain fields serving all or most of the businesses in this area would solve the waste disposal problems of several of the businesses in this area and possibly provide some additional income to those landowners whose land were used for the new system. The area would need to be very carefully designed as existing delivery and parking areas at the Leelanau Coffee Roasting Company and access to the art colony from Pine could not be disturbed, but there appears to be enough land to meet all these needs.

Similarly, the design would need to carefully include a public pathway from Lake to Pine. All those who would benefit would need to contribute relative to their benefit, and businesses would need to consider not only their existing, but potential future needs. It is likely that at least a part of the existing old fire station building would have to be torn down, and perhaps all of it, but there may well still be building/space left for both a public restroom and a small retail store.

This kind of project is unlikely to go forward without the Township taking the lead to do the necessary research and broker a possible multiple use arrangement. Conceptually, the benefits are great for everyone involved and thus are worthy of serious consideration. This is the kind of situation however, where any one landowner could nix the entire arrangement. But if it is technically feasible to get

a cluster waste treatment system in place serving all these landowners, the long term benefits to the community of viable business enterprises (and a permanent public restroom) is so great, that moral persuasion and substantial peer pressure may be necessary.

Note: In mid-August 2003 (after a draft of this Plan was prepared) the Township Board voted to authorize getting bids to tear the old fire station down as the first step to preparing the property for sale to the private sector.

**Photo 5-9**  
**Vault Toilet at Alligator Hill Trailhead**



*Photo by Mark Wyckoff*

### **Public Restrooms**

During the summer months, there is a high demand for public toilets in the village. The Township Board has responded to this demand by placing six portable toilets at strategic locations around the business area. While a permanent toilet facility at the old fire station would solve a large part of the public toilet needs, some other facilities may still be needed. While the existing system of portable toilets works, if revenues were available, two other options may be more desirable for the long term. The first is vault toilets of the new variety being used by the National Park Service (such as at Alligator Hill trailhead). See Photo 5-9. These are attractive structures with a northwoods look that in the eyes of many, are preferable to the appearance of a typical portable

toilet. They are also handicapped accessible. The second option is to work with the supplier of the portable toilets to provide a better looking, but no less functional toilet. The third option is to use a portable toilet that fits inside a shelter (like the NPS toilet). Again this would improve the appearance of the portable toilets. If portable toilets are continued, at least some should be handicapped accessible.

### **Public Boat Launch**

The location of the first public boat launch onto Lake Michigan west of Leland at the end of Lake Street in Glen Arbor has long been a source of conflict and controversy. The primary issue is the congestion associated with boats, cars and trailers using the launch site and conflicts with pedestrians, bicyclists, beach users and landowners along Lake Street. As there is no public parking lot nearby, and none is feasible, boat users must park their vehicles and trailers on the road shoulder. It is not uncommon in the summer for much of both sides of Lake Street to be lined with vehicles with trailers. This greatly reduces on-street parking for property owners along the street and sometimes creates driveway access problems for landowners.

**Photo 5-10**  
**Boat Launch on Lake Street**



*Photo by Mark Wyckoff*

The most important observation about this situation is that there is a high demand for launching boats onto Sleeping Bear Bay and that need is not adequately being met to the satisfaction of all users and nearby landowners by the launch facility on Lake Street. Several times the Township has studied alternative sites for a public boat launch. The only site that repeatedly emerges as a preferred location is Glen Haven. This location is highly preferred by boaters

because it is far more sheltered than the Glen Arbor site and historically was the site for docking large ships (the pilings can still be seen in the water). This site is at the end of Glen Haven Road (old M-209) which is owned and maintained by the Leelanau County Road Commission. See Photo 5-12. At the time of preparation of this Plan, a title search had just been completed along with an attorney opinion that established the public dedication of this road all the way to the water's edge had never been revoked. If the County Road Commission has ownership, the Road Commission Board is open to the establishment of a boat launch at this location. However, because this site is adjacent to the Cannery (a boat museum), and because many Park visitors use the beach at this location, adding a boat launch would contribute to congestion at this site. Many people have expressed opposition to a boat launch at this location for these reasons and because it would cut through a dune, while others oppose any boat launch in the National Park. The National Park Service reportedly has taken no official position, but says it is awaiting a final decision on a title search. However, the most recent National Park Service management plan for the Park (which was rejected a few years ago) showed a boat launch in the Glen Haven area.

**Photo 5-11**  
**Vehicles and Trailers Parked Along Lake Street**



*Photo by Mark Wyckoff*

The Township Board has expressed great willingness to work with the National Park Service in siting a boat launch in the Glen Haven area. There is ample land and suitable locations both east and west of Glen Haven Road for a boat launch. The location that minimizes negative impacts on the environment is the preferred location for all. Since the entire area is Piping plover habitat, and the shorebird is an endangered species, that makes it a challenging proposition. But to date, the National Park Service has not been very cooperative in searching for an



acceptable solution, suggesting the problem is exclusively that of the Township and that acceptable sites can be found elsewhere.

If the County Road Commission owns the right-of-way to the waters edge, there may be room for negotiating with the National Park Service on another location for the boat launch in Glen Haven. In the meantime, problems at the Lake Street launch site will continue as none of the other options examined by the Township do anything other than transfer the existing problems elsewhere.

**Photo 5-12**  
**Glen Haven Road at the Cannery**



*Photo by Terry Gretzema*

A public boat launch is a public facility that needs to be on public land. The only land area large enough, and safer than the present location is on National Park Service property. The Township believes this is an issue where the National Park Service needs to step up to the plate and shoulder some responsibility as a neighbor and a public service entity. Clearly the establishment of a public boat launch is fully within the scope of its authority and ability to service. A public boat launch would also help to fulfill its recreation responsibilities in management of the Park. What remains to be seen is to what degree the National Park Service will cooperate in partnership with the Township, the County Road Commission, and on behalf of all the users of the Park. Otherwise, the possibility of a launch site in Glen Haven appears likely to remain unresolved, barring intervention by Congress.



## **Trails**

As a whole, Leelanau County is home to a wide variety of trails and hiking paths. Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore has a number of unconnected trails meandering through wooded areas and sand dunes. The trail system on North and South Manitou Islands allow for incomparable hiking opportunities to see rare wildflowers, old farmsteads, and a wide variety of birds. The Leelanau Trail winds 15 miles through the last of Leelanau County's railway corridors from Greilickville to Suttons Bay. The trail takes users over rolling hills, beautiful northern forests, orchards and meadows, and numerous streams, lakes, and ponds. Yet more could be done to improve biking, pedestrian and cross-country trails in Glen Arbor Township. Among the stated goals of the Township Recreation Plan, are the objectives of furnishing sufficient recreational facilities to serve the increasing population in the Township and to coordinate with the County and region to provide recreational facilities for citizens and visitors. Creating a network of trails in the Township that also link other parts of the National Park is one way to do this. This need was recognized in the 1984 Plan with the following observations:

*"The character of the National Lakeshore attracts visitors who desire to experience the outdoors and the scenic nature of the Township. Glen Arbor is actually in the central part of the National Lakeshore with large sections beyond the Township to the south near the Platte River and to the north near Good Harbor Bay. Thus, there is the need for hiking, skiing and biking trails through the Glen Arbor area. Since private lands separate the park lands, a recreational path route through Glen Arbor Township should be designated.*

*The recreational path should serve three principal functions: (1) to provide a connection through the Township between sections of the National Lakeshore, (2) to provide for continuity and physical relationship between activity centers of the Township, namely the Dunes, Glen Haven, Glen Arbor, the Leelanau School and the Homestead, and (3) to provide a safe and enjoyable place to walk and ride bikes."*

Based on citizen input received at a 2004 Town Meeting, there is substantial support for improving bicycle and pedestrian trails around Big and Little Glen Lakes (presently there are only narrow paved shoulders along the road) and from the Homestead and the Leelanau School through the woods to Glen Arbor. Other desired trail locations within the National Park include from the campground to Glen Haven with views of the bay and from the Homestead to Port Oneida through the woods and old fields. Connections off the road from Glen Lake south to Empire and into the National Park land in Benzie County are also desired.

While the paved shoulders of main roads are sufficient for bike trails in much of the Township at current traffic volumes, if volumes rise, the danger for bicyclists will rise appreciably. Already sections of road with 45-55 mph traffic pose significant risk to bicyclists, especially when younger children are involved.

Leelanau County is one of the top destination locations for bicyclists in Michigan. A network of multi-season non-motorized trails separated from road pavement should be carefully planned and constructed. This will require cooperation between the National Park Service, the Township, MDOT, the County Road Commission and private landowners.

### **Traffic Safety**

Two intersections in the village of Glen Arbor warrant special mention with regard to traffic safety. Both are on M-22 (Western Ave.). The first is the intersection of M-109 and M-22. See Photo 5-13. Presently this intersection is a standard four-pronged intersection, but it only has three stop signs. Westbound and left-turning southbound traffic on M-22 has no stop sign. This is very confusing for visitors, pedestrians and bicyclists. Screeching tires, horns and sudden stops are common. It seemed nearly everyone at the Town Meeting in August 2004 had their own tale of a near crash during the peak summer months. One need not observe the intersection long on a busy summer day before noticing considerable driver and pedestrian confusion, tentative action and near collisions. The only likely reason no serious injuries have occurred here is because the near constant congestion in this area in the summer, causes traffic to slow considerably increasing response times. Township officials frequently say "it would be tragic if it takes the death of someone before a stop sign is erected there." There is no traffic reason to not erect a stop sign now. Driver confusion is high. M-22 is not a high volume roadway. Glen Arbor is not on the way to somewhere else, it is a destination location, traffic does not have to move fast. M-22 is already slow moving and congested at this intersection during the summer when the sign is most needed, and drivers at the other three intersections already have stop signs. Striping the cross-walk in all four directions would also dramatically aid with safe pedestrian crossing. Visitors expect a four-way stop at this intersection, but local and seasonal residents do not, so temporary signage a block east will be needed to educate drivers about such a change. Apparently MDOT has been contacted many times already with safety concerns about this intersection. MDOT should be contacted again, only this time with a formal request to make this change, and if it is denied, it should be resubmitted every winter until the change is made.

**Photo 5-13**  
**M-22 (Western Ave.) and M-109**



*Photo by Mark Wyckoff*

The second intersection with safety issues is M-22 at Lake Street. See Photo 5-14. This is one block east of the M-22/M-109 intersection discussed above. Currently both north and southbound traffic on Lake Street face stop signs while there are no stop signs on M-22. Lake is greatly narrowed by on-street parking during the peak summer tourist season and there is no available right-of-way to expand the street width (as existing buildings are already very close to the road) to improve visibility at the intersection. In addition, outside display of goods, a telephone and a planter and seasonal canopy further reduce visibility for turning movements. Some businesses on the south side of the intersection have no off-street loading area, so congestion is worst when delivery trucks come. There is also a lot of pedestrian and bicycle activity in each direction. While moving parking away from the intersection on the south side of Lake Street would also help improve safety (by improving visibility and allowing more room for turning movements) here, there is a significant deficiency of parking in the area that would only be exacerbated by eliminating any parking spaces here. While a strong case could be made for a second four-way stop intersection here (in addition to one at M-22 and M-109), as a large number of near misses also occur here, local residents wish to preserve traffic flow on M-22 while also improving traffic safety. As a result, striping the cross-walk and adding a pedestrian crossing sign an appropriate distance from the intersection may be enough to improve safety and reduce driver and pedestrian confusion at this intersection. If this does not work, then a four-way stop should be implemented. If the striping does work, the Township may want to consider using decorative brick to match

that at the corners as it is a strong visual cue to drivers to slow for pedestrians and it looks terrific. MDOT's approval and that of the County Road Commission would be needed before any crosswalks could be striped or decorative brick paving installed.

**Photo 5-14**  
**M-22 (Western Ave.) and Lake St.**



*Photo by Mark Wyckoff*

**Public Rights-of-Way**

The original Glen Arbor Plat included several dedicated rights-of-way that have not been maintained by the public. Some of these may soon be needed for public purposes and may be difficult to use without controversy. The first are the two alley sized rights-of-way between Lake and Lake Isle Streets (with Manitou Boulevard in the middle). Presently there is no pedestrian or bicycle connection between these streets and each is a very long block causing walkers or bikers to go a long way around to get from one to the other. Assuming there have been no infringements on these public-rights-of-way, and that they are in fact still publicly owned, it would improve the pedestrian character of the village if they were improved and maintained as a pedestrian/bicycle path, but not for vehicular access. This improvement is in keeping with the major investment in sidewalks the Township has made in the last three years and which have dramatically improved the safety and quality of movement for pedestrians. The other location in which sidewalks should next be constructed is from the Township Park on M-22 south to Lakewood Drive on at least the east side of the street and possibly on both sides. This will provide a pedestrian connection to this growing subdivision and better define the start of the village part of Glen Arbor Township.

It will be necessary to go around several large trees to put sidewalks in here and doing so will add more interest to the path while protecting important tree cover. Within twenty years, sidewalks will also be an asset from County Road 675 to Oak St. on the north side (although a trail permitting bicycles would be better here because of heavy summer traffic and narrow road shoulders). Sidewalks will also be valuable from the western edge of the village along M-109 to Lake Isle on at least the south side of the street. Again, protecting existing trees will be important.

The second public right-of-way that may need to be used within the next twenty years is the unconstructed part of Pine Street to State Street. Every map of the village, including that used by the Glen Lake Sleeping Bear Chamber of Commerce, shows Pine Street going through to State Street. But it stops 50-60 yards short. This is unfortunate as many visitors do not realize there is public parking on Pine (which is one reason Pine Street parking is often underutilized during peak summer retail hours) and are dissuaded from searching for a proper parking space when going around the block means going around two blocks. If Pine Street were extended to State, not only would the street system be completed as originally platted (and the grid is the most efficient street system there is), it would open up substantial space for additional parking. If the existing width of the pavement on Pine were continued, with perpendicular parking for the full length, at least thirty additional parking spaces could be created. There is one major problem with this option. There is a natural swale that would need to be crossed and the Pine Street right-of-way is adjacent to dedicated conservation land south of the art colony. Any crossing of the swale would likely require a permit from the DEQ and the road design would need to be very sensitive to the wildflowers that live there and the seasonal wetland vegetation. This is a natural area that is already recognized for its value and function, and any road extension would destroy some of that value. As a result, this option should not be pursued unless the parking problem becomes much worse, and simpler, less costly options fail to meet the need.

The simplest ways to meet the immediate need for more parking on Lake Street from State to Western Ave. (see Photo 5-15) are to:

1. Restripe the parking area on Pine Street (it is very faded) and place a conventional parking sign (blue background with a white capital P and arrow pointing south down Pine). A second parking sign should be ordered (with a north facing arrow) and installed at the Township Hall to better let visitors know about parking behind the Township Hall (which is also very underutilized).
2. Widen the pavement on State Street from Lake at least to where the Pine Street right-of-way is (and possibly to Oak if necessary) and marking the pavement for parallel parking. See Photo 5-16. Businesses in the area should instruct all employees to park there first, once parking behind businesses is used up, freeing street parking for customers. This would



add about 30 parking spaces and when combined with the option above, would make better use of about a hundred spaces in an area in need of additional parking.

3. Construct a walking bridge from State Street to the Pine Street parking area. This will make it more accessible to some users.
4. In general, if parking needs grow further, the Township should first look to widening existing streets and adding parking there, before investing in off-street lots. However, it ultimately may be necessary for the Township to play a major role in the creation of some new off-street lots, if that role is nothing more than brokering agreements between property owners. However, the character of Glen Arbor would be irretrievably altered if all unused space became parking lots. Some congestion and limits on parking are good, as it slows traffic, making the area safer for pedestrians. But if congestion becomes too bad because of inadequate nearby parking, then local businesses will lose customers, and the image of Glen Arbor will slowly shift from a desirable place that is fun and convenient to one which is desirable, but a risky prospect when it comes to finding parking within a convenient timeframe. Some visitors and potential future residents will not come back. Thus, additional parking needs must be periodically monitored and addressed with serious proposals, but providing more parking “at all costs” is neither desirable nor necessary. That said, future parking needs should be considered as new development takes place, and as businesses ponder future changes on their property. To that end, the following discussion is intended to stimulate additional thought, and possibly positive action at an appropriate time, and soon enough that existing opportunities are not lost forever.

**Photo 5-15**  
**Lake Street Parking**



*Photo by Mark Wyckoff*

**Photo 5-16**  
**State Street Parking**

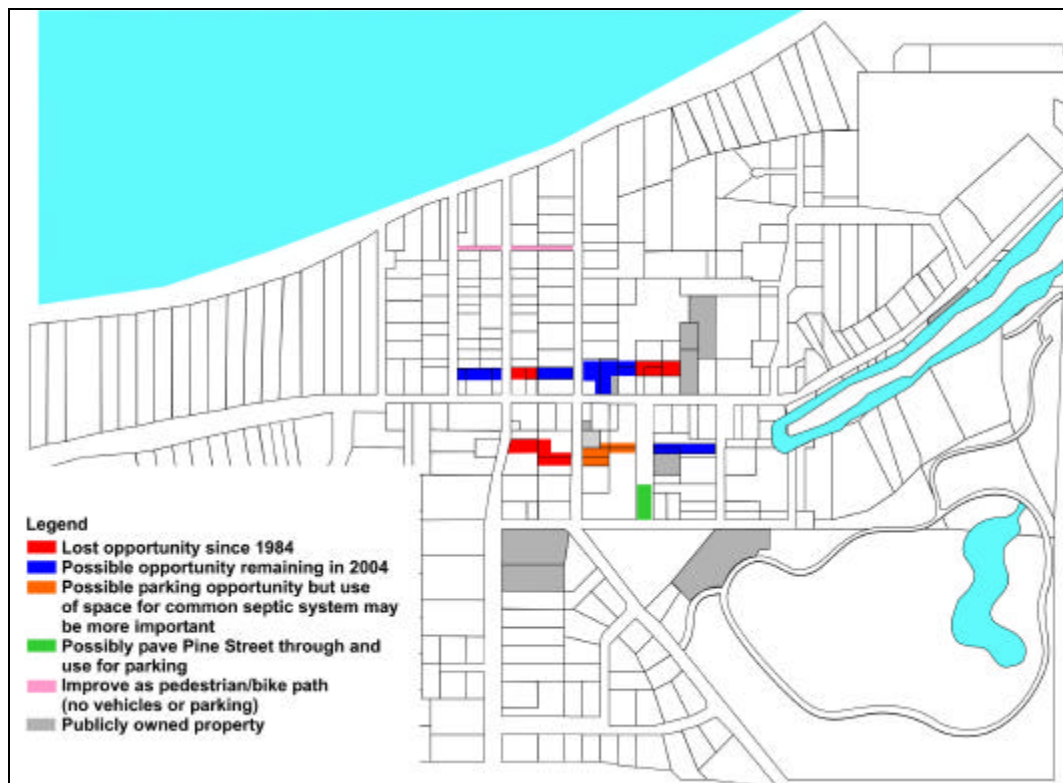


*Photo by Mark Wyckoff*

### **Off-Street Parking**

Most parking in the village is on-street parking. This is largely a result of the original Town Plat as the original lots in the village were small and did not lend themselves to nor was there a need for off-street parking at the time. However, some commercial uses in the village do not currently provide enough parking. Where possible, individual businesses should provide their own parking off-street and it is required by the Zoning Ordinance for new businesses. For already established businesses that cannot provide parking because they lack space, some common parking areas should be considered. This was recognized in the 1984 Plan by Vilican-Leman which included a drawing of potential connected off-street lots. Some of these opportunities have since been lost. See Map 5-1. In 1988, M.C. Smith built on this alternative with a proposal for a number of other streetscape improvements (many of which have been made including all the new sidewalks). However, the basic idea of shared/connected parking lots is still valid and future land use decisions should attempt to implement the idea where it is feasible to do so. That may require approving part of a planned, shared parking area, one lot/development at a time. Or as mentioned above, it may require a more active role by the Township. In the meantime, it will be very important that the Board of Appeals not grant variances from parking requirements for new development in the village and that it strongly encourage shared parking arrangements.

**Map 5-1 Potential Off-Street Parking Areas & ROW to Preserve**



*Graphic by John Warbach, Planning & Zoning Center, Inc.*

## **Affordable Housing**

### **Typical Options**

There is a need for affordable housing in the Glen Arbor area. Local businesses are primarily in the service sector: retail sales, restaurants, lodging and residential services including construction. It is very difficult for these workers, many of them seasonal, to find adequate housing close to their jobs. This is a disadvantage to both the workers and to their employers. The cost of residential property is very high, in part because much of it is waterfront.

Affordable housing is often provided in the following ways. These include:

- Manufactured housing. These can be either mobile homes or modular units, assembled on site. Manufactured housing is fairly common in the northwest region of Michigan on individual, rural lots, and less common in mobile home parks, where it is likely a sewage treatment system would be required. There is very little privately owned undeveloped land in Glen Arbor Township that is suitable for a mobile home park, and land values are high throughout the Township. This makes it unlikely a mobile home park would be proposed within the Township.
- Multi-family developments, with relatively small unit size. Apartments for low to moderate income families are scattered in cities throughout northwest Michigan, but are not very common.
- Older, smaller existing homes. Unless in a prime location, older, smaller homes can often be an affordable housing alternative. Making sure older homes are well maintained or meet modern building codes can be a problem. In a resort area such as Glen Arbor, small, older homes may have been built as summer cottages, and they may serve poorly as year around homes without substantial improvements that would drive up costs.
- New construction where building costs are low. Factors that contribute to lower building costs include lower cost land, building at a high density and access to public sewer and water. Public sewer and water is not available in Glen Arbor Township and land costs are very high.

None of these options are very viable in Glen Arbor Township. That suggests the need for affordable housing may need to be met outside the Township by working with neighboring jurisdictions.

### **Affordable Housing in Adjoining Jurisdictions**

There is relatively little area zoned to accommodate mobile homes in the three township area of Cleveland, Empire and Glen Arbor Townships. There are no areas zoned for mobile home parks in Glen Arbor and no zoning districts permit mobile home parks by right. This is because there are no affordable parcels in the Township large enough and level enough for a mobile home park, and no public utilities available. Empire Township has an existing mobile home park on the south side of Little Glen Lake, but no other areas zoned for mobile home parks. The Recreation (REC) and Commercial Resort (CR) zoning districts in

Cleveland Township both permit mobile home courts as a use by right. The REC district is primarily designed for outdoor recreation, such as golf courses, tennis courts and ski areas. The CR district is designed primarily for lodging businesses. There are about 800 acres of REC district in Cleveland Township, but much of this is associated with the Sugar Loaf Ski Resort and Golf Course. There are about 130 acres of CR district in Cleveland Township, but these are in generally small pieces and are in prime locations next to inland lakes.

There is some provision for smaller homes within the three townships. Glen Arbor Township permits multiple family units as small as 480 square feet. Multiple family units are permitted in both the Business District and the R-V District, and there is substantial undeveloped land in each district. However, since there are no public sewers, multiple family use is a problem as a large septic field would be required and undeveloped lots in areas zoned to permit multiple family uses are few and far between. Empire Township has three zoning districts that permit small homes. The R-1, and REC districts permit houses with a minimum living area of 700 square feet. The R-2 district permits multiple family homes with a minimum living area of 700 square feet. There is a small area of about 100 acres zoned R-2, multi-family along Empire Highway, about three miles east of the Village of Empire. There are several hundred acres of R-1 zoned land in the Township. A portion of this is adjacent to the Village of Empire and the remainder is close to Big Glen Lake, but across MacFarlane Road. There is a substantial amount of land zoned R-3 in Empire Township, which requires a minimum living area of 1,200 square feet. The Village of Empire provides opportunities for affordable housing in its PUD zone (permits mixed use, between 80 and 100 acres) adjacent to the downtown, the CR—Commercial Residential zone (permits one and two-family dwellings and mixed use, a few acres downtown), the R-2—Multiple Family zone (permits multi-family dwellings such as apartments, between 30 and 40 acres) and the R-1 zone (permits one and two-family dwellings and mobile homes that meet the definition of a single family dwelling—essentially a complete residential unit. There are several hundred acres in R-1 with half or more in the existing village). The Village has no reference to dwelling unit size in its zoning ordinance. Residential zones in Glen Arbor Township do not reference the minimum size of the home, except in the multi-family district, mentioned above, and this flexibility could permit some construction of smaller homes, but because of lot prices, they would not likely qualify as affordable.



**Photo 5-17**  
**Apartments above Manitou Mercantile**



*Photo by Mark Wyckoff*

Thus it appears that affordable homes are not likely to be built in Glen Arbor Township in the typical fashion. However, the need can be met in several ways in adjoining jurisdictions. What can occur in Glen Arbor Township however, is the provision of affordable housing as apartments above businesses in the commercial district. This is already occurring to a limited extent, most notably in the Manitou Mercantile building. See Photo 5-17. As more commercial buildings are erected in the Township, apartments could be encouraged on the second floor, where the lot had adequate area to handle the septage. Over time, this could significantly help meet some of the need for affordable housing in the Township. The balance of the need will have to be met in adjoining jurisdictions, and Glen Arbor Township should periodically meet with its neighboring jurisdictions to see what role it could play in helping to ensure this need is being met in the area.

### **Intergovernmental Relations**

#### **Adjoining Units of Government**

It is very easy for governmental bodies or agencies of government to focus attention only on managing the lands and services they provide at the exclusion of attention on relationships with adjoining units of government. However, while local governments must manage the lands they own and services they provide, if they do not make an effort to regularly communicate with adjoining units of local government, future unexpected problems are likely, as are missed opportunities. This is of course, because a decision by one unit of government often has an

effect on adjoining units of local government and vice versa. The Michigan Legislature has recently acknowledged the importance of intergovernmental cooperation in the planning arena, by requiring local governments to notify adjoining units of local government at the start of local planning projects and prior to adoption of new or amended plans.

Glen Arbor Township met this procedural obligation and also scheduled a meeting with adjoining units of local government to discuss issues of mutual concern. All but Cleveland Township sent a representative. At that meeting it was established that zoning along common borders was compatible and that Empire Township had recently focused attention on waterfront issues. Empire Township has a stronger set of keyhole regulations and is eager to keep a common set of waterfront regulations in place with Glen Arbor Township. Both Empire Township and Kasson Township have more land suitable for and zoned for affordable housing than Glen Arbor Township and along with the Village of Empire are actively helping to meet the area wide need for such housing.

Adjoining Townships have a history of active cooperation in everything from fire and ambulance service to libraries and there is no reason that cooperation should not continue into the future. This is an issue that will likely be of even greater significance in the later part of the next twenty years as the odds are growing that there will be an effort made statewide to consolidate local governments, probably by voluntary means. This will likely be driven more by fiscal considerations than ideology, as a structural budget deficit will not only continue to cut into the total state budget, but will especially hurt state revenue sharing and that in turn will reduce local ability to provide necessary services. Since Michigan has the third largest number of units of local government in the nation, and fragmentation of local governments can be shown to be fiscally inefficient when the area involved is relatively small, it is likely that efforts will be made to encourage local governments to consolidate with adjoining units of government. Such efforts are likely to be tied to fiscal incentives for consolidation. It may be useful for Glen Arbor Township to keep this in the back of its collective mind in case an opportunity comes up that requires a relatively quick decision (as occurred with the opportunity for school consolidation two years ago).

### **National Park Service**

As acknowledged above, there are several important issues that the Township needs a cooperative working relationship with the National Park Service on to successfully pursue. These include relocating the boat launch and planning a network of interconnected trails between key activity areas.

Another much bigger issue that the National Park Service is quite sensitive to is the tension associated with attempting to manage more of the Park for wilderness purposes. Two years ago when the Park Service requested public input on a new management plan for the Park that included closing public access

to key areas of the Park, there was enormous public outrage from one end of the Park to the other. The Park Service is in a difficult position. National legislation appears to require the Park Service to manage more of its lands for wilderness, without clearly defining, where, why or how, or providing any clear measure for balancing the wide range of public interests involved in making such management decisions. A survey of participants at the June 2004 Glen Arbor Township Town Meeting shows the difficulty of this challenge. Three-quarters of respondents were year around residents and one-quarter were seasonal residents. Yet, three-quarters of the respondents want the National Park Service to keep all existing public access within the Park and to only manage North and South Manitou Islands for pure wilderness (the remaining one-quarter want it all to be wilderness). Many residents expressed desire for improving handicapped access in places where there is road access, but no handicapped facilities. This should be no surprise to the Park Service as this area was highly accessible to visitors and tourists long before the Park was created and thousands of people visit the area and/or live here because of the access that exists throughout the Park. However, pure wilderness means very limited access, and the more wilderness is cut up into sections by access, the less wilderness-like the area will be.

While the National Park Service has embarked on an effort to gather input from local governments and various organizations with interests in the management of the Park about their goals and objectives for the Park, the issue of how much of the Park should be wilderness and how much access should be permitted will be the fundamental questions that need to be answered. It may be that the only meaningful answer must come from Congress in the form of legislation that defines more particularly the long term objectives of managing the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.

**Photo 5-18**  
**National Park Service Sign**



*Photo by Terry Gretzema*

Township officials are encouraged by this recent effort by the Park Service to reach out for public input, but remain frustrated on other fronts. For example, the Park Service is by far the largest landowner in the Township and yet did not actively participate in the process to update this Plan, while many other landowners willingly did. While the Park Service responded to all questions for background information it never seemed interested that this process was underway.

The Township will continue to work cooperatively with the National Park Service whenever the need or opportunity arises, but it hopes that over the life of this Plan, there will be a greater effort on the part of the Park Service to sincerely work cooperatively with it in finding effective solutions to mutual problems and opportunities. The recent meetings the National Park Service has initiated with other nearby jurisdictions about a process for updating the Sleeping Bear National Lakeshore Management Plan is an encouraging sign and an important opportunity that the Township looks forward to participating in.

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