

FORSYTH TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

2026-2031



FORSYTH
TOWNSHIP



CUPPAD

DRAFT DECEMBER 2025
ADOPTED APRIL 2026

FORSYTH TOWNSHIP

RESOLUTION OF ADOPTION

PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION

TO ADOPT THE FORSYTH TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

WHEREAS, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (or MPEA, also known as P.A. 33 of 2008) authorizes the Forsyth Township Planning Commission to prepare and adopt a Master Plan for the use, development and preservation of all lands in the township and promote cooperation between local units; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission prepared a proposed Master Plan and submitted the plan to the Forsyth Township Board of Trustees for review and comment at its meeting on December 8, 2025; and

WHEREAS, on December 18, 2025, the Board of Trustees received and reviewed the proposed Master Plan and authorized distribution the Master Plan to the Notice Group entities identified in the MPEA for a public review period of 63 days which ended on March 9, 2026 and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission provided notice of a public hearing to the Notice Group entities and to the Mining Journal, and held a public hearing for Master Plan adoption on April 6, 2026; and

WHEREAS, the MPEA authorizes the Forsyth Township Board of Trustees to assert by resolution its right to approve or reject the proposed Master Plan and the Board initiated this action; and

WHEREAS, the Forsyth Township Board of Trustees, following an affirmative vote the majority of its members will be the final approving body for the Master Plan.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, The Forsyth Township Planning Commission hereby approves and adopts the Forsyth Township Master Plan, and recommends the Plan for adoption to the Forsyth Township Board of Trustees.

Yeas: 3

Nays: 0

Absent: 3

4/16/26

Date

Chair

I certify that the above is a true and complete copy of a resolution passed by the Forsyth Township Planning Commission at a meeting on April 6, 2026.

By:

Crystal Carlier
Planning Commission Secretary

STEVEN KEVERN
SUPERVISOR

RONALD LAUREN
CLERK

ROSS UNDERWOOD
TREASURER

Forsyth Township
MEMBER MICHIGAN TOWNSHIP ASSOCIATION

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LEONARD FOWLER
TRUSTEE

LARRY HAMMOND
TRUSTEE

FORSYTH TOWNSHIP BOARD RESOLUTION

TO ADOPT THE FORSYTH TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

WHEREAS, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (or MPEA, also known as P.A. 33 of 2008) authorizes the Forsyth Township Planning Commission to prepare and adopt a Master Plan for the use, development and preservation of all lands in the township and promote cooperation between local units; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission prepared a proposed Master Plan and submitted the plan to the Forsyth Township Board of Trustees for review and comment at its regular meeting on December 8, 2025; and

WHEREAS, on December 18, 2025, the Board of Trustees received and reviewed the proposed Master Plan and authorized distribution the Master Plan to the Notice Group entities identified in the MPEA for a public review period of 63 days which ended on March 9, 2026; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission provided notice of a public hearing to the Notice Group entities and to the Mining Journal, and held a public hearing for Master Plan adoption on April 6, 2026; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission passed a resolution to adopt the Master Plan and recommend its adoption to the Board of Trustees during its meeting on April 6, 2026; and

WHEREAS, the MPEA authorizes the Forsyth Township Board of Trustees to assert by resolution its right to approve or reject the proposed Master Plan and the Board initiated this action; and

WHEREAS, the Forsyth Township Board of Trustees, following an affirmative vote the majority of its members, will be the final approving body for the Master Plan.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, The Forsyth Township Board of Trustees hereby approves and adopts the Forsyth Township Master Plan.

PASSED AND APPROVED BY THE TOWNSHIP BOARD OF THE TOWNSHIP OF FORSYTH, MARQUETTE COUNTY, MICHIGAN THIS 16TH DAY OF APRIL, 2026.

Ayes: Supervisor Kevern, Clerk Lauren, Treasurer Underwood, Trustee Hammond

Nays: None

Absent: Trustee Fowler

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of the resolution adopted by the Forsyth Township Board, Forsyth Township, Marquette County, Michigan at a regular meeting held on April 16, 2026, pursuant to the procedures required by law.

Ronald Lauren
Ronald Lauren, Forsyth Township Clerk

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This plan could not have been completed without the dedication and support from the Township staff and the following organizations:

Forsyth Township Planning Commission

Jim Nowak	Art Ontto
Jim Delmont	Ron Lauren
Neil Armatti	Kenneth Dillinger

Forsyth Township Board of Directors

Steve Kevern	Ross Underwood
Larry Hammond	Ron Lauren
Leonard Fowler	

Forsyth Township Staff

Crystal Carter	Dee Carter
Amanda Perry	Stacy Linee
Lori Cronick	Paul Back
Gina LaBre	

Community Organizations

K.I. Sawyer Community Alliance
 Forsyth Township Library
 Team Riders
 Let's Grow KI
 MSU Extension
 Sawyer Community Enrichment
 Forsyth Township Historical Society
 Gwinn Area Community Schools
 Forsyth Forward
 ATV & Snowmobile Club

Forsyth Township Citizens

THANK YOU!

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1 Introduction

WHAT IS A MASTER PLAN?

A Master Plan is a document that provides guidance for the growth, development, and physical improvements within a municipality. The document reflects the community it serves and draws on public input to define a united vision of the community's future. Based on thorough analysis of community data, the Master Plan offers constructive recommendations and implementation steps that can be undertaken to achieve the township's vision.

The core purpose of a Master Plan is to guide land use patterns, economic development and redevelopment, transportation and access, community infrastructure and services, and the management of the community's natural resources. It is a tool for identifying the long-range community challenges on the horizon and provides the framework for how we will adapt to meet those needs in the future.

AUTHORITY TO PLAN

In Michigan, P.A. 33 of 2008, commonly referred to as the *Michigan Planning Enabling Act*, authorizes units of government to plan, create Planning Commissions, and regulate and subdivide land. The act permits and mandates the Planning Commission to create and adopt a Master Plan. The Master Plan is the basis for land use regulations and zoning. For units of government that have and enforce zoning, that zoning must be based on a plan. The purpose of this Master Plan is to guide future development towards more economic and efficient use of the land; promote public health, safety, and the general welfare; and provide for adequate transportation systems and infrastructure, public utilities, and recreation.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

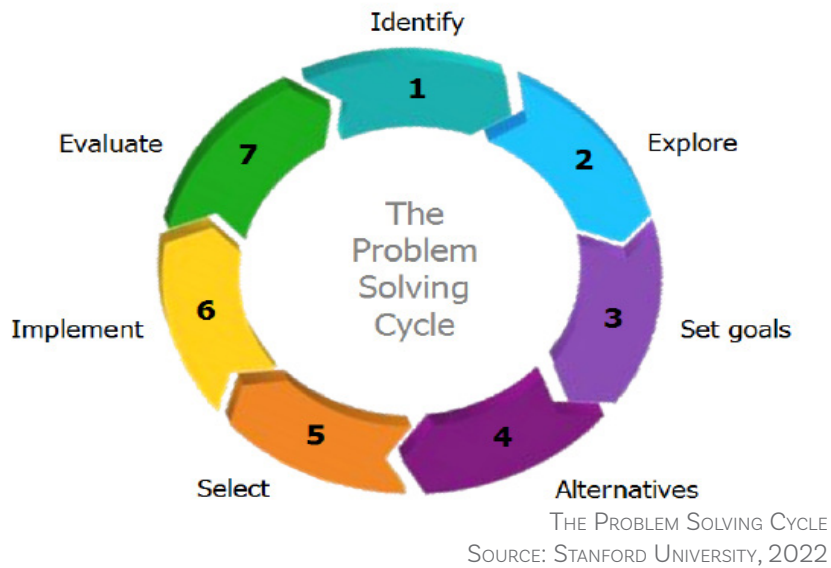
Community planning is a cyclical process. Every five years, a community must review its Master Plan and consider necessary updates. The Annual Report found in Appendix A provides the important factors which could be reviewed to determine the need for updates to the plan.

The seven-step process chart (right) describes the phases of the plan's development, starting with a review of the current plan. Next, the plan engages with community stakeholders who will provide important perspectives and feedback on areas relevant to their interests.

In the third step, research and analysis on a range of community related topics is performed to give insight into the factors and trends shaping the community. From this analysis, we are able to engage with community stakeholders on step four to identify issues, needs, and opportunities as they relate to the community.

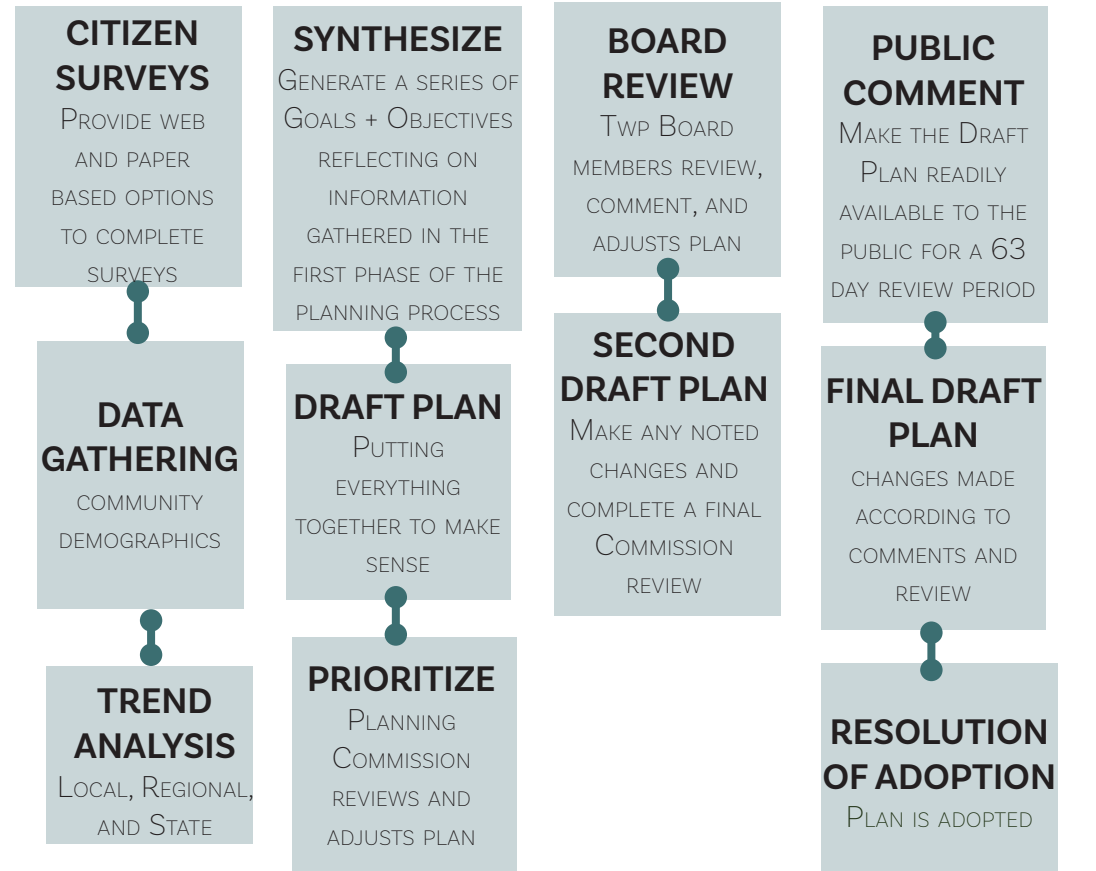


GWINN FARMERS MARKET



Step five involves the creation of a strategic framework for addressing the issues and opportunities that were defined, and result in a collection of top goals, related objectives, and policy recommendations for future adoption. These strategic items are then included with the content of the plan and in step six, the Planning Commission proceeds with the formal adoption of the Plan at a public meeting.

After the adoption of the Master Plan, local elected and appointed leaders, the Township Board, and other public and private stakeholders will work together on step seven to implement the action items and recommendations found in the plan. Ideally, an annual review will take place, assessing progress on goals and objectives. Five years from the adoption of the plan, the Commission will start again from the beginning of the cycle to determine what has been accomplished and what changes need to be made to the strategy in light of new information.



THE PLANNING PROCESS

PAST PLANNING ACTIVITIES

In order to adequately plan for the future, a community must first review the recommendations and strategies of other relevant and recent community plans. By coordinating and aligning strategies with these past efforts, we avoid the pitfall of “reinventing the wheel” and build a strategy that interrelates with other programs and initiatives to build mutual support, as opposed to pushing in different directions in pursuit of the same vision.

2012 Strategic Master Plan Update: Forward Forsyth 2035

UPEA worked with the communities within the township to create this comprehensive master plan which focuses on community engagement and sustainable development for increased local economic stability.

2016 Forsyth Township Recreation Plan

The recreation plan allows community leaders to prioritize projects and plan for grant applications in order to secure state and federal funds.

2020 Marquette County Master Plan 2040

Marquette County’s 2040 Master Plan included all townships, breaking them into four planning regions based on their location and unique features. Forsyth Township, along with Ewing, Sands, Skandia, Turin, Wells, and West Branch, were named the Blueberry Farms Region.

2022 Marquette County Recovery and Resiliency Plan

This plan was created during a partnership between CUPPAD and TIP Strategies, a consulting firm operating out of Houston, TX. This plan was created as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, to bolster the resilience of economic development in the county.

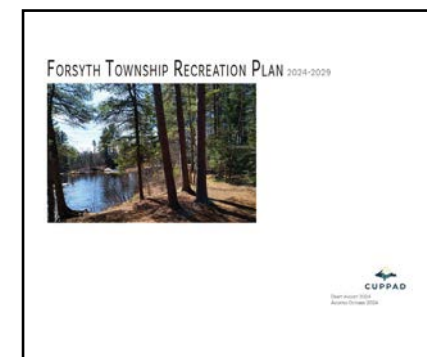
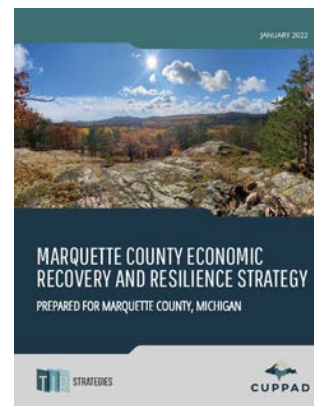


2024 Central UP Regional Housing Partnership Action Plan

CUPPAD and Community Action Alger Marquette (CAAM), along with many volunteer working groups, worked to refine and personalize the goals contained in the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA)’s Statewide Housing Plan. After much consideration, the goals and objectives in this plan are indicative of the unique and nuanced housing need in our local area.

2024 Forsyth Township Recreation Plan

This Recreation Plan update was done in coordination with Forsyth Township’s Planning Commission, based on the 2024 community survey. This plan emphasized the lack of recreational opportunities and suggests various projects, goals, and objectives based on community input.



REGIONAL CONTEXT

Forsyth Township lies in the central Upper Peninsula of Michigan, in Marquette County, about 15 miles south of the City of Marquette. Municipalities adjacent to Forsyth Township include Tilden, Richmond, Sands, West Branch, Skandia, Turin, Ewing, and Wells Township.

There are several unincorporated communities within Forsyth Township but only two that are Census Designated Places, or CDPs. CDPs do not have their own government or legal structure but are places of significant population groups identified by the Census Bureau for statistical purposes. Gwinn and K.I. Sawyer are Census Designated Places. CDPs are often statistically comparative to towns and cities, with a population concentration and clear boundaries. Forsyth Township is also home to the Marquette Sawyer Regional Airport.

As such, the Township and Marquette County, along with the Sawyer Operations Authority, work together to govern and manage the land use, utilities, and infrastructure. During 1970 through 1990, Forsyth Township had the largest population of any township in the County. After the closing of the air force base, however, the population dwindled.

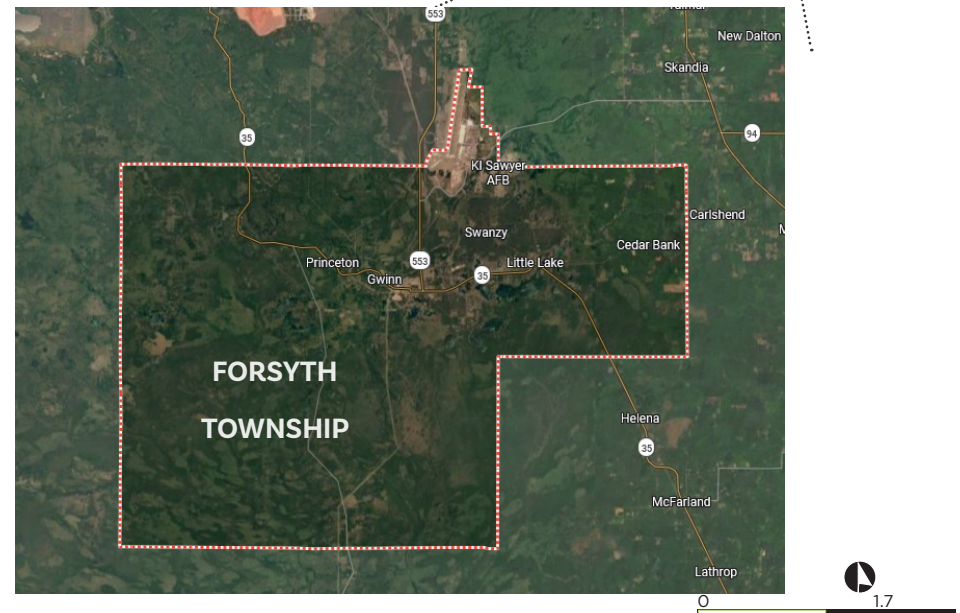
The area is rural and heavily forested with numerous small inland lakes, over 50 in fact. The primary job base in the region is tourism, service industries, mining, and forest-based timber industries.

The Township is home to many state campgrounds, including Bass Lake, Pike Lake, Anderson Lake West, and the Little Lake State Forest Campground.

Within the region, the transportation corridor of natural and international significance is US-2, which runs from Mackinaw

FORSYTH TOWNSHIP

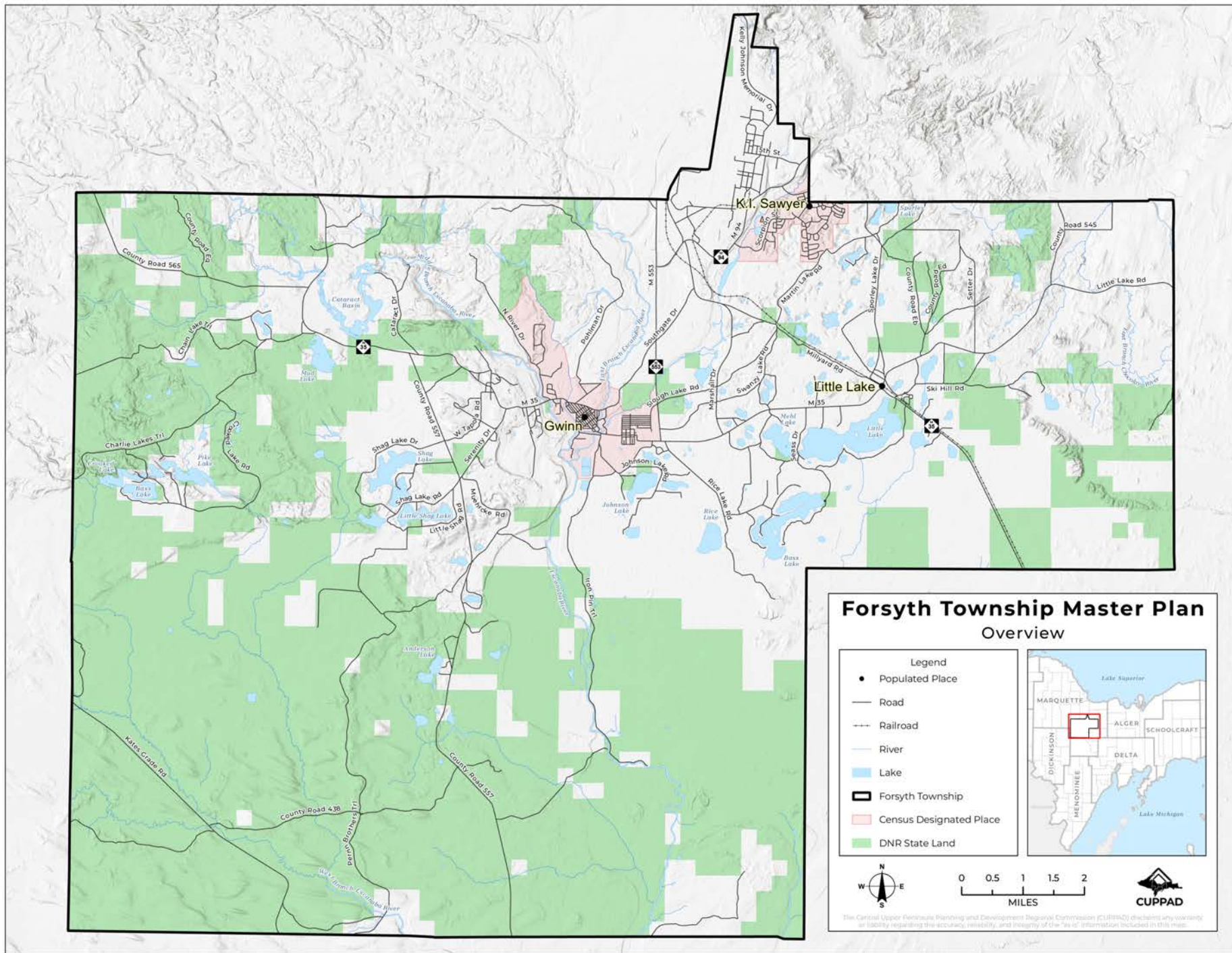
MARQUETTE COUNTY

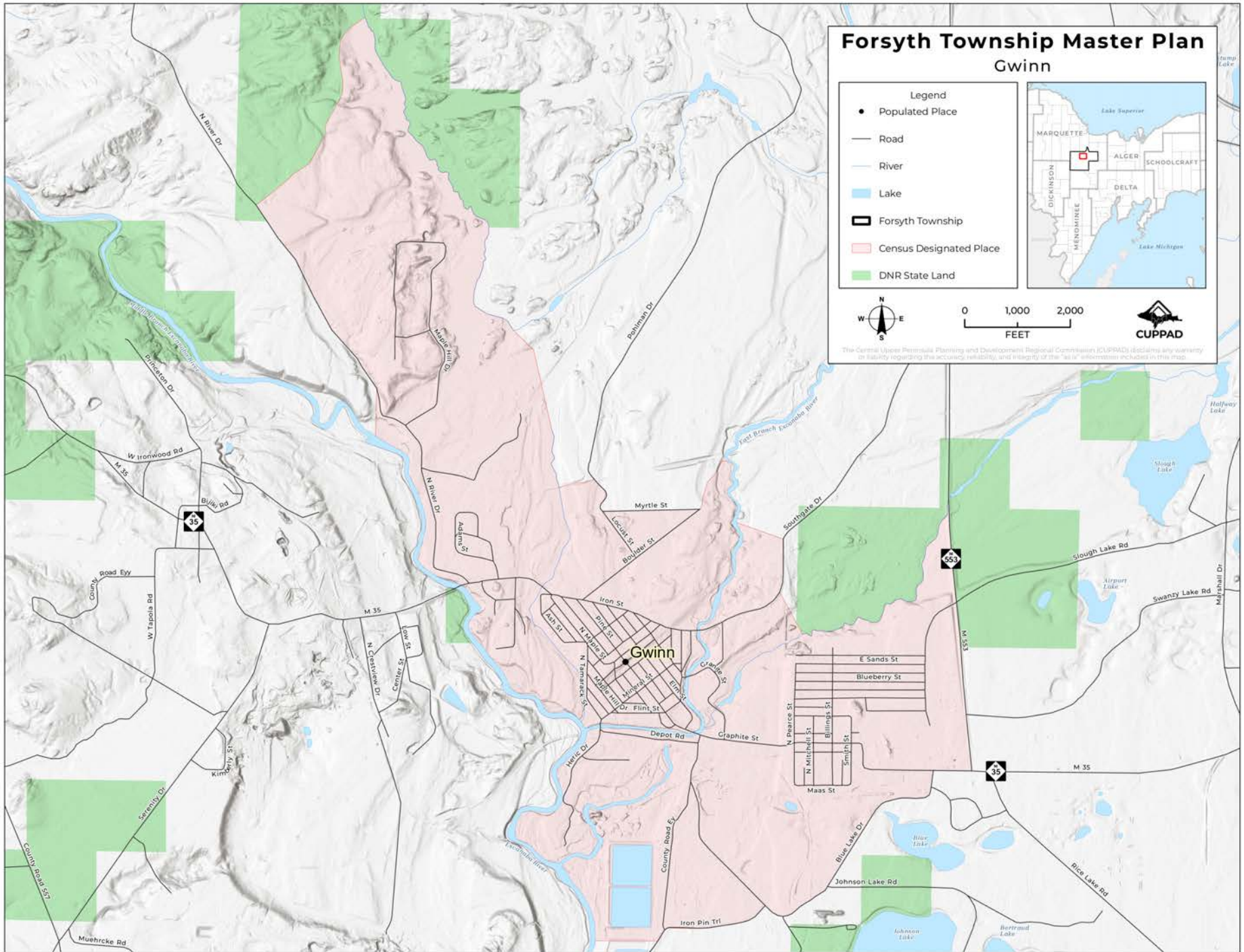


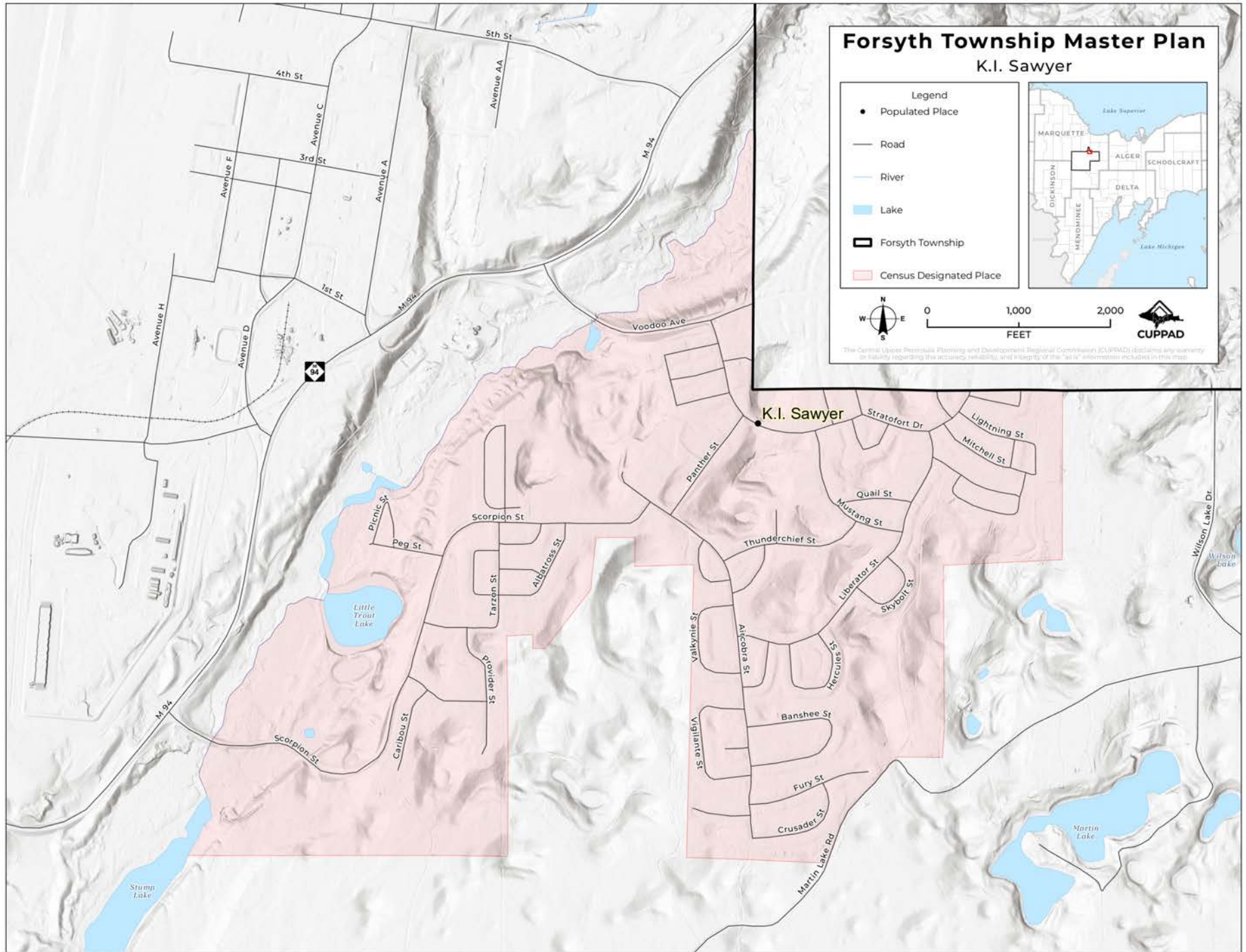
City/ St Ignace area west to Wisconsin. Another important corridor is M-28/ US-41, which runs from Sault Ste. Marie, west through Marquette to Houghton.

A county-wide public transit service is available, and an intercity bus serves all the counties in the region. Ridesharing opportunities are available through the local rideshare office and MichiVan.

Freight rail services are available in the township, mainly for timber and iron ore, but no passenger rail service is available. These rail services feed into a larger network connecting Canada to Mexico through the United States. There are commercial ports in nearby Marquette and Escanaba. Water access varies by location.







HISTORY

The township is home to many unincorporated communities like Little Lake, Austin, Princeton, and New Swanzy, along with census designated places (CDPs), Gwinn and K.I. Sawyer. CDPs are often statistically comparative to towns and cities, with a population concentration and clear boundaries.

Prior to 2000, Forsyth Township held the distinction of having the largest population of any township in Marquette County. However, this status changed dramatically following the closure of the K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base, after which the township fell behind Chocoday Township in population. A portion of the former K. I. Sawyer Air Force Base extends into the township. This military installation had been a major population and economic driver for the region, and its closure marked a significant turning point in the township's demographic and economic landscape.

Incorporated in 1863, Forsyth Township became a part of the Marquette County. The township was named after O. F. Forsyth, who served as the general agent for a mining firm operating in the region. The township's name commemorates his role in the area's mining industry. The first permanent settlement became Little Lake, founded as a logging community and later connected by the Peninsula Railroad Company's rail line. As the timber industry waned, agriculture began to have more of a presence with the region. Eventually Cleveland Cliffs Iron Company established a rail line from the Swanzy Iron Pits to the junction at Little Lake. This proved a turning point in the township's settlement history allowing the mines in the region to operate with higher profit margins.

William P. Mather, president of Cleveland Cliffs Iron Company at the time had plans for a community between Princeton and Little Lake developed by Boston based landscape architect, Warren Manning. The model town, designed with inspiration from the town of Coleraine in Minnesota, was called Gwinn, the maiden name of Mather's mother. It took less than three years to build this picturesque planned community. It was designed to meet the needs of every person in the community.

During World War II mining activity began to decline and the mines within the township ultimately closed. In the early 1950's the Department of Defense established the K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base, spurring rapid growth within the township. It closed in late 1995 leading to a major population decrease. Agriculture and lumber industries still maintain a significant presence within the township demonstrating community resilience and the ability to adapt to changing resources and economic opportunities.



BUILDING TOWN HALL IMAGE CREDIT: FORSYTH TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

LANDSCAPE + TERRAIN

Forsyth Township is home to a diverse array of natural areas. Here, landscape typologies are utilized to showcase the various landforms influenced by terrain, soils, exposure and vegetation. By developing a clear understanding of what landscapes the township has and where they are located a more holistic understanding of the region is generated. Elevation and soil structure likewise contribute to developmental patterns, environmental factors, and decision making.

Recreation opportunities, preferred connections between typologies, development, and preservation priorities begin to emerge allowing communities to formulate a vision for the ideal future landscape. Striking the right balance of development and preservation of natural resources within a community is key to maintaining a long lasting beautiful place for generations to explore and appreciate.



CONIFER FOREST

Jack pine forests are found throughout the township, providing a habitat for a unique array of plant and animal species.



DECIDUOUS/MIXED FORESTS

Upland areas contain beautiful deciduous/mixed forests. The original tree stands are what drew settlers to the land initially. Now the forests provide a haven for birds and wildlife and a jaw-dropping fall color display.



INLAND LAKES + RIVER CORRIDORS

Inland lakes dot the landscape providing a haven for many different plant and animal species as well as spaces for fishing, birding, hiking, paddling, camping and sightseeing. Stream and river corridors serve as greenways connecting parks and natural areas throughout the township.



WETLANDS

A combination of high water table, bedrock close to the surface, and drainage depressions formed by glaciers provide an abundance of wetlands within the township. These areas contain a variety of plants including wood sorrel, northern dewberry, sphagnum moss, sedges, dogwood and various wildflower species.



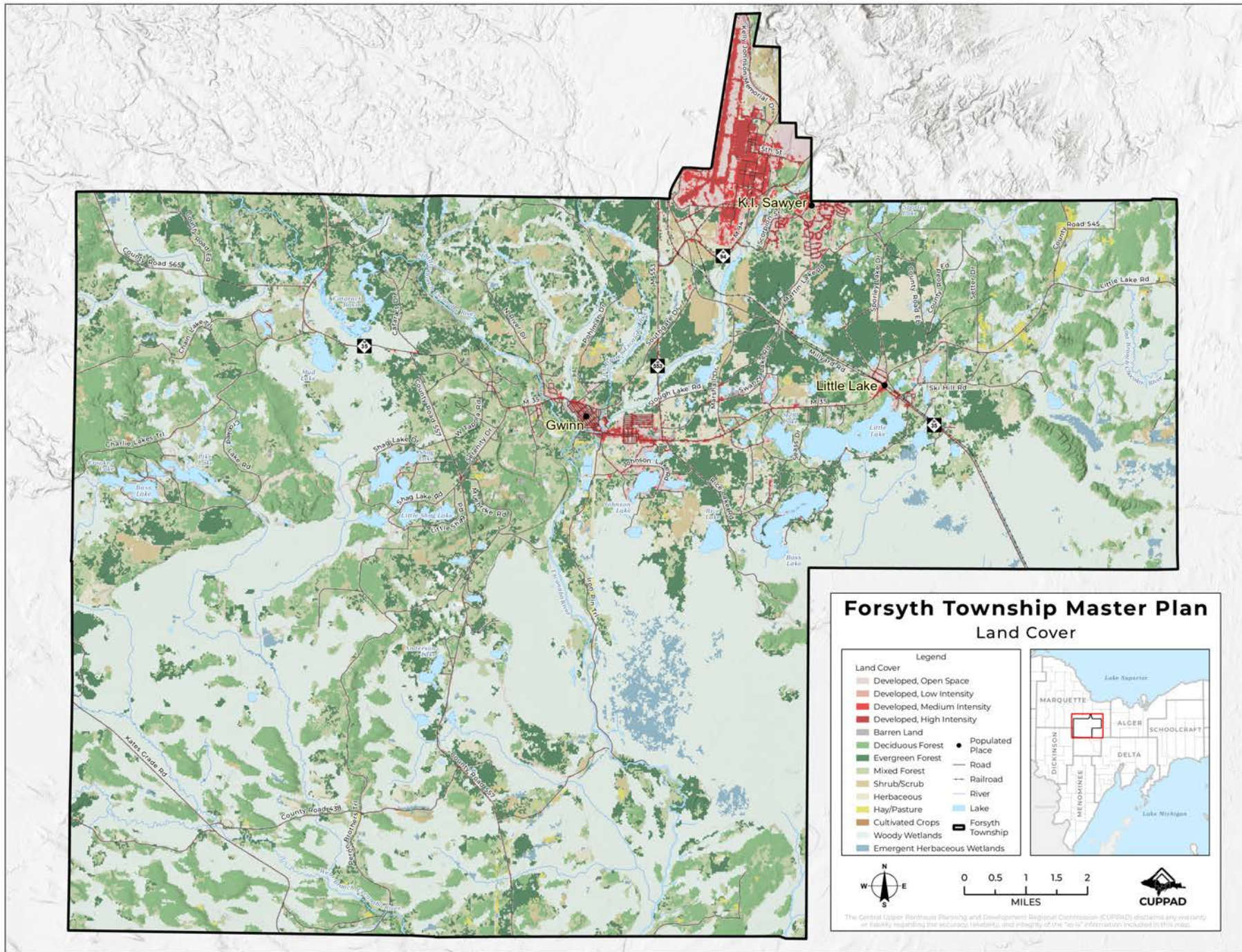
PASTURE

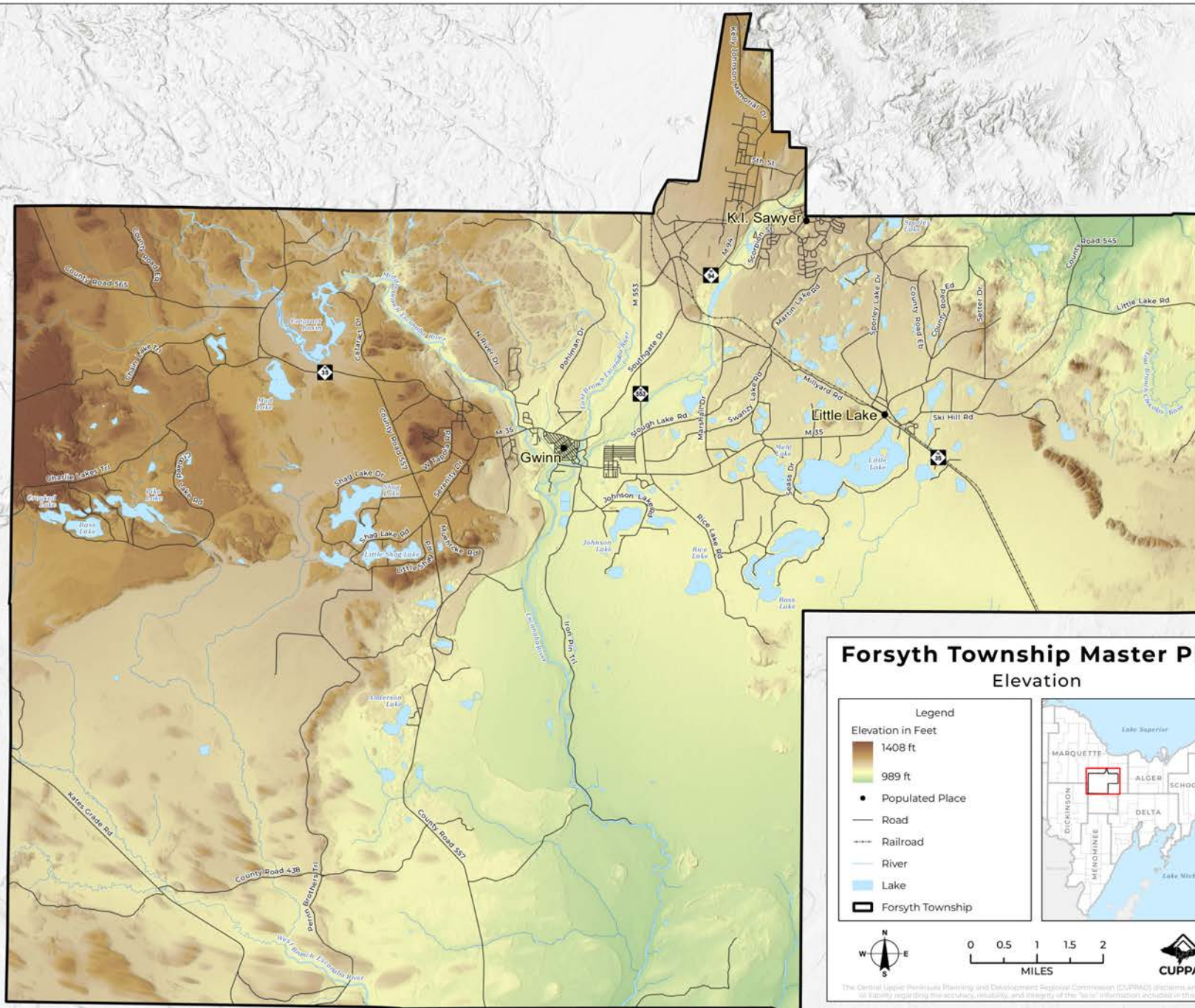
There is a great deal of agriculture land within the township containing open fields for grazing and cultivating crops.



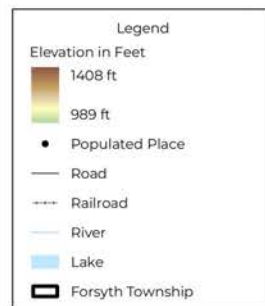
HARDSCAPE + GRAVEL

The rural character of Forsyth Township holds true with its roads as well. Beyond the main highways, county thoroughfares, and pockets of urban and residential development, the roads are often gravel. These provide a network of gravel bike routes and ORV routes as well.

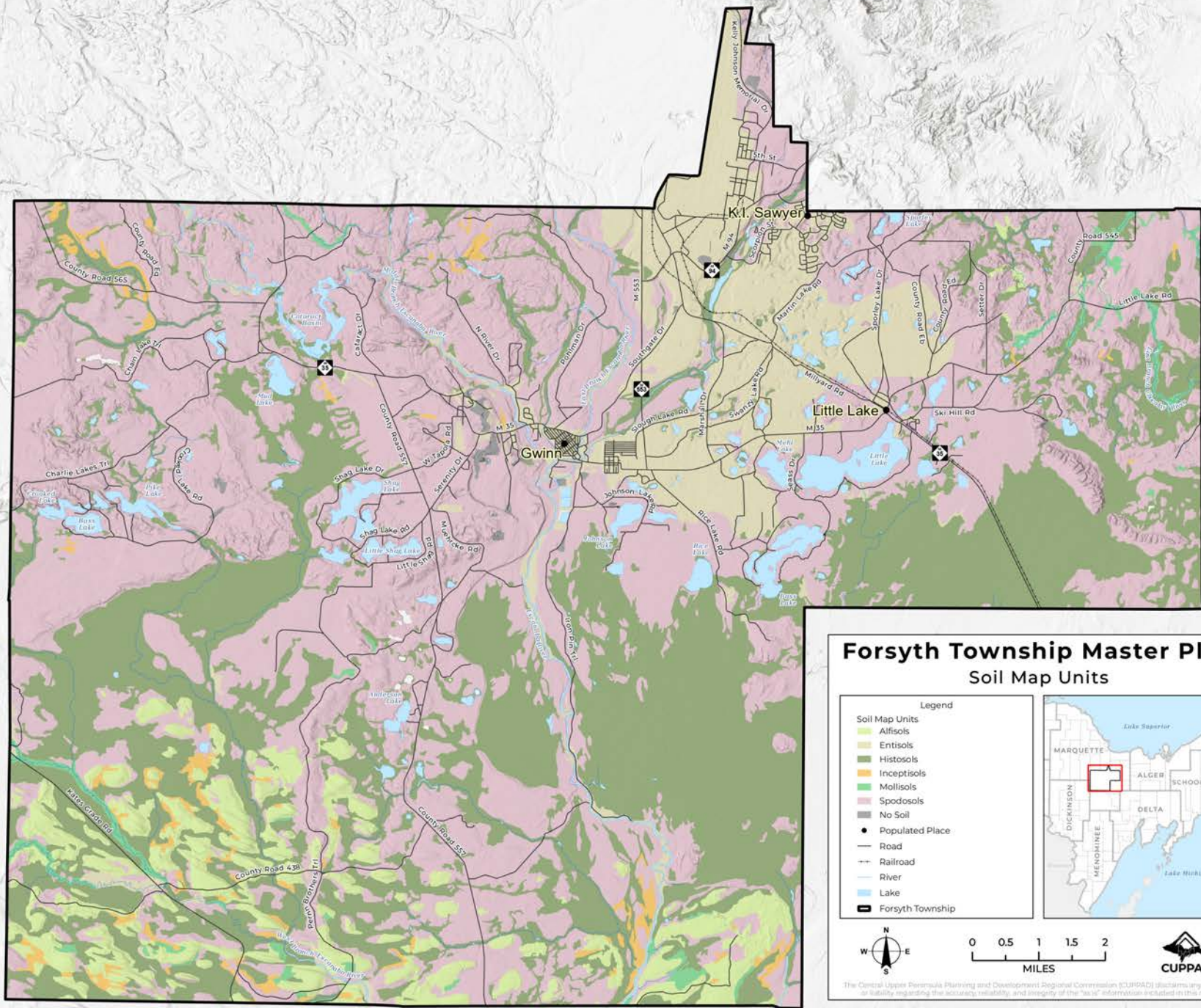




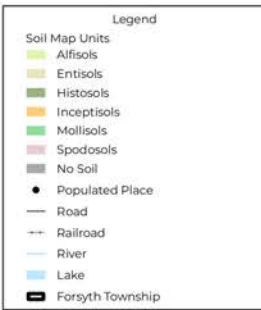
Forsyth Township Master Plan Elevation



The Central Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Regional Commission (CUPPAD) disclaims any warranty or liability regarding the accuracy, reliability, and integrity of the "as is" information included in this map.



Forsyth Township Master Plan Soil Map Units



The Central Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Regional Commission (CUPPAD) disclaims any liability or liability regarding the accuracy, reliability, and integrity of the "as is" information included in this map.

2 Guiding Principles

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

Throughout the process of developing the 2025 Master Plan, a number of overarching guiding principles were consistently mentioned which described common values held by the community. These guiding principles and the Vision Statement paint a unifying picture of Forsyth Township's future, which will result from the implementation of strategic elements found in this plan.

The word cloud below reflects the community's view of the township based on the community survey, which can be found in the appendix. Most mentioned was "Small Town" (61 mentions), "Nature" (56 mentions), and "Community" (49 mentions). Also mentioned were "Friendly People" (36), "Love" (32), and "Quiet" (28).

Forsyth Township is fortunate to have a friendly community that is full of love and has admiration and respect for nature. It's citizens value the quiet small-town feel of the safe rural community. Keeping these top values in mind, the Strategic Priorities were built around how the community sees itself and hopes to meet and confront challenges in the future.



1. PRESERVATION OF SMALL-TOWN CHARACTER

The frequent mention of "Small Town" indicates a strong community value in maintaining the intimate, close-knit, and unique qualities of Forsyth Township. This principle emphasizes the importance of preserving the township's small-town charm and identity as it grows and evolves.

2. COMMITMENT TO NATURE AND ENVIRONMENT

"Nature" being one of the top mentions highlights the community's deep appreciation and respect for the natural environment. This principle reflects the need to prioritize environmental stewardship, conservation, and sustainable and responsible development practices in the township's future plans.

3. FOSTERING A UNIFIED COMMUNITY

With "Community," "Friendly People," and "Love" being prominent values, this principle underscores the importance of nurturing a supportive, welcoming, and connected community. It emphasizes the need to build and maintain a positive, inclusive atmosphere where residents feel valued and engaged no matter where they live or where they're from while retaining their individualism and community pride.

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

*“Forsyth Township envisions a future where its **small-town charm and natural beauty** are preserved and celebrated, creating a vibrant, inclusive community that honors its rich **heritage** while embracing sustainable growth.*

*We are committed to fostering a **close-knit, welcoming environment** where residents and visitors alike are connected through shared **respect** for nature, love for our community, and dedication to a thriving, peaceful township that meets the challenges of tomorrow with resilience and unity.”*

3 Trends Shaping the Region

POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

This section of the Master Plan is often referred to as the “fact book”, an important component that provides data on the changes that are occurring in the community with regard to population, economics, and housing, among other topics. By analyzing the data of the past, we can draw conclusions about what the future might bring and be better prepared for the changes that take place. Examining population trends is helpful for communities to plan for resources and amenities to meet the needs of the residents. Population change is a primary component in tracking a community’s past growth or decline, as well as forecasting future population trends. Population characteristics relate directly to housing, education, recreation, health care, and the future economic needs of the community. All statistics were taken from the US Census Bureau and the American Community Survey. Data for the township is used when available, otherwise county data is used.

Over the last 50 years population in the state of Michigan has generally grown. Marquette County and Forsyth Township were also growing in population until 2020. While Marquette County’s population change from 1990-2000 was only 9.6 percent, the change for the Township

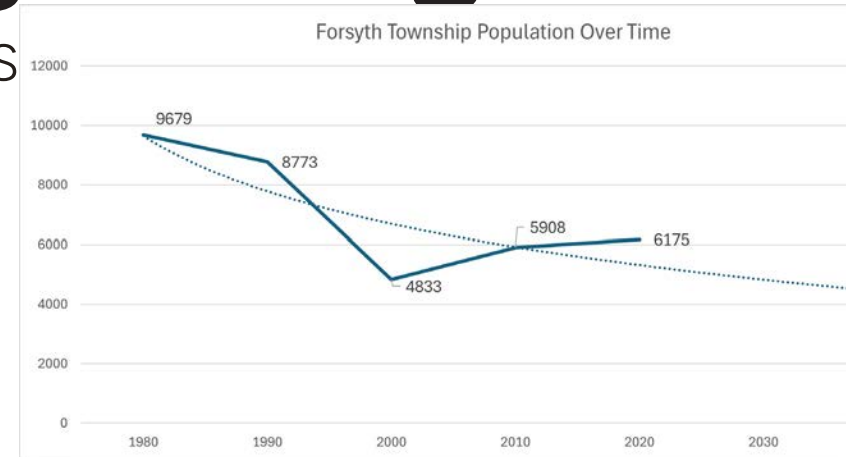
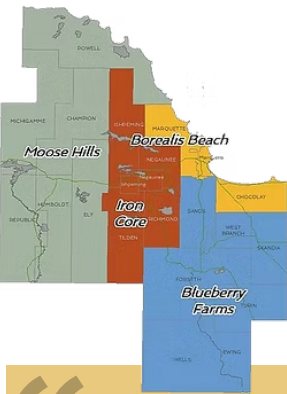


FIGURE 3.1: POPULATION CHANGE OVER TIME, US CENSUS 2023

was over 50 percent. This is an extreme change for any community and can be attributed to the closure of the Sawyer Air Force Base in 1995. However, in recent years, population numbers have been growing. Even though figure 3.1 (above) shows a downward trend, we can assume that the population will at least plateau, if not keep rising. People are drawn to the area for the small-town feeling, the low cost of living, the vast expanse of nature, and manufacturing employment opportunities. Age distribution can illustrate the difference between certain cohorts over time, allowing for better informed planning decisions. Do we need more playgrounds or senior housing? What will our workforce look like in 20 years? These questions can be answered with

Population by Year	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
Forsyth Township	9,679	8,773	4,833	5,908	6,175
Marquette County	70,887	70,887	64,634	67,077	66,017
Michigan	9,262,078	9,295,297	9,938,444	9,883,640	10,077,331

FIGURE 3.2: POPULATION BY YEAR, STATE, COUNTY, AND TOWNSHIP; 1980-2020



IN THE NEXT 20 YEARS, Blueberry Farms WILL SIGNIFICANTLY BENEFIT FROM FINDING A WAY TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL RESIDENTS...USING ITS NATURAL ASSETS TO GENERATE SUSTAINABLE, EQUITABLE GROWTH.

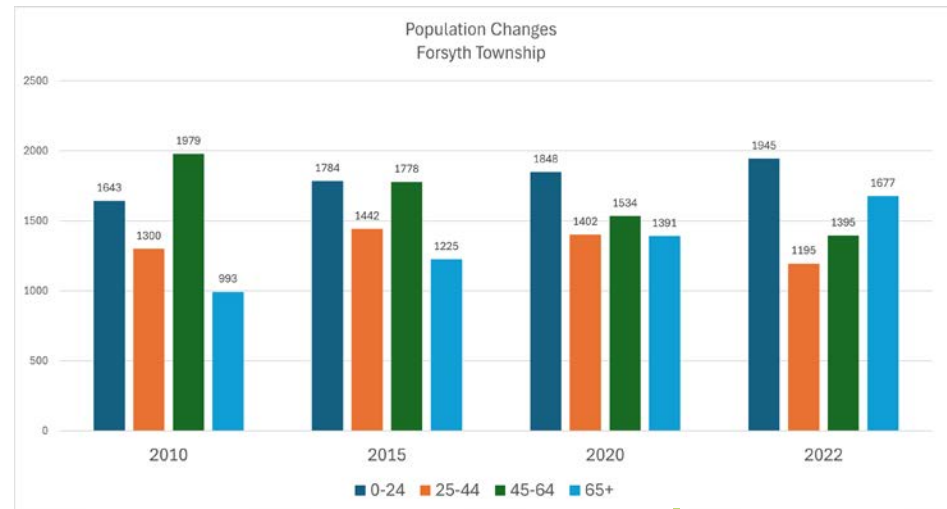
-MARQUETTE COUNTY 2040: YOUR COUNTY, YOUR PLAN, OUR COMMON FUTURE

an approximation based on data and facts. In Forsyth Township, the median age has increased from 40.5 in 2000 to 44.6 in 2021, reflecting an overall aging trend. While age cohorts remain relatively balanced—each comprising roughly one-quarter of the population—the distribution has shifted. In 2000, the largest cohort was residents under age 25; by 2021, residents aged 60 and older formed the largest group, with those under 25 still representing the second-largest segment.

This dual concentration of younger residents and older adults has significant implications for the township's future. The continued growth of the senior population, driven by the aging Baby Boomer generation, will increase demand for healthcare, senior housing, transportation, and support services. At the same time, the presence of a substantial youth population will require sustained investment in education, recreation, and family-oriented infrastructure.

Balancing the needs of these two large age groups will be a critical challenge for Forsyth Township in the coming

FIGURE 3.4: POPULATION CHANGE BY AGE



AGE | 2000

Source: US Census ACS Data

AGE | 2021

Source: US Census ACS Data

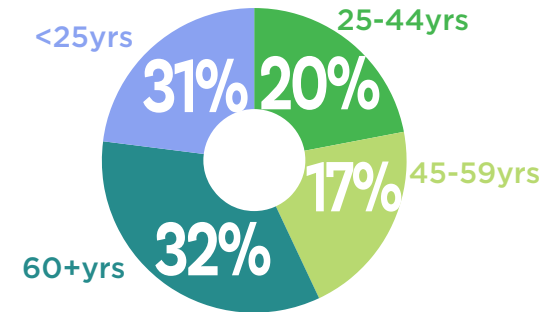
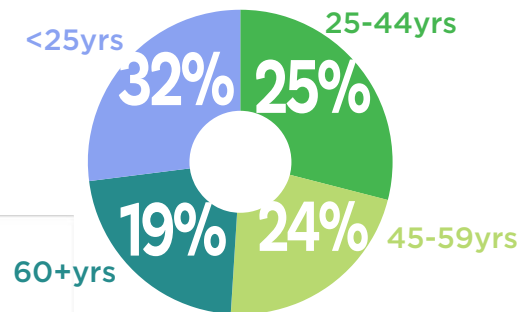


FIGURE 3.5: AGE COHORTS BY YEAR

decades and will influence priorities across housing, public services, and community development.

Population pyramids are useful tools meant to measure subsets of age groups split by sex. They are a snapshot in time of the structure of the population of a community and helps explain changes in workforce, birth rates, migration, and more.

In figure 3.5 the largest age cohorts in Forsyth Township are males aged 15-19 years and 70-74 years, and females aged 14-19 years, 40-44 years, and 65-69 years. Keeping these trends in mind will help community leaders prioritize development in a way that meets the needs of all its members.

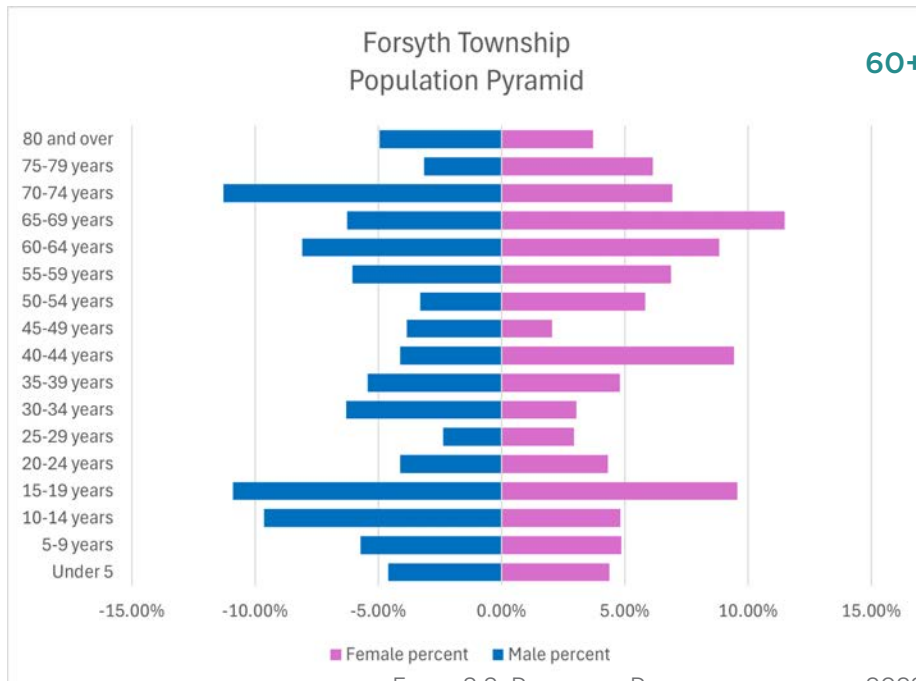


FIGURE 3.3: POPULATION PYRAMID BY SEX AND AGE 2022

INCOME TRENDS

At this time in 2025, the most current and best available income figures are provided by the Census Bureau's 2022 American Community Survey (ACS). Like any survey, it comes with a margin of error relative to the size of the community sample. The chart below depicts two types of income data, households and families in the year 2022. A **household** consists of all people who occupy a housing unit collectively, while a **family** is defined by two or more related individuals within a single household.

Median household income and the poverty rate can reveal more trends. The median household income in 2022 was \$60,297, pretty close to Michigan's median household income at \$66,986. This is a healthy indicator. The median family income in 2022 was \$80,590, also close to the state's median family income levels at \$90,947,

However, the poverty rate of Forsyth Township is 14.4%, a little higher than the state rate of 13.4%. While incomes tend to rise over time, so does the price of goods and services. Unfortunately, the price of goods and services has continued

to rise faster than wages. This leaves many people, not in poverty, but in a different category, called **ALICE**. ALICE is an acronym that stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed - meaning a group of people who, even though they have employment, are struggling economically. They are above the Federal Poverty Level but still struggle to make ends meet. ALICE is put together by the United Way and describes the population in this segment as "working hard, but barely surviving and definitely not thriving." These populations often have to make difficult choices with limited resources. A single mother might have to choose between medication and baby formula. A college student may be having to choose between grocery shopping and making rent. According to this report, in Marquette County 26% of households struggle to afford the basic necessities of housing, child care, food, technology, health care, and transportation.

FIGURE 3.7: FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD INCOME

	2010	2022	Change
Median Household Income (MHI)	\$34,944	\$60,297	+72.6%
Median Family Income (MFI)	\$43,125	\$80,590	+86.8%

Forsyth Township Income, 2022
Families and Households

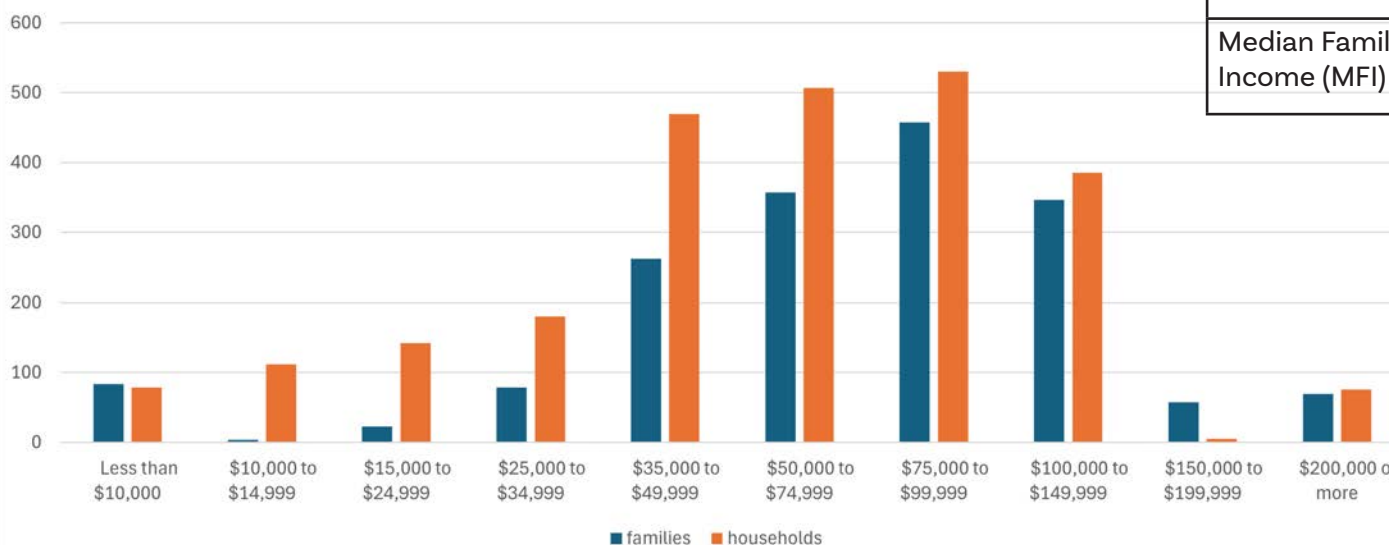


FIGURE 3.6: FAMILY INCOME AND HOUSEHOLD INCOME, 2022
SOURCE: ACS 2022, CENSUS BUREAU 2010, 2022

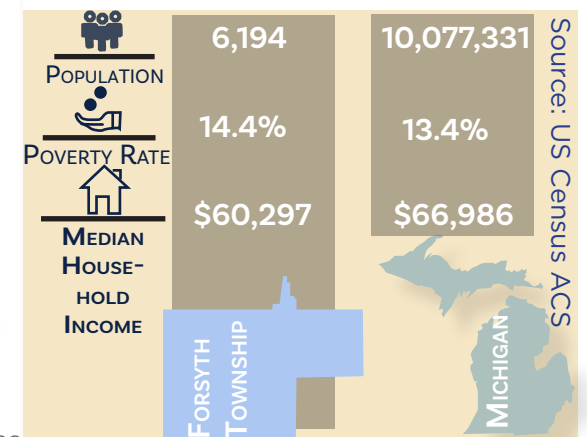
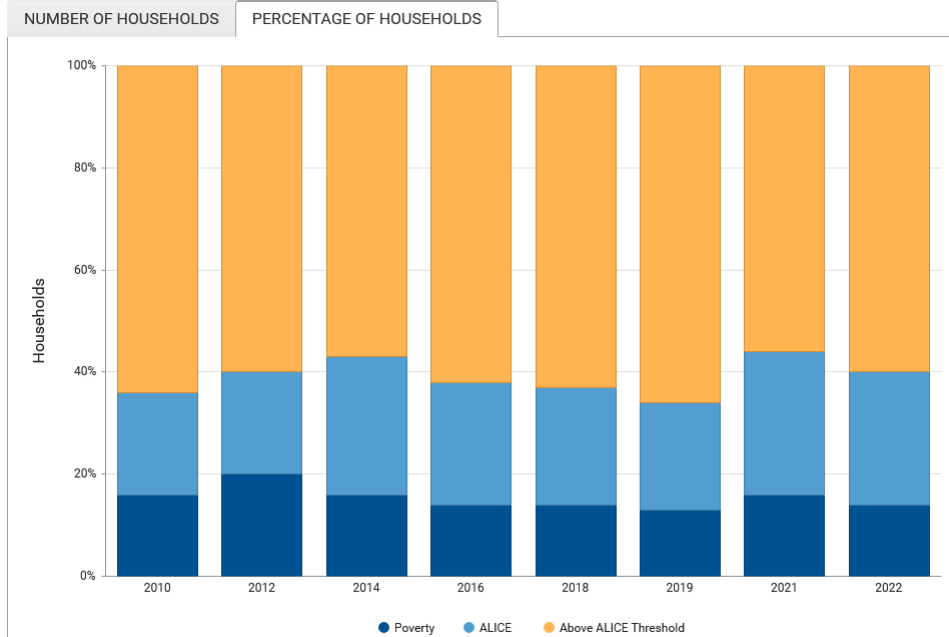


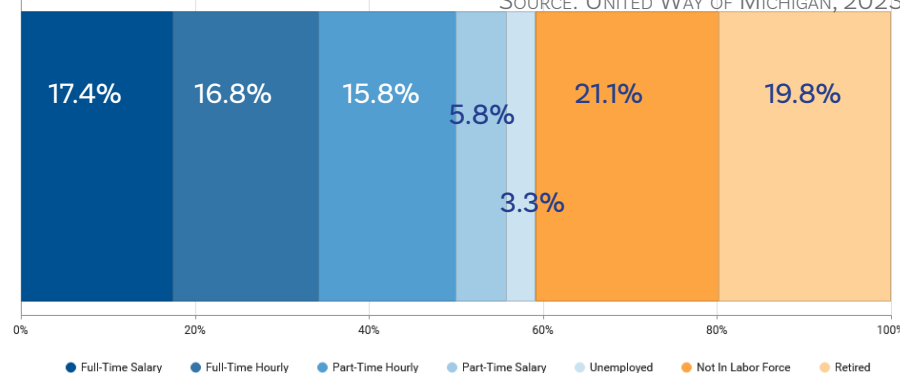
FIGURE 3.8: TOWNSHIP AND STATE COMPARISON

FIGURE 3.9: PERCENTAGE OF ALICE HOUSEHOLDS IN MARQUETTE COUNTY



While financial circumstances for families and households can change over time, many find themselves bouncing between poverty and the ALICE threshold, while those above the ALICE threshold are less susceptible to these changes. From the graph above (3.9), poverty levels stay about the same, while the ALICE population fluctuates and continues to grow. In 2010 the ALICE rate was 20% for Marquette County, while in 2022 it was 26%. While this category continues to grow along with inflation, it is important that township and county leaders recognize that income and poverty are not the only markers of household stability.

FIGURE 3.10: LABOR STATUS, 16 AND OLDER
SOURCE: UNITED WAY OF MICHIGAN, 2023



It is also important to note that many people in the ALICE population are employed, but a substantial portion of both full and part-time workers are paid by the hour; these workers are more likely to have fluctuations in income and are less likely to receive benefits like sick leave and paid time off. According to the United Way report, only a small portion of Marquette County is unemployed, about 3%, while those not in the labor force account for 21.1%, and those retired account for 19.8%. The seasonality of the tourism industry and service-based jobs in Marquette County is also an important factor.

Below is a table called the Household Survival Budget. The Household Survival Budget reflects the minimum cost to live and work in the current economy and includes housing, child care, food, transportation, health care, technology, and taxes. It does not include savings for emergencies or future goals like college or retirement. In 2022, household costs in every county in Michigan were well above the Federal Poverty Level of \$13,590 for a single adult and \$27,750 for a family of four.

Household Survival Budget, Marquette County, Michigan, 2022								
Monthly Costs and Credits	Single Adult	One Adult, One Child	One Adult, One In Child Care	Two Adults	Two Adults Two Children	Two Adults, Two In Child Care	Single Adult 65+	Two Adults 65+
Housing - Rent	\$393	\$386	\$386	\$386	\$525	\$525	\$393	\$386
Housing - Utilities	\$163	\$258	\$258	\$258	\$310	\$310	\$163	\$258
Child Care	\$0	\$200	\$533	\$0	\$400	\$1,133	\$0	\$0
Food	\$487	\$826	\$741	\$893	\$1,502	\$1,327	\$450	\$824
Transportation	\$462	\$596	\$596	\$703	\$1,113	\$1,113	\$398	\$575
Health Care	\$174	\$383	\$383	\$383	\$601	\$601	\$499	\$998
Technology	\$86	\$86	\$86	\$116	\$116	\$116	\$86	\$116
Miscellaneous	\$177	\$274	\$298	\$274	\$457	\$513	\$199	\$316
Tax Payments	\$322	\$676	\$742	\$450	\$917	\$1,063	\$381	\$688
Tax Credits	\$0	(\$207)	(\$217)	\$0	(\$413)	(\$433)	\$0	\$0
Monthly Total	\$2,264	\$3,478	\$3,806	\$3,463	\$5,528	\$6,268	\$2,569	\$4,161
ANNUAL TOTAL	\$27,168	\$41,736	\$45,672	\$41,556	\$66,336	\$75,216	\$30,828	\$49,932
Hourly Wage	\$13.58	\$20.87	\$22.84	\$20.78	\$33.17	\$37.61	\$15.41	\$24.97

FIGURE 3.11: FAMILY INCOME AND HOUSEHOLD INCOME, 2022
SOURCE: UNITED WAY OF MICHIGAN, 2023

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

At this time in 2025, the best and most reliable employment and economic data comes from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics and the St Louis FRED, Federal Reserve Economic Data. While there is no data for Forsyth Township or the CDPs contained within, there is valuable data available for Marquette County.

According to the Federal Reserve Economic Data, FRED, the unemployment rate in Marquette County has had various ups and downs over the years. In 2000, the County's employment total was 32,958 with an average annual unemployment rate of 4.5%. The most recent total in late 2020 indicates the employment total was 29,121 with an average annual unemployment rate of 9.7%. In figure 14, the shaded areas indicate a recession, with the blue line indicating the unemployment rate. The Great Recession, which officially lasted from about December 2007 through June 2009 resulted in an average unemployment rate of just over 10%. In subsequent years, Michigan experienced a longer recovery period than the rest of the nation, presumably as a result of having a less diversified economy, heavily centered around manufacturing. Since this event, the employment numbers have not fully recovered to pre-recession levels. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic is in part responsible for higher unemployment numbers, as certain professions and trades were put on hold for lockdowns to stop the spread. Also in 2020,

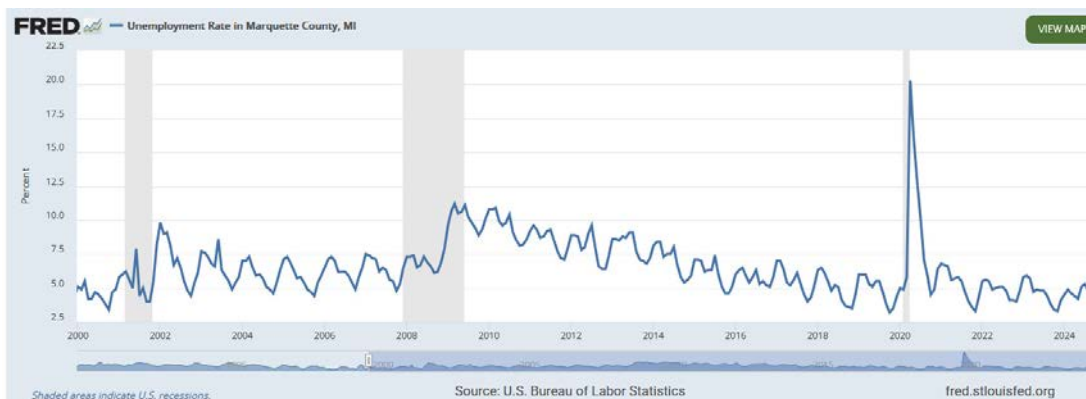


FIGURE 3.12 UNEMPLOYMENT IN MARQUETTE COUNTY, FRED 2022

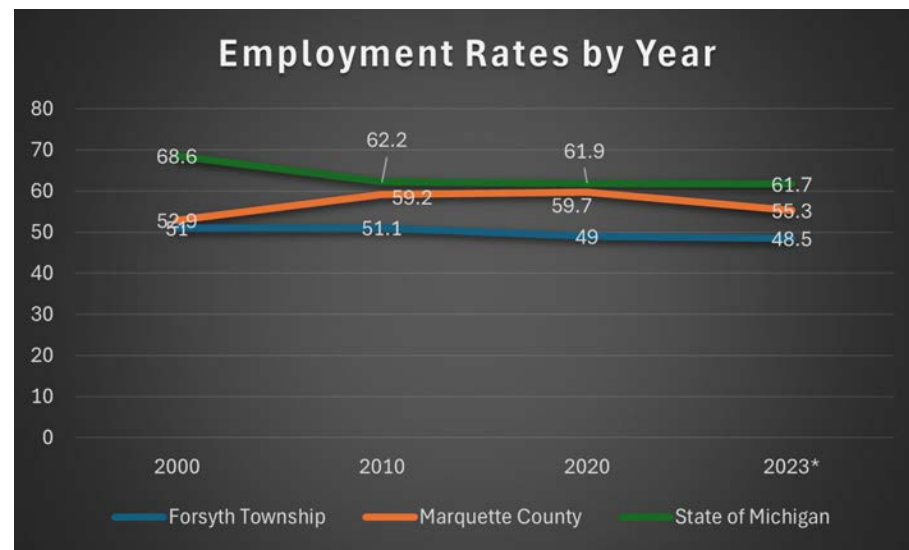


FIGURE 3.13 UNEMPLOYMENT IN MARQUETTE COUNTY, 2022

employment numbers dipped by almost 1,000 jobs. It is possible that following the pandemic, many workers have permanently left the local labor force; perhaps moved, retired, or are in disability status.

Conversely, employment rates since 2000 have generally dipped by a couple of percentage points. For instance, in the State of Michigan, the 2023 (*estimated data) is 61.7%, is considerably lower than the 68.6% in 2000. Marquette County's employment rates have risen throughout the early 2000's, but are expected to even out at 55.3%. Forsyth Township's employment rate has been somewhat stable for the last 25 years, hovering around 50%. While these rates are not too different, it is useful to compare the Township rate to that of the larger County and that of the State to get a larger picture of the state of employment.

In Marquette County's Master Plan, Marquette County 2040, the county is split into four different sections. Forsyth Township falls into the Blueberry Farms Region, which is described as "an area abundant in resources &

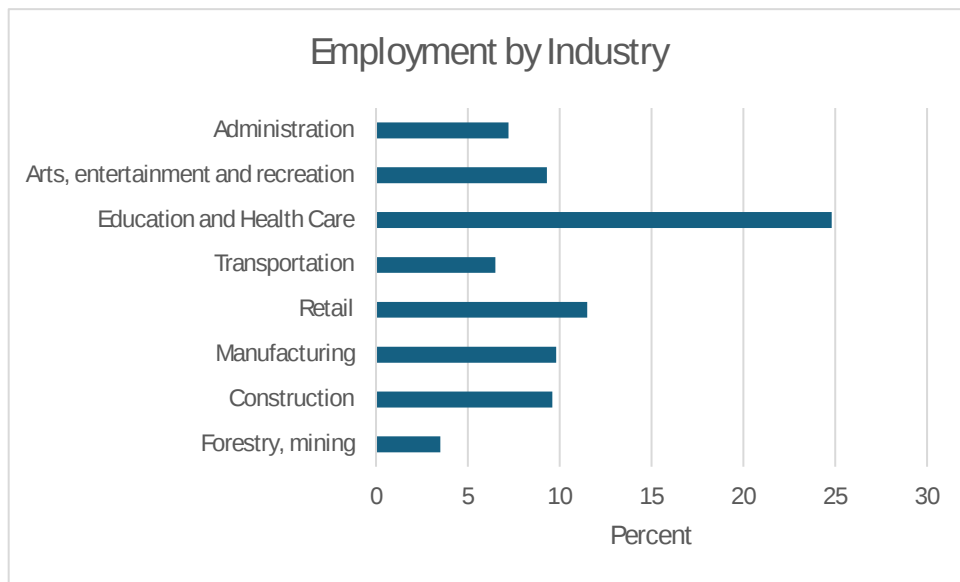


FIGURE 3.14 EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY, FORSYTH TOWNSHIP, US CENSUS, 2022

opportunity”, founded on a natural resource economy. While forestry and mining were the primary foundation for the local economy in the Upper Peninsula, our industries are changing. Top occupations in the County are now trending towards Education and Health Care, Retail, Manufacturing, and Office Administration and Management. Education and Health Care is the fastest growing category in the past few years.

The top employers in the Blueberry Farms section of Marquette County all happen to reside in Forsyth Township. These include:

Major Area Employers	# of Employees
Envoy Air	200
PotlatchDeltic	170
Superior Extrusion	143
Gwinn Area Community Schools	140
VanDamme Trucking	132

SOURCE: MARQUETTE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DATA AND EMPLOYER REPORTING, 2022

For most of Marquette County’s history, the economy was principally based on the iron ore mining industry. Mining on the Marquette Iron Range in Marquette County goes back more than 150 years. Since the closing of many of these mines, the

economy has had to shift from iron ore production to a more manufacturing, retail service, administration, and tourism-based economy. It is crucial that our local economy and industries are able to shift to meet these growing industries to stay relevant and viable into the future, offering local employment opportunities and generating local wealth.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2019-2023 data, workers aged 16 and over in Forsyth Township have a mean travel time to work of 25.3 minutes. This is slightly higher than the average commuter times elsewhere in Marquette County, which is about 18.5 minutes. This suggests that residents in Forsyth have to travel slightly longer to get to work, increasing costs in time, vehicular maintenance, and scheduling.

Forsyth Township would benefit from having more and diverse local employers. One way some U.P. communities fill this void is with the tourism industry. Forsyth Township is fortunate to have vast swaths of wild land, many lakes, and outdoor recreation opportunities of all types. It also has a rich history from which to draw unique visitor experiences from, either through storytelling, interpretive signage, or guided tours of the area.



LOCAL BUSINESS: SUPERIOR EXTRUSION

EDUCATION TRENDS

Forsyth Township demonstrates strong high school completion rates, with 96.3% of residents aged 25 and older holding a high school diploma—exceeding Marquette County (95.2%), Michigan (92.0%), and the U.S. average (89.9%). However, only 26.2% hold a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 34.7% in Marquette County and 31.1% statewide.

Nearly half (48.8%) of residents have completed some college or an associate's degree, indicating many begin postsecondary education but do not complete a four-year degree. This gap likely reflects the absence of higher education institutions within the township, requiring residents to travel for further study.

Vocational pathways are an important alternative, especially given the township's employment base in manufacturing, administration, and health care. In Michigan, enrollment in Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs reached over 112,000 students in 2023–24, up 9% in two years, underscoring the growing role of skilled trades and technical training.

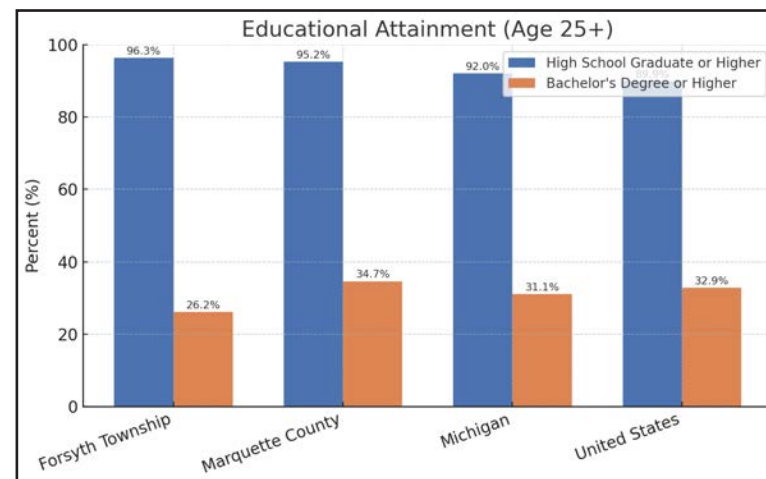


FIGURE 3.13: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, TOWNSHIP, COUNTY, STATE, COUNTRY, US CENSUS 2022

Educational attainment shapes the community's workforce capacity, economic development potential, and long-term quality of life. Forsyth Township's exceptionally high high-school completion rate reflects strong foundational education, but lower bachelor's degree attainment compared to the county and state may limit access to certain high-skill industries. Understanding these trends helps local leaders target investments in career pathways, vocational training, and partnerships with regional colleges to ensure residents have diverse opportunities for advancement without needing to relocate.

Educational attainment

96.3%

High school grad or higher

about the same as the rate in Marquette County: 95.5%

a little higher than the rate in Michigan: 91.9%

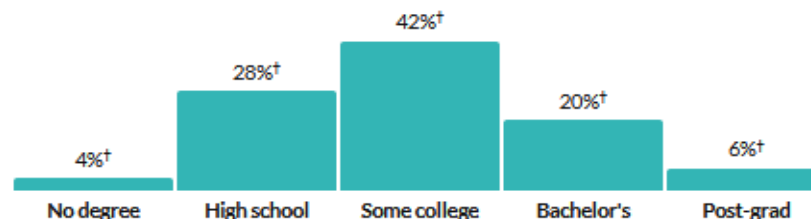
26.2%

Bachelor's degree or higher

about three-quarters of the rate in Marquette County: 35.8%

about 80 percent of the rate in Michigan: 31.8%

Population by highest level of education



* Universe: Population 25 years and over

[Show data / Embed](#)

FIGURE 3.12 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, FORSYTH TOWNSHIP, US CENSUS BUREAU 2022

HOUSING TRENDS

Housing availability, type, and condition are all important factors contributing to the overall quality of life in Forsyth Township. This section assesses various housing characteristics using 2010 - 2023 Census data, the latest American Community Survey (ACS) data, and local real estate listings in order to provide a snapshot of the current housing trends.

Since the 2020 pandemic, the housing market has been booming. Housing prices continue to rise and the demand for quality affordable housing in Marquette County continues to grow. Home prices in Forsyth Township have seen a similar rise. As of January 2025, the median home sold in Forsyth Township was \$201,150, reflecting about a 68% increase from the previous year. In Gwinn specifically, the median listing price was \$235,000, reflecting a 54% increase since 2024. These figures indicate a significant rise in home prices in the area in recent years.

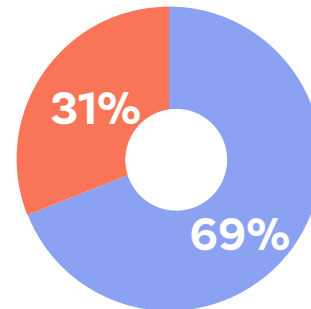
Housing in Forsyth Township tends to be more affordable than that in other areas of Marquette County. The median list price in the City of Marquette is about \$389,000, almost double the price of housing in the township. This is but one factor when people decide where to live and work. Rentals are likewise growing in price per month, putting further financial strain on those who may already be struggling.

A **household** consists of all people who occupy a housing unit collectively, while a **family household** is defined by two or more related individuals within a single household. A **non-family household** means the people who occupy a housing unit are not related, such as roommates. In Forsyth Township, 31% of households are non-family households,

FIGURE 3.14: HOUSING TENURE; SOURCE: AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY, 2022

HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE

Non-Family Households

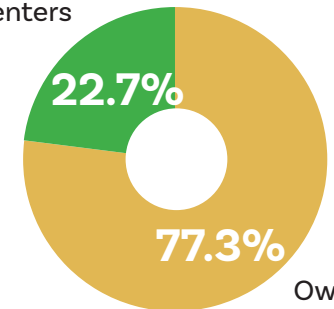


Family Households

while family households make up 69% (figure 3.14). Families currently outweigh non-families in the township. The average household size in the township is 2.45 people.

HOUSING BY TENURE

Renters



Owners

Housing tenure is a financial arrangement and ownership structure under which someone has the right to live in a house or other dwelling. This is usually in the form of a mortgage or rental agreement. In Forsyth Township, 77.3% of households are considered owners, under a mortgage tenure agreement. The other 22.7% are households who have a rental agreement with a landlord or a company. This means that not all families are owners and not all non-family households are renters. Housing tenure over time (figure 3.15, next page) shows that the owner and rental rates have stayed at relatively similar rates with about a quarter of the population of the township renting. Since 2010, however, ownership has been going down while the percentage of renters grew. This is indicative of the rate of the rising costs of homeownership over the last twelve years.

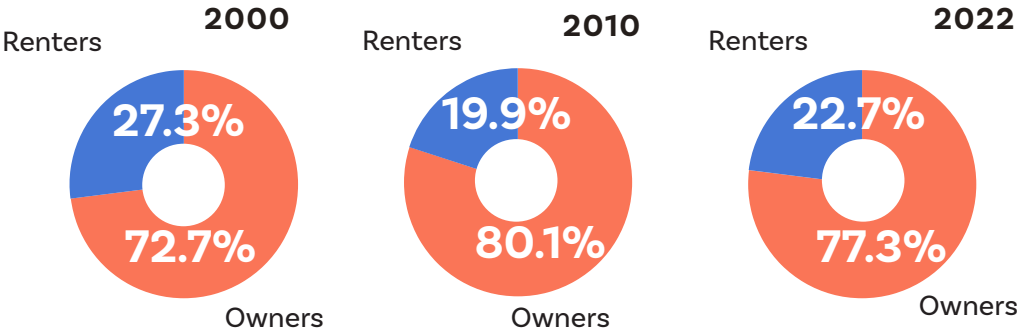
Other important factors to consider when examining tenure and household type are the age of tenants, household size, educational attainment, and the availability of housing stock.

Tenure by age (figure 3.16) reveals that most homeowners in Forsyth Township are within the 55-64 and 65-74 age brackets. These numbers dip significantly at the Under 35 and 85 and Older age brackets. This suggests that most homeowners are retired or are getting close to retirement.

The age categories with the most renters are those Under 35, 35-44, and then again at 55-64 years of age. This suggests that most renters are on the younger side of the spectrum. Younger people often don't have the immediate means to make a big housing purchase, even if they would like to. The high cost of homeownership, even entry-level, continues to be a barrier for most young people.

Household size can often determine income levels, budgets, and living situations. The household size most numerous in the township is a 2-person household. These might be married couples, unmarried couples, or roommates. This category also sees the most disparity between owners and renters, with homeowners making up about 80% of 2-person households.

TENURE OVER TIME



TENURE BY AGE

	Owner	Renter	Total
Under 35	151	180	331
35-44 years	312	130	442
45-54 years	258	41	299
55-64 years	348	118	466
65-74 years	629	56	685
75-84 years	204	42	246
85 and older	58	9	67

TENURE BY HOUSEHOLD SIZE

	Owner	Renter	Total
1 person	427	246	673
2 person	997	138	1135
3 person	116	85	201
4 or more people	420	107	527

Households consisting of four or more people who own their house are almost as numerous as those of consisting of one person homeowners.

Tenure over time (figure 3.15) shows that the percentages of renters and owners has stayed about the same over the past 22 years. 2010 shows an increase of almost 8% in homeowners, dropping renters down below 20%. In 2022, these numbers have only slightly changed, with 22.7% of residents renting and 77.3%of residents owning their own home. These statistics show that the local market is relatively healthy with no remarkable shifts between renting and owning over the years.

FIGURE 3.16: HOUSING TENURE
SOURCE: AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY, 2022

FIGURE 3.15 HOUSING TENURE OVER TIME, ACS 2022

Housing in the community remains relatively affordable compared to many parts of the country, but trends show clear differences between owners and renters. Most households pay between \$500 and \$1,499 per month for housing. Homeowners are more likely to have costs on the lower end of that range, often due to an older or paid-off mortgage. Renters, by contrast, have fewer very low-cost options, and most pay between \$500 and \$999 per month. Only a small share of households—whether owners or renters—spend more than \$2,000 monthly, suggesting limited high-cost housing in the area. A number of renters also report “no cash rent,” which may reflect informal living arrangements or housing assistance.

When looking at incomes, lower-income households are far more likely to rent, while middle- and higher-income households are much more likely to own. The largest share of households in the community earn between \$50,000 and \$99,999 per year, and most of these are homeowners. Renters are concentrated in income ranges below \$35,000, highlighting that rental housing primarily serves residents with fewer financial resources. Recent years have shown major increases in the cost of housing, making affordability harder to come by.

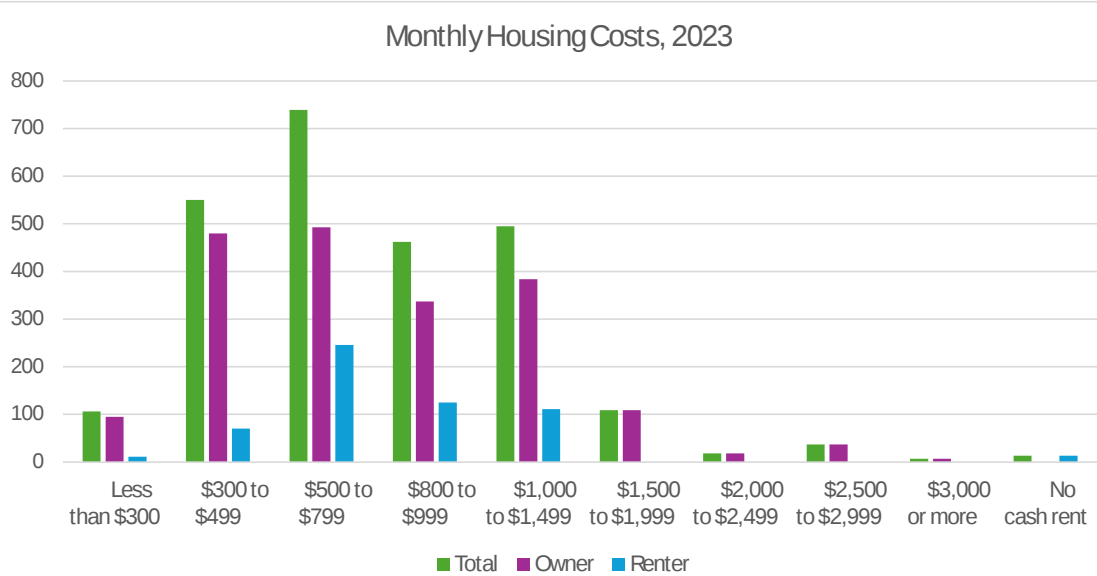


FIGURE 3.17 MONTHLY HOUSING COSTS, OWNER AND RENTER, ACS 2023

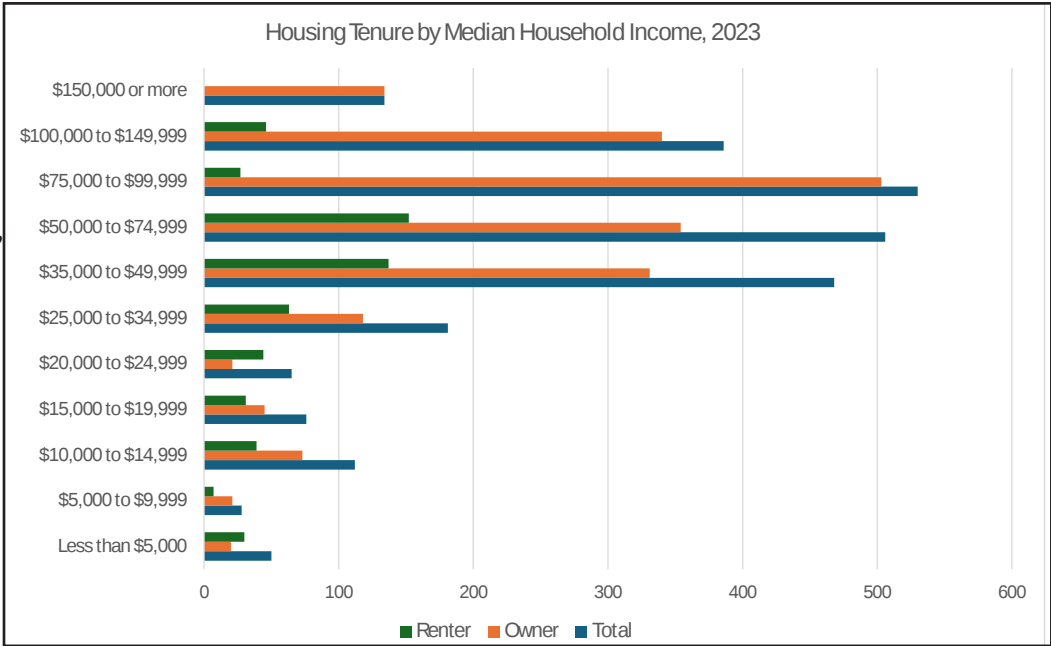


FIGURE 3.18 HOUSING TENURE BY MEDIAN INCOME, ACS 2023

Housing is considered **affordable** when a household spends no more than 30% of its income on housing costs. These costs include rent and utilities for renters, and mortgage payments, property taxes, insurance, and utilities for homeowners. Households that spend more than 30% of their income on housing are considered **cost-burdened**, and those spending more than 50% are considered **severely cost-burdened**. In simple terms, housing is affordable when residents can pay for their homes without sacrificing other basic needs such as food, healthcare, transportation, or education.

Maintaining affordable homeownership opportunities while expanding the supply of safe, affordable rental housing will be important to meet the needs of residents across all income levels. More housing data and local trends and recommendations will be discussed in Chapter 7: Housing and Neighborhoods.



People + Community

Examining trends shaping the Township, County, and Region provides an important snapshot of demographic and economic statistics. Analyzing these statistics and predicting future trends can help communities plan for their development in order to meet the needs and desires of their residents. Meeting these needs is important for residents to feel safe and included in the larger community, adding to current resident retention and new resident attraction.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Planning Commission, along with the results of the community survey, recognizes the following strategic priorities that guide and prioritize the following goals and objectives for future community development.

Community Unity

A common theme mentioned throughout the community survey is the desire to see the Township united. Currently, the township is divided into two **Census Designated Places** (or CDPs): Gwinn, and K.I. Sawyer. Other places within the township such as Little Lake, Princeton, Austin, and New Swanzey are considered **unincorporated communities**, and contribute to the rich history and character of Forsyth, each with its own unique background, voice, and historical significance. Township leaders have voiced similar concerns and are currently taking actions towards unification without sacrificing local pride. It is more important than ever that community groups work together on initiatives so that more voices are heard when decisions are being made.

Healthy Population Growth

Rural areas often face the daunting problem of population growth and retention. Forsyth Township in particular has seen firsthand what population loss does to a community with the closure of the K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base. Population numbers have never fully recovered since this event, but in recent years, population numbers have increased incrementally. This suggests that Forsyth Township is a desirable place to live, work, and raise a family. Friendly communities, affordable living options, and proximity to outdoor recreational opportunities are among the top drivers for people choosing to relocate to the area. These are also contributing factors to general quality of life. High quality of life is desirable and can be achieved through placemaking efforts, embracing regional talent attraction and retention strategies, and consistent community events. Maintaining and growing the housing stock is another important feature for increasing in-migration.

Increased Public Engagement

Public engagement is a critical element in the development of broadly inclusive communities and leaders who are responsive to their own constituents. Increasing participation in planning activities and civic matters can help guide projects in a way that is most desirable for the general community. Meaningful engagement can also lead to a more informed citizenry, mitigating harmful rumors and divisive hearsay. When residents are more informed, they are more empowered to provide constructive feedback to leaders which can result in project modifications that better align with the needs and wants of the community.

Consistently meeting the public's expectation for public engagement serves to build a sense of trust, transparency, and understanding that will enhance the bond between the township and its residents.

Child Care Access

Access to affordable and reliable child care is an important factor in supporting families, workforce participation, and long-term community vitality. In communities throughout Marquette County, including Forsyth Township, families may face challenges finding child care that is both available and affordable. Limited provider capacity, workforce shortages in the child care sector, and increasing demand have created gaps in access that can affect parents' ability to work and contribute to the local economy. When reliable child care options are limited, parents may face barriers to maintaining employment or pursuing new job opportunities, which can affect both household stability and the stability of the local economy.

Addressing child care availability is increasingly recognized as an important component of community and economic development. Coordination with regional partners and supportive local policies can help expand access to child care options for Forsyth Township residents. As Forsyth Township plans for future housing, economic development, and community growth, recognizing child care as an important piece of community infrastructure will help support working families and contribute to the township's long-term vitality. Continued coordination with regional partners and service providers can help ensure that Forsyth Township residents have access to the resources they need to live and work in the community.

GOALS + OBJECTIVES

Goal 4.1: Encourage population growth and retention of current residents through desirable amenities and purposeful marketing.

Objective 4.1.1: Promote Forsyth Township as a destination for tourists and a safe and suitable area for families.

Objective 4.1.2: Improve local amenities such as high-speed internet, reliable public transportation, and access to parks and recreation, and pedestrian mobility and safety.

Objective 4.1.3: Prioritize school and educational developments, programs, and opportunities to draw in and keep young families with children.



FORSYTH RESIDENTS ENJOYING LIVE MUSIC

Goal 4.2: Foster an engaged and inclusive community by encouraging civic participation and opportunities for residents of all ages to take part in local decision-making and community life.

Objective 4.2.1: Ensure broad community participation by reaching out through multiple channels such as, local news, flyers, facebook, and the township website.

Objective 4.2.2: Improve communication between community segments through publication of a regular township newsletter.

Objective 4.2.3: Consider hosting township events in different and rotating community venues when appropriate.



COMMUNITY FUN DAYS AT THE PARK

Goal 4.3: Encourage active civic participation and transparency in local decision-making processes.

Objective 4.3.1: Coordinate messaging efforts online through the township website and utilize social media channels for maximum reach.

Objective 4.3.2: Actively seek community input via resources such as surveys, town hall style meetings, or a coffee hour with local officials.

Objective 4.3.3: Identify and utilize community leaders to take a lead on promotion and organization for community events and education.

Objective 4.3.4: Include announcements of public meetings in local publications and a bulletin at the township offices.

Objective 4.3.5: Engage in educational opportunities for the community, highlighting the importance of public participation and encouraging participation.



MILLAGE VOTING

Goal 4.4: Support opportunities for youth engagement and leadership to build community pride and long-term investment in Forsyth Township.

Objective 4.4.1: Collaborate with schools to foster meaningful opportunities for engagement that matches with curriculum and grade level.

Objective 4.4.2: Consider appointing a youth liaison to the planning commission or board to facilitate youth engagement and ownership in the community.

Objective 4.4.3: Coordinate with schools on volunteer opportunities, community event support, and community beautification efforts.

Objective 4.4.4: Survey high school and middle school students on priorities in the community and foster ideas for youth centered community improvements or updates to amenities.



HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Goal 4.5: Support services and amenities that allow residents to thrive at all stages of life, including access to child care for families and opportunities for senior citizens to age in place.

Objective 4.5.1: Continue updates and improvements to the programming and facility at the Forsyth Senior Center to improve engagement and participation.

Objective 4.5.2: Create a plan to develop quality market-rate senior housing and/or assisted living facilities to keep local seniors in the area.

Objective 4.5.3: When making transportation improvements, consider seniors that may have limited mobility options.

Objective 4.5.4: Consider engaging with local schools on intergenerational events, opportunities, and meals for community cohesion.

Objective 4.5.5: Encourage the availability of licensed child care providers serving Forsyth Township residents and local workers through coordination with regional partners and supportive local policies.

5

Economic Development

The field of economic development has traditionally focused on the strategies of business attraction, retention, and expansion to drive local job growth and prosperity. However, the evolution of our society, driven by factors like the advancements in technology, globalization, and others have changed this field significantly. Today, talented and skilled people are the fuel of the current global economy and where they live and cluster, industries tend to grow and thrive. These workers are generally more free to relocate and are searching for places that hold a high quality of life, competitive salaries, and high-quality affordable housing options. Vibrant downtowns and inclusive communities are also significant factors.

In the Upper Peninsula, there are many opportunities for knowledge and skill-based industries, but land-based industries, upon which the U.P. was founded (forestry, agriculture, mining, fishing) are still important today. Mining was the foundation for Gwinn, the model town, and is still an active industry in the larger Marquette County area, with the Eagle and Tilden mines employing many who reside in Forsyth Township. Unfortunately, land-based industries are particularly subject to market changes and sustainability practices, making longevity hard to predict. Heavy reliance on relatively few land-based industries may leave the community less resilient when faced with significant economic shocks, such as a mine closure. It would be beneficial for local leaders to seek opportunities for industry diversification to increase local employment. One such diversification tactic is to lean into the natural beauty of the township, and to promote tourism and outdoor recreation opportunities.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Planning Commission, along with the results of the community survey, recognizes the following strategic priorities that guide and prioritize the following goals and objectives for future economic development.

Industry Diversification

Industry diversification is a strategy that seeks to grow the output, workforce, and wages of new and emerging industries in regions where few larger industries dominate the economy. Diversification of industries, similar to investment planning, can result in reduced potential losses and greater potential for rapid recovery when impacted by economic shocks, such as the Great Recession of 2008 and the COVID-19 Pandemic. According to EMSI, Economic Modeling Specialists International, which provides high-quality employment data and economic analysis via web tools and reports, the highest industry cluster in the county is Non-Function Employment, meaning, service-based uncategorized industries such as food service and retail, numbering over 16,000 jobs in 2020 (figure 5.1). Knowledge-Intensive Business Services is the next highest industry cluster, followed closely by Higher Education. Agriculture and Natural Resource extraction is still high up on the list, but only employs about 5% of the local workforce. Mining remains a current staple of Marquette County industries, but is expected to continue its downward trend. Figure 24 shows the employment rates of the County along with the national average. Marquette County has many more employees than the national average, but there has been a 26% drop in growth over 2015-2020, and is projected to fall another 20% by 2025.

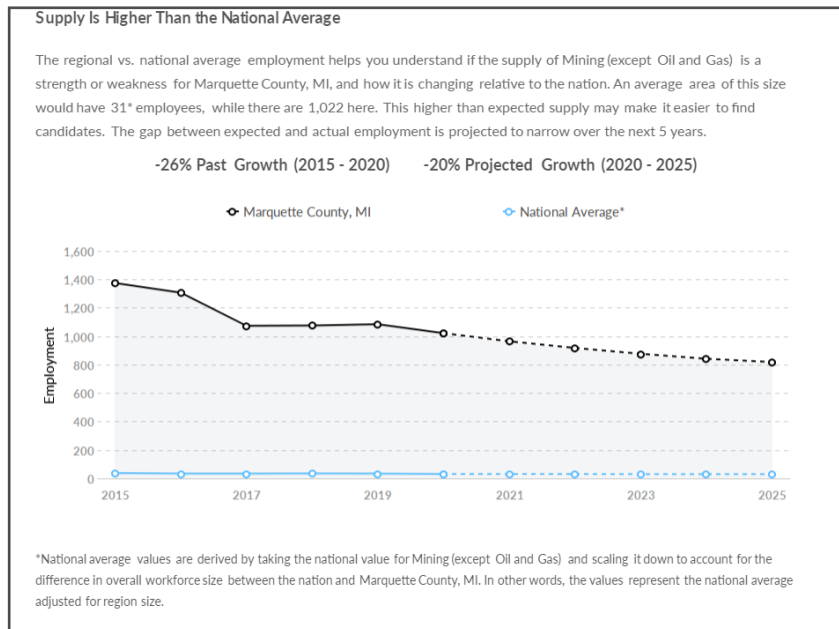


FIGURE 5.1: MINING INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT RATES, SOURCE: EMSI, 2020

A breakdown of those currently employed in the mining industry by age in figure 25 shows that most employees are between the ages of 35 and 54, with almost a quarter of those being over 55. This suggests that those in the mining industry may stay until they retire. These figures also suggest that young people are not relying on employment in the mining industry but may be searching elsewhere for more sustainable and reliable opportunities. The decline of the mining industry ultimately means less entry-level family-wage jobs for the residents of Marquette County. While mining remains an important industry in Marquette County, it is not sustainable nor dependable for future generations as the natural resources in the area are limited and finite.

There has been a recent shift away from mining and manufacturing from 2020 onwards, with management and technical services industries growing the fastest (figure 5.2). The top growing occupations meanwhile include management, transportation and material moving, and business/financial operations. Transportation and material moving occupations

are quickly outpacing the rest, with the number of positions reaching over 140 in Marquette County alone. This suggests that skills and experience are vital when seeking specialized or management positions.



FIGURE 5.2: TOP GROWING OCCUPATIONS AND INDUSTRIES, MARQUETTE COUNTY
SOURCE: ECONOMIC MODELING SPECIALISTS INTERNATIONAL (EMSI), 2020

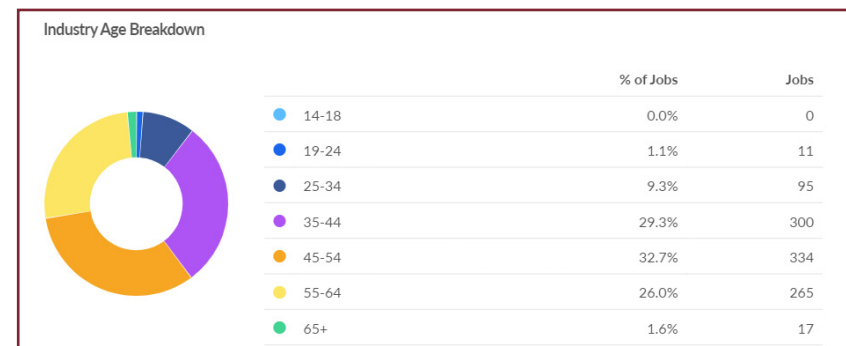


FIGURE 5.3: MINING INDUSTRY AGE BREAKDOWN
SOURCE: ECONOMIC MODELING SPECIALISTS INTERNATIONAL (EMSI), 2020

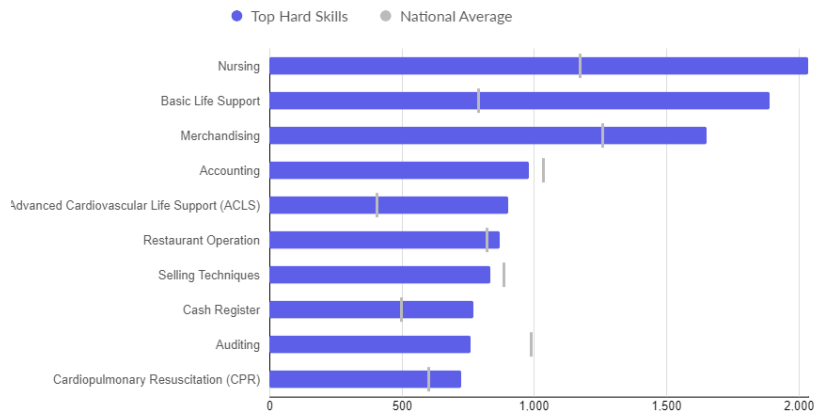


FIGURE 5.4 TOP HARD SKILLS VS NATIONAL AVERAGE, MARQUETTE COUNTY
SOURCE: ECONOMIC MODELING SPECIALISTS INTERNATIONAL (EMSI), 2020

Figure 5.4 shows the top Hard Skills in Marquette County compared to the National Average. Hard skills refer to the job-related knowledge and abilities that employees need to perform their job duties effectively. Soft skills are the personal qualities that make an employee successful, such as personal relations, collaboration, and time management. Hard skills show the level of training and specialization an employee needs to be eligible for certain occupations.

Nursing is the top hard skill for Marquette County, followed closely by Basic Life Support and Merchandising. All of these skills exceed the national average, and is indicative of the importance of the health sector in the County and those who support it.

Accounting, Selling Techniques, and Auditing are hard skills where Marquette County falls behind the National Average, but are not vastly important for the region's economy. Growing skills in a workforce is often a necessary and difficult task, especially when there is a major shift in industries, like in Marquette County.

Forsyth Township in particular has a strong base in manufacturing industries, as discussed in Chapter 3, along with strong values on educational attainment. Talent and skill pipelines can make a large impact and often seek to reach high school and college students.

Talent & Skill Pipeline Development

Talent and skill pipelines are a method of keeping and maintaining a pool of talented and skilled workers, ready to fill in employment and knowledge gaps in a certain industry. Pipelines can be built with the help of local employers, schools, and other community driven or economic development organizations. These pipelines can also help support emerging industries, such as the tech industry, remote working, and outdoor recreation. Figure 5.5 shows an example process in which an economic developer, higher education institution, or a local employer can start to develop a highly skilled and already trained pool of potential employees. First an industry is selected and their needs are assessed. Where are they lacking? What sorts of positions need to be filled either now or in the near future? Develop training programs and/ or credentials to meet those specific needs. Recruitment starts, often at the high school level, for interested students. The candidates that complete the program are now hire-ready and strengthen the local economy. By forming mutually beneficial partnerships with local businesses and industries, the local economy can be strengthened with potential workers while encouraging the future workforce (students) to stay in the area. These pipelines can provide a clear path from school to career and are an investment in specially trained individuals for companies. Likewise, outside of traditional career paths, entrepreneurship and business incubators also have the potential to create further jobs and opportunities. These activities could also be supported

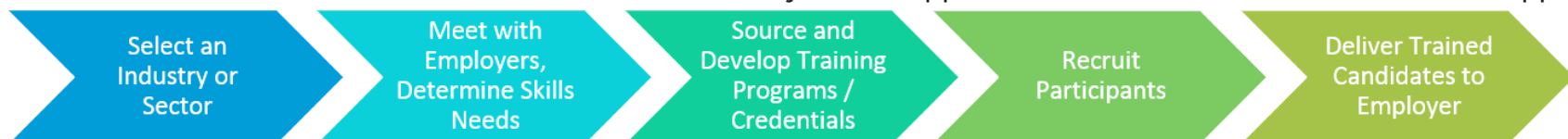


FIGURE 5.5: TALENT AND SKILL PIPELINE EXAMPLE

using a pipeline or other services offered by the local SmartZone or employee resources such as Michigan Works.

Outdoor Recreation

Outdoor recreation has recently been recognized as an emerging and growing industry cluster, especially in Marquette County. Tourism and service-based jobs and industries are readily available, but due to their seasonal nature, these sectors are difficult to sustain a community on its own. However, following the COVID-19 Pandemic, Marquette County, along with much of Michigan, saw increased tourism and visitors, often overwhelming outdoor recreational capacities and threatening sustainability practices for popular facilities and attractions.

The Bureau of Economic Analysis calculates the economic output nationwide for outdoor recreation is \$689 billion, surpassing other industries such as mining, farming, and manufacturing. Since then, outdoor recreation has played an increasingly important role in supporting economic growth in the United States. Harnessing this industry growth for destination states, like Michigan, could be a strong economic driver for prosperity and quality of life.

As demand for outdoor recreation increases, so does the region's ability to grow this industry responsibly and sustainably. Forsyth Township is at a unique vantage point in the U.P. and could increase the availability and quality of outdoor attractions, capturing tourists who value the distinctive amenities the township has to offer. The township could also attract repeat visitors who have already visited the more popular places such as Munising and Marquette, or those who prefer their great outdoor adventures without crowds of people.

At this time in 2025, township leaders have recognized the need for increased maintenance and capacity in the surrounding area and have outlined ongoing and future projects more specifically in the Parks and Recreation Plan (2024). Some proposed projects include renovating Banshee Park and addressing the community need for non-motorized trails with regional connections. The proximity to trails, lakes, and camping amenities make Forsyth Township a near perfect destination for outdoor recreation opportunities no matter the season.

Communities across Michigan recognize that outdoor recreation supports health, contributes to a high quality of life and—perhaps most importantly—attracts and sustains employers and families. Outdoor recreation in Michigan is a real and steady economic driver, especially in the Upper Peninsula.

In Michigan, outdoor recreation annually generates:



**\$26.6 BILLION in
consumer spending**



232,000 direct jobs



**\$2.1 BILLION in state and
local tax revenue**



**\$7.5 BILLION in wages
and salaries**

FIGURE 5.6: OUTDOOR RECREATION IN MICHIGAN VALUES
SOURCE: MICHIGAN OFFICE OF OUTDOOR RECREATION INDUSTRY, 2021

GOALS + OBJECTIVES

Goal 5.1: Develop and facilitate a strategic plan for community ownership and meaningful redevelopment at K.I. Sawyer.

Objective 5.1.1: Continue to support K.I. Sawyer's initiatives to develop a strategic plan for base redevelopment.

Objective 5.1.2: Facilitate community input events and workshops to gather information and ideas to address possible new uses to fill in community gaps.

Objective 5.1.3: Continue to support the Sawyer Operations Authority for community cohesion.

Objective 5.1.4: Support beautification efforts in K.I. Sawyer to empower residents and fight blight.

Objective 5.1.5: Consider hosting Town Hall style meetings that rotate locations to strengthen communication between township leaders and community members.

Objective 5.1.6: Support the use of a Commercial Rehabilitation District (CRD)* in K.I. Sawyer to encourage redevelopment and revitalization of commercial properties.

Objective 5.1.7: Collaborate with West Branch Township on a cohesive management plan for K.I. Sawyer's amenities, utilities, and overall future planning.

Goal 5.2: Attract and grow small business owners and opportunities while supporting entrepreneurs.

Objective 5.2.1: The Planning Commission will periodically review the zoning code to determine where possibilities exist for incorporating new light and small industry uses within appropriate zoning districts.

Objective 5.2.2: Review contemporary data on locational advantages as it relates to emerging outdoor recreation industries to foster opportunities.

Objective 5.2.3: Continue to support community based organizations and nonprofits on their local business development partnerships and initiatives.



LOCAL BUSINESS: DAISY JO'S

Goal 5.3: Support workforce development and foster youth retention in local careers.

Objective 5.3.1: Collaborate with local schools and employers to identify industry needs and develop a program or pipeline of training or certification to help set up students for local future job success.

Objective 5.3.2: Identify gaps in social services that prevent working families from thriving, such as childcare and transportation.

Objective 5.3.3: Connect schools with Career Technical Education services to provide in-demand specific skills training.

Objective 5.3.4: Collaborate and foster youth retention through local job fairs, mentorship programs, or scholarship opportunities.



LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS BUILDING A SAUNA AS PART OF A BUILDING TRADES CLASS, 2024

Goal 5.4: Improve the diversity of industries and employment opportunities by building on existing strengths, locational advantages, and emerging opportunities.

Objective 5.4.1: Partner with Marquette County and regional economic development organizations to start attracting new industries suited to the area's assets.

Objective 5.4.2: Consider creating incentives for new businesses, home-based businesses, and remote-friendly businesses.

Objective 5.4.3: Get involved and stay in contact with local and regional recreation entities including the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for updates, opportunities, and best practices.

Objective 5.4.4: Consider ways to assist new recreation-based business and retail incubation and support soft or trial openings to encourage new and varied businesses.



KAYAKING CATARACT BASIN
IMAGE CREDIT: RYAN LIPINSKI

Goal 5.5: Foster inclusive economic growth through the pursuit of digital equity.

Objective 5.5.1: Continue to support and expand broadband access to all township residences.

Objective 5.5.2: Improve connectivity infrastructure and updated equipment for schools, library, public buildings, and community based non-profits.

Objective 5.5.3: Encourage and facilitate technology learning opportunities for groups who may need extra assistance such as seniors, low-income residents, and job seekers.

Objective 5.5.4: Consider high-impact amenities for guests and residents such as free community wifi in a centralized and easily accessible location.



DIGITAL EQUITY

Goal 5.6: Develop and enhance tourism and outdoor recreation as an economic driver.

Objective 5.6.1: Support community based organizations and nonprofits in their work to enhance local recreational attractions and amenities.

Objective 5.6.2: Foster and advertise community events to include all ages, like Concerts in the Park.

Objective 5.6.3: Support activities that strengthen the small town identity of the Forsyth Township community, such as Gwinn Fun Daze and Sawyer Summer Sizzle.

Objective 5.6.4: Identify and address recreational gaps in the township such as lack of signage on trails, outdated and unkempt parks, and lack of safe walking trails.

Objective 5.6.5: Explore the possibilities of recreation grant opportunities and public-private partnerships to drive new projects forward.



SECOND ANNUAL SAWYER SUMMER SIZZLE



6

Natural Resources, Environment, and Energy

Forsyth Township is fortunate to be surrounded by an abundance of largely undeveloped beautiful natural features. These are the features that have the potential to draw in visitors and outdoor enthusiasts. Seemingly endless possibilities exist for recreation during all four seasons of the year. The entire Upper Peninsula has been seeing record numbers of visitors and tourists, here to take in all that we have to offer. However, with this influx comes a responsibility to take care of the community, the environment, and the natural resources that make the township so special.

As the global economy and climate changes, industries using fossil fuels are particularly vulnerable to economic shockwaves. This makes it more important than ever to adopt sustainable practices for energy longevity and to protect our environment for future generations.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Planning Commission, along with the results of the community survey, recognizes the following strategic priorities that guide the following goals and objectives.

Low-Impact Approaches to Development

Low-Impact Development (LID) is a term that refers to the development precautions and structural best practices when engaging in the development of land which attempts to allow a site to function in a state as close as possible to its pre-developed state. For example, existing

soils, vegetation, and mature trees may be protected from encroachment on unused portions of the development site. Part of the benefits of these practices are ensuring healthy stormwater drainage, preserving natural habitats, and preserving the character of the natural landscape that makes our home so unique. LID is not a “one size fits all” approach, nor is it a solution to every environmental problem, but it can be used as a tool for communities to preserve their natural environment and become more resilient in the face of extreme weather events such as storms or flooding.

Growing Renewable Energy Capacity

As the cost to distribute energy from non-renewable sources grows high and the efficiency and prices of renewable technologies improves, it is worth considering updates to infrastructure and amenities that are ultimately less expensive, renewable, and sustainable. Forsyth Township is served by the Upper Peninsula Power Company (UPPCO) who recently announced an ambitious goal of approximately 50% of its energy generation to come from renewable resources by the year 2028, with 100% by 2040. This goal aligns well with the State of Michigan’s Renewable and Clean Energy Standards. Local governments can assist with these goals by adopting compatible renewable energy ordinances to guide the development and acceptance of both large and small scale solar projects. Some possibilities for such projects include rooftops of homes and businesses, vacant lots,

and even repurposed parking lots. Encouraging assessments of current energy use and upgrading to more energy efficient devices can also help reach this goal, while saving residents money.

Materials Management

Responsible materials management is an important component of environmental stewardship and community sustainability in Forsyth Township. **Materials management** refers to the systems used to reduce, reuse, recycle, and properly dispose of waste generated by residents and businesses. Effective management of these materials helps conserve natural resources, reduce landfill use, protect groundwater and surface water quality, and support a cleaner and healthier community.

Forsyth Township participates in regional materials management efforts coordinated through the Marquette County Solid Waste Management Authority, which provides waste disposal services, recycling opportunities, and programs for the proper handling of materials such as household hazardous waste, electronics, and other specialty items. By working through a countywide system, residents have access to responsible disposal options while reducing the need for additional local infrastructure.

These efforts also align with the goals of the Michigan Materials Management Plan, which encourages communities across the state to reduce waste, increase recycling, and shift toward a more sustainable materials management system. The statewide plan emphasizes the importance of diverting materials from landfills, improving recycling access, and promoting education and outreach to help residents make informed disposal decisions.

Continued participation in regional programs and alignment with state materials management goals will help Forsyth Township manage waste responsibly while protecting the natural resources that define the community. Supporting recycling opportunities, promoting proper disposal practices,

and working with regional partners will remain important as the township grows and as materials management practices continue to evolve.

Prioritizing Environmental Protections

As a potential destination for outdoor-based recreation of all kinds, it is invariably important to promote balanced and responsible growth and development. Preserving the wild spaces within the township should be a priority, balancing with potential economic and community development opportunities. Simple steps, such as allowing residents to have native plant and pollinator gardens can have a big impact. Community information campaigns against garbage dumping or littering can also serve to protect the beauty of the local environment. It is strongly recommended that Forsyth Township take part in the Central UP initiative for responsible and profitable materials management.

Strong environmental safeguards not only protect public health from documented contamination risks but also support the township's economic resilience by preserving the clean water and pristine natural environments that attract new residents and businesses while sustaining the community's successful adaptation from extractive industries to more sustainable economic activities.



FLY FISHING ON THE ESCANABA RIVER; IMAGE CREDIT: FORSYTH FORWARD

GOALS + OBJECTIVES

Goal 6.1: Promote, encourage, and facilitate widespread adoption of renewable energy systems across residential, commercial, and municipal sectors.

Objective 6.1.1: Review municipal buildings and ordinance codes for potential barriers to development of renewable energy technologies and improve upon any outdated or overly burdensome regulations as appropriate.

Objective 6.1.2: Encourage and educate residents, local establishments, schools, and other public sector organizations about cost savings from improved weatherization and energy efficiency upgrades.

Objective 6.1.3: Encourage including energy efficiency and renewable energy requirements during any upgrade, renovation, or new construction of facilities or amenities.

Objective 6.1.4: Consider partnering with regional and state entities such as UPPCO, Marquette County, and Michigan Energy Options to create a comprehensive energy plan for the township, aligned with state goals.



EXAMPLE OF SOLAR PANELS ON RESIDENCE

Goal 6.2: Coordinate with regional partners to promote responsible materials management and environmental stewardship.

Objective 6.2.1: Continue collaboration with regional partners, including the Marquette County Solid Waste Management Authority, to support accessible and responsible waste disposal and recycling opportunities for residents.

Objective 6.2.2: Support regional and statewide initiatives consistent with the Michigan Materials Management Plan that encourage waste reduction, recycling, and responsible materials management.

Objective 6.2.3: Promote community awareness of proper waste disposal, recycling opportunities, and materials diversion programs available to township residents.

Objective 6.2.4: Encourage stewardship of natural areas, roadsides, and public lands through responsible disposal practices and community education.



EXAMPLE OF RECYCLING SORTING FACILITY

Goal 6.3: Protect natural and environmentally sensitive areas with low impact approaches to development and redevelopment.

Objective 6.3.1: Consider creation of a stormwater management plan to reduce problems caused by flooding and erosion.

Objective 6.3.2: Enhance the greenspaces throughout the township through creation of rain gardens, native plantings, swales, and other low impact design elements.

Objective 6.3.3: Increase public knowledge and participation about clean water and lake and river area protections by hosting workshops, community events, and educational campaigns.

Objective 6.3.4: Encourage community leaders and elected officials to engage in trainings and educational opportunities from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) and other local organizations such as the Superior Watershed Partnership (SWP).

Objective 6.3.5: Consider grant funding opportunities to facilitate community-wide garbage and recycling services within the township.

Objective 6.3.6: Consider implementing guidelines for development that preserve the natural environment such as dark sky lighting.

Objective 6.3.7: Consider events such as “Dump Days” to help facilitate the proper disposal of unwanted items.

Goal 6.4: Encourage responsible use and upkeep of public and recreational places within the township by promoting ownership and pride.

Objective 6.4.1: Consider working with local and regional organizations who have successful campaigns in place, such as Travel Marquette with their “Respect Marquette” educational campaign for visitors and residents.

Objective 6.4.2: Coordinate with and support local volunteers and outdoor recreation organizations or clubs to maintain current trails with possibilities of upgrades and expansions.

Objective 6.4.3: Promote Forsyth Township as a destination for adventure and all-season recreational activities and events.



FISHING AT PETER NORDEEN PARK; CREDIT: JENNIFER MANNINEN



Housing + Neighborhoods

Housing is a key factor in planning for a community's future. The availability and affordability of housing directly influences where and how people live, work, and interact with their community and surroundings. Local governments can have an impact on housing through policy, availability of infrastructure and public services, incentives, and quality of life amenities.

Examining trends in housing can reveal some insights into the past while helping communities plan for the future. Over the past several years the housing market has seen higher selling prices, higher rental costs, and less availability leading to higher demand and more competition. In Forsyth Township, as in most rural places, neighborhoods are generally spaced far apart and are unique in their positioning and challenges. According to the community survey, the challenges mentioned the most were the empty buildings at K.I. Sawyer, general blight within neighborhoods, and the lack of available affordable housing options. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the housing market has been experiencing unique trends. Demand is high, but so are prices, for owning and renting alike. In late 2024, thanks to a grant from the Housing Readiness Program from Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA), Forsyth Township underwent an extensive housing audit to explore current trends, identify issues and barriers related to future development, and to explore possible remedies and solutions that align with state and regional goals.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Planning Commission, along with the results of the community survey, recognizes the following strategic priorities that guide and prioritize the following goals and objectives for future community development.

Responsive to Community Needs and Perceptions

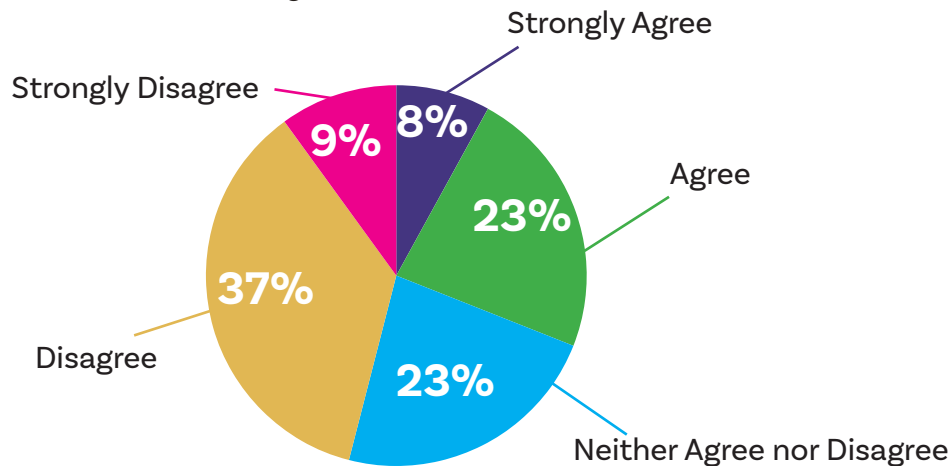
Demand for quality housing is quickly outpacing available stock for homeowners and renters alike, driving up prices. Most Upper Peninsula communities are experiencing this same trend. According to the community survey, Forsyth Township residents are most concerned about the ratio of short-term or vacation rentals (STRs), multi-unit housing options, and providing an appropriate mix of single-family housing. 46% of survey respondents indicated that the current mix of housing is not appropriate to meet demand in the area. This suggests that residents are open to more diverse housing options that fit their needs. 50% of survey respondents indicated that they would agree with more multi-unit housing options. This suggests that Forsyth Township is experiencing a deficit in “missing middle” housing.

“Missing Middle” is a term that refers to housing types that are not commonly present in Michigan communities and typically include such forms as mixed-use loft apartments above a commercial business, townhouses and rowhouses, duplexes, and possibly apartment buildings that would fit into current neighborhoods. In Forsyth Township, the growth of such missing middle housing could appeal to those who find themselves priced out of the current market. Smaller living spaces such as cottages, tiny homes, and modular housing could appeal to certain segments of the population, such as retirees looking to downsize, empty-nesters, or young professionals.

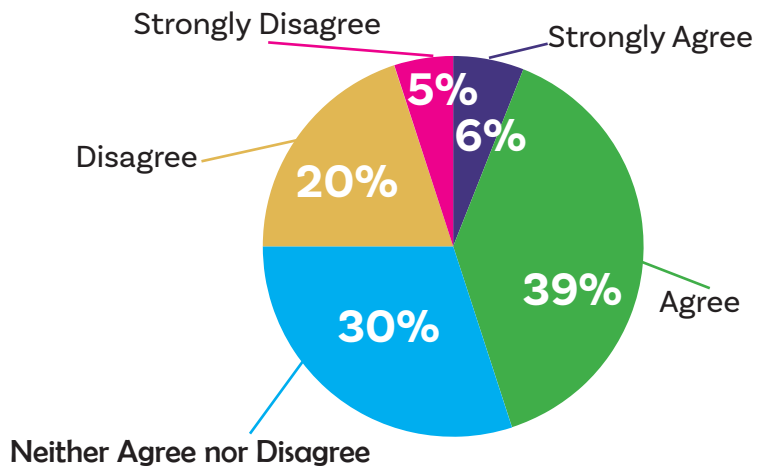
According to the community survey, 45% of respondents agree that the amount of STRs within the Township are

According to the Community Survey, Residents Think..

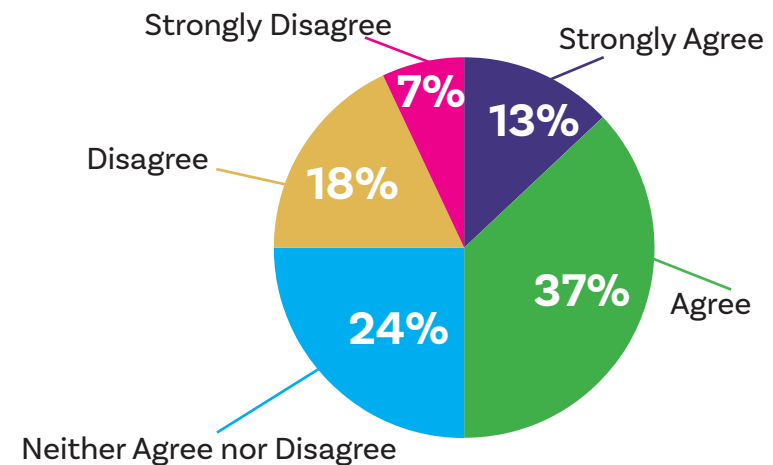
Housing Mix is Appropriate to Meet Community Need



Amount of STRs are Appropriately Balanced with Residences



More Diverse and/or Multi-Unit Housing is Needed



appropriately balanced. Only 25% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. Community perception leans toward having an appropriate mix, but more education may be needed for the general public.

At the time of this publication, Forsyth Township requires all STRs to be licensed and registered with the township. Right now, the rate of STRs to permanent residents is 1%. According to the US Census Bureau's definitions, this rate is consistent with similar rural communities seeing low tourism, suggesting that the township has room to grow in this regard. However, it should be a continued priority of the township to keep STRs regulated and within acceptable limits.

Tourism Type*	STR Ratio
Low Tourism	1-3%
Moderate Tourism	5-10%
High Tourism	15-20%

Preserve and Enhance Housing Stock

Like many areas of the rural Upper Peninsula, most of the current housing stock in Forsyth Township was built between 1960 and 1980. Approximately 56% of homes in the township were built before 1970, indicating a significant portion of homes are aging, requiring specialized maintenance, modernization, or accessibility renovations. The addition of the KI Sawyer Air Force Base in 1956 created a housing boom when soldiers and their families needed places to live. Since the closure, much of these houses were neglected to the point of disrepair. Forsyth Township currently has strong local ordinances regarding blighted buildings and junk accumulation, and in 2024 changed from a complaint driven process to proactive prevention.

New home build permits within Marquette County (figure 7.1) have dropped within recent years, especially when compared to the years before the 2008 housing bubble, when home prices dropped then rose quickly and lending practices were questionable. COVID-19 highlighted the national housing

shortage. Many people desired to move to less populous places, interest rates were lowered, and the nature of office-work changed, allowing for more remote working opportunities. Building materials went up in price due to supply chain disruptions and lockdowns. These prices and demands have not significantly changed in recent years.

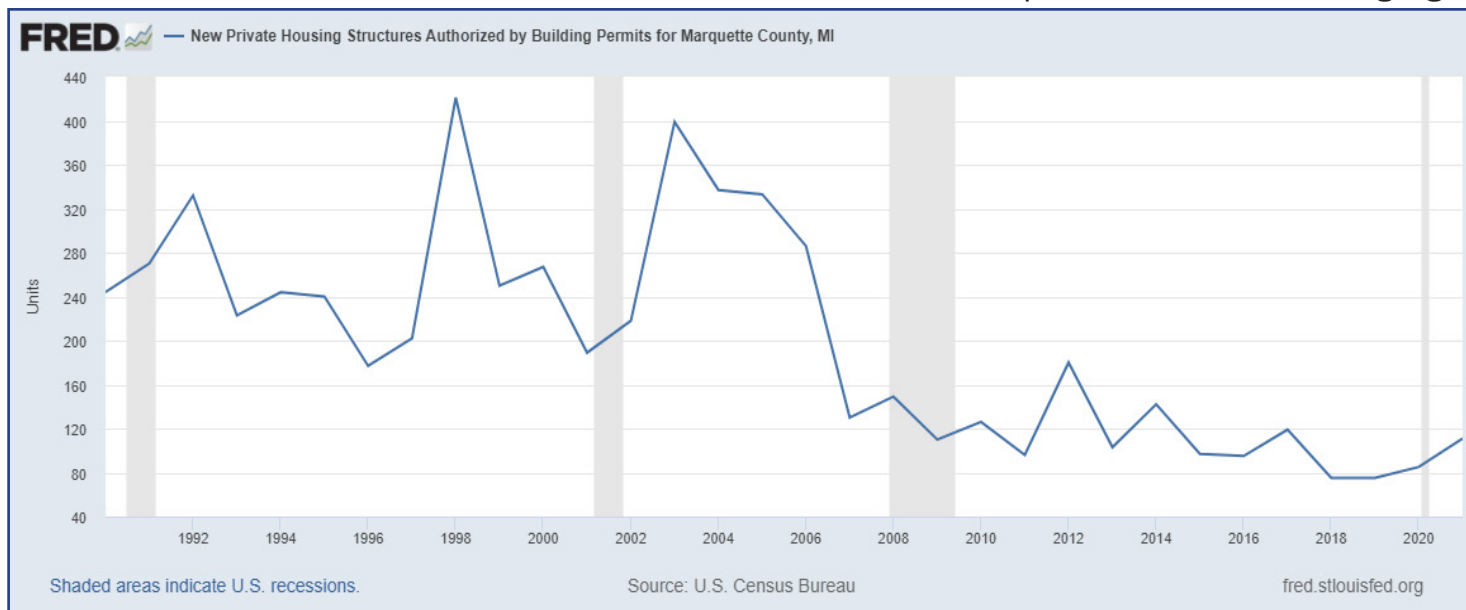


FIGURE 7.1: *SOURCE: USCENSUS.GOV; FEDERAL RESERVE ECONOMIC DATA, FRED, 2022

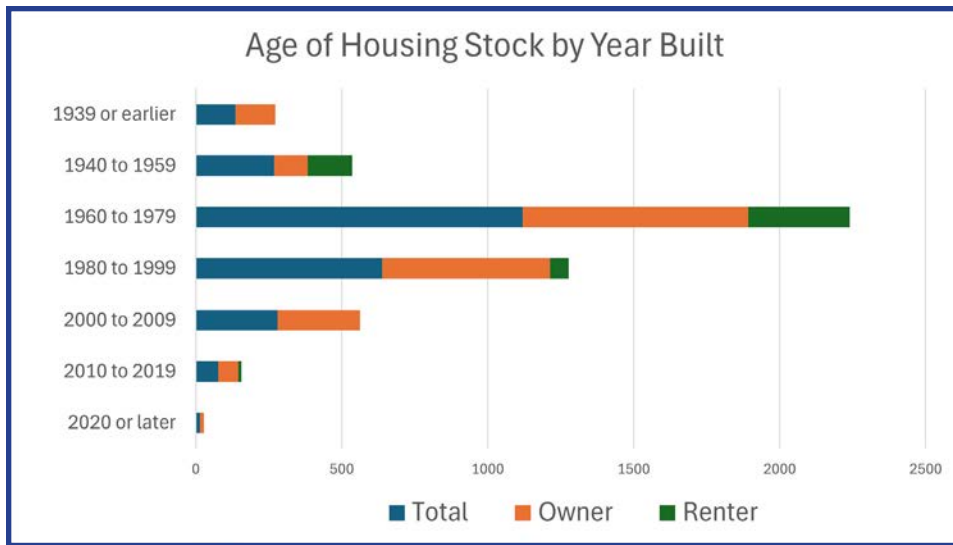


FIGURE 7.2: AGE OF HOUSING STOCK BY YEAR BUILT, US CENSUS 2022

Along with aging housing stock and blighted properties, Forsyth Township has the added challenge of being relatively spread out, as rural townships often are. Neighborhoods are few and far between, with Gwinn being the exception. Desirable neighborhoods are those in which every citizen has access to affordable housing and high quality public institutions, amenities, and infrastructure. Walkability and access to public transportation are also highly desirable and making plans to address these issues in neighborhoods could not only enhance quality of life for citizens, but could also add to the attractiveness of the area to new residents.

The township could benefit from a concerted effort to improve the quality of existing housing stock. Utilizing a home repair grant program or similar program could assist property owners with completing much needed updates, renovations, and beautification projects that might otherwise be out of financial reach. More housing developments focused on affordable properties for renters and seniors would begin to address some of the discrepancy on housing availability.

Diverse Housing Options

Forsyth Township has many different housing types, but the majority is made up of single-family homes, or 1-unit detached. A one-unit detached housing unit is a standalone residential structure designed to house a single family or household. It is physically separated from other buildings, meaning it does not share walls, floors, or ceilings with any other dwelling units. It typically involves its own parcel of land with open space (yards) around it. Over 65% of the township's housing stock fits this description and is often cost-prohibitive to young families and seniors.

Diverse housing types can increase affordability and availability for those who find themselves priced out of homeownership. Duplexes currently make up only 5% of housing stock in the township, while triplexes and fourplexes only account for roughly 1%. Buildings containing 5 or more units, usually apartment buildings, make up 12% of housing stock in the township. Mobile homes make up the last 10% of housing stock.

Home Types in Forsyth Township

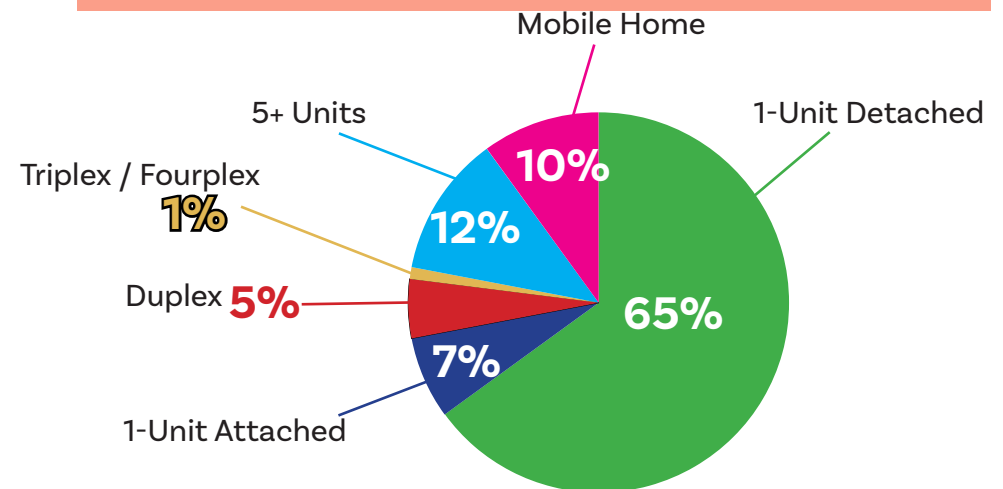


FIGURE 7.3: HOME TYPES IN FORSYTH TOWNSHIP, US CENSUS 2022

As part of the MSHDA funded Housing Readiness Program audit, the zoning ordinance was reviewed to identify barriers to new housing developments including zoning district descriptions, allowed housing typologies, and reviewing the site plan approval process for unnecessary or redundant policies. It was found that there were no significant barriers to development at the local zoning level. Forsyth Township's zoning ordinance is strong and developer friendly, allowing many kinds of uses. The Future Land Use Plan (chapter 10) goes into further detail regarding land uses as it pertains to zoning.

However, other barriers to housing development and typology diversity were identified during this process. In Forsyth Township, the availability and cost of basic infrastructure is a high barrier to development. Certain parts of the township do not have water and sewer access at all, the parts that do are experiencing rising water rates, and electricity costs are incredibly high when compared to other parts of the county. The rural nature of the township makes it more difficult for developers to develop, along with the rising costs of building materials in recent years seem to be the most significant barrier. To gain new builds, the township could consider extending utilities to buildable parcels if feasible.

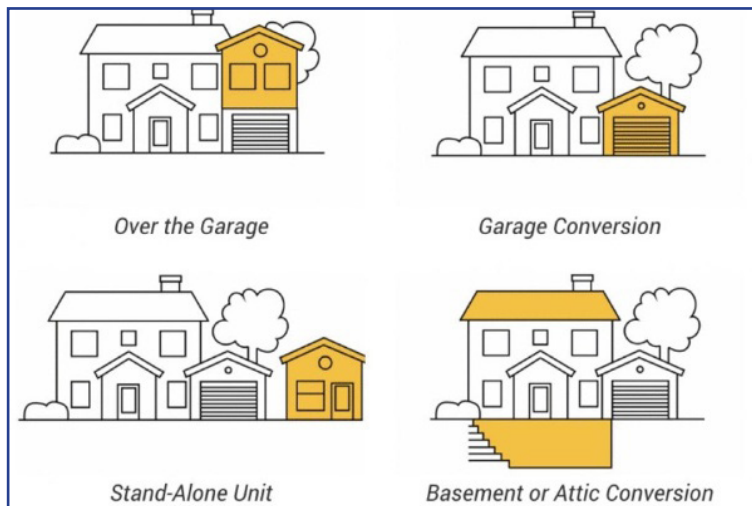


FIGURE 7.4: ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT EXAMPLES
SOURCE: MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING, PAROLEK, 2020



FIGURE 7.5: A TINY HOME COTTAGE COURT EXAMPLE

Working with township leaders, the following recommendations to increase housing options were made following the best practices and data provided by the American Planning Association, the Michigan State Housing Development Authority, and aligning with county, regional, and state goals. Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) such as mother-in-law apartments or above garage living units, will be allowed within the township with a conditional use permit. The mixed-use district will be expanded to encourage new businesses and housing, allowing for a variety of mixed-use development. A critical component of mixed-use development is that it combines community needs (access to housing, employment, basic goods and services, public spaces) with walkability and public transportation. Tiny homes (those under 400 square feet) and modular homes could be a good fit for some Forsyth Township residents and are already allowed. A cottage court of tiny homes with public amenities could be more desirable and visually appealing to new residents looking to locate within the township, or could be suitable for vacation rentals.

Diverse housing options will also serve to increase affordability, by offering different housing types at different price points. According to Homes.com, the median home price in the township in January 2024 was around \$119,500. In January 2025, however, the median home price was around \$201,150, marking

a **68.3% increase** over one year alone. In the broader Marquette County, home prices are higher but reflect only an overall 9.3% increase.

The current supply of housing does not meet demand. Homes are selling quickly, at record prices. In April of 2025, a 3-bedroom home sold for \$120,000 after 8 days on the market. A 4-bedroom on Little Lake sold for \$340,000 after 7 days on the market. The township should consider future housing developments that center around senior living, young families, and others that may be in need of rentals or transitional housing. Large apartment complexes may be out-of-character for the township, but alternatives that fit within the community could be considered, such as duplexes and four-plexes.

According to the Marquette County Housing Needs Assessment (2020), seniors are the fastest growing group of homeowners in recent years. About one-third of all households are headed by someone of retirement age. Seniors may need more assistance with mobility upgrades, such as access ramps, and have more specialized healthcare needs, making proximity to hospitals and services more important than ever.



FIGURE 7.6: EXAMPLE OF A RESIDENTIAL FOUR-PLEX

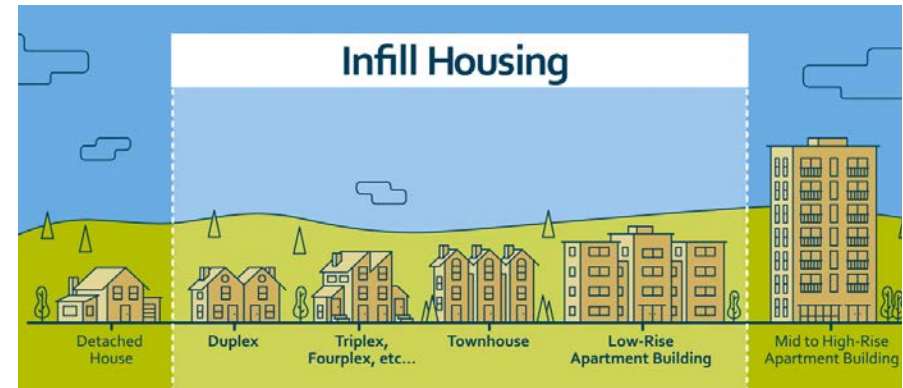


FIGURE 7.7: INFILL HOUSING EXAMPLES
SOURCE: MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING, PAROLEK, 2020

Special considerations should be made when approving site development for shared housing. These considerations include appropriate amenities, such as a play park for children or a social gathering area for residents with picnic amenities. These may seem like small additions, but are an excellent tool to fostering community bonds between residents.

Infill development could be another useful tool to increase housing density and affordability. Infill development refers to the process of developing vacant or underused parcels within the populated parts of the township, rather than expanding outward with new development. Oftentimes, this can be filling in vacant residential spaces, but it can also mean redevelopment of current usable structures. Renovation and adaptive reuse of current buildings can be much more feasible and cost-efficient than new construction, labor, and materials. Infill development also promotes mixed-use neighborhoods, raises property values, and can preserve and protect green spaces within the township. Successful infill development requires collaboration between developers, local government, and members of the community to ensure that it aligns with overall goals and vision for sustainable growth.

Overall, the township is well-poised to draw in new residents due to the relative affordability in comparison to the City of Marquette and neighboring cities of Ishpeming and Negaunee.

GOALS + OBJECTIVES

Goal 7.1: Increase the stock of quality affordable, attainable, and market-rate housing that meets the needs and incomes of Forsyth Township residents.

Objective 7.1.1: Collaborate with the Marquette County Land Bank and local developers to facilitate redevelopment of tax-foreclosed, vacant, and underutilized properties.

Objective 7.1.2: Encourage development of mixed-use, workforce, and missing middle housing projects.

Objective 7.1.3: Encourage infill development, cluster subdivisions, and creative lot use in appropriate zoning districts.

Objective 7.1.4: Explore the creation of a local housing trust fund or other financing mechanisms with county or regional partners to support affordability initiatives.

Objective 7.1.5: Support access to first-time homebuyer education, down payment assistance, and credit counseling in partnership with state and regional programs.

Objective 7.1.6: Coordinate with local landlords and other model organizations to engage in best practices and accountability measures to ensure quality rentals.

Objective 7.1.7: Continue to enforce registration of short term rentals to keep the STR ratio within desirable limits.

Goal 7.2: Strengthen and improve neighborhoods in Forsyth Township by encouraging and incentivizing home updates made by homeowners.

Objective 7.2.1: Seek grants to develop a housing rehabilitation strategy to assist homeowners with repair, energy efficiency upgrades, and safety improvements.

Objective 7.2.2: Monitor housing conditions township-wide to prioritize reinvestment areas and resource allocation when possible.

Objective 7.2.3: Consider creation of a housing committee to keep a boots-on-the-ground approach to local housing issues.

Objective 7.2.4: Continue to enforce the township's zoning ordinance regarding blight and excessive junk to enhance neighborhood appeal and appearances.



VENTURE POINT APARTMENTS IN GWINN

Goal 7.3: Promote, enhance, and strengthen the ability of older adults to age in place where they wish to stay.

Objective 7.3.1: Incentivize and promote development and creation of local senior housing, assisted living centers, and other aging-friendly facilities with universal design features (zero-step entries, wider doorways, single-floor living) or ADA complaint features.

Objective 7.3.2: Support accessibility projects and renovations to elder-owned homes, including access ramps and ground floor amenities.

Objective 7.3.3: Facilitate partnerships with local and regional service providers to enhance and integrate support services for seniors such as tele-health services and meals-on-wheels.



VOLUNTEERS BUILDING ACCESS RAMP

Goal 7.4: Coordinate housing growth with infrastructure availability and proximity to social and community services.

Objective 7.4.1: Promote walkability by clustering housing developments near amenities and destinations such as parks and schools.

Objective 7.4.2: Foster collaboration between public and private sectors to encourage local investment in affordable housing projects in desirable locations.

Objective 7.4.3: Identify and prioritize housing development in areas with existing water, sewer, road, and broadband infrastructure.

Objective 7.4.4: Perform a regular review of the zoning ordinance to further streamline potential housing developments and desirable housing typologies for the township.



TOWNHOUSES 51



Quality of Life

This chapter addresses the features, amenities, experiences, and conditions that collectively make Forsyth Township a desirable place to live. Quality of life is important for resident longevity and general health. It impacts future residents, children, the elderly, visitors, and everyone in between. What makes Forsyth Township special? How can we create a great place that retains its citizens, has opportunities for youth, and draws in new families? What can we do as a community to make the overall population more happy, healthy, and safe? These are the big questions that we attempt to find solutions to as we engage in meaningful community development over the coming years to create and maintain a vibrant and desirable place to live.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Planning Commission, along with the results of the community survey, recognizes the following strategic priorities that guide and prioritize the following goals and objectives.

Recreational Assets and Walkability

Forsyth Township is positioned within a wealth of recreational assets. Whether on land, water, ice or snow the township's recreational assets are a draw for visitors and important for residents to connect with nature and each other.

Walkability refers to how safe, practical, and convenient an area is for pedestrian traffic. A walkable community is characterized by a well-connected street network, a mix of land uses, and pedestrian infrastructure such as sidewalks, wayfinding signage, curb ramps, crosswalks

and more. High levels of walkability contribute to public health, decrease reliance on motor vehicles, and enhanced local economic vitality. Surveys conducted by the Urban Land Institute and the National Association of Realtors reveal a growing number of Americans prefer walkable access to daily needs, public spaces, and amenities. These preferences are reflected in real estate demand, rising property values, and rising interest in mixed use developments.

Engaging Public Spaces

When properly maintained and well-used public spaces can contribute significantly to community vitality and vibrancy. by enhancing and investing in public spaces, these actions tend to have the effect of encouraging private investment in nearby properties. Placemaking is a term that means creating places where people want to be and focuses on transforming public spaces to strengthen connections between place and people.

Placemaking is centered on people and their needs, aspirations, desires, visions, and build upon community participation. Forsyth Township could benefit from mapping the current public spaces and placemaking assets, then determine where and how it can be enhanced and equitable for all residents.

The Project for Public Spaces foundation has found that in order to be successful, meaningful places need four key elements: Accessibility, Activities, Image, and Sociability. People have to be able to get there, have things to do there, feel safe and comfortable there, and be able to connect with others.

What Makes a Great Place?

Project
for Public
Spaces



FIGURE 8.1: THE PLACE DIAGRAM
WWW.PPS.ORG

Proximity to other desirable places increases foot traffic and when paired with potential local needs identified in the survey (such as a grocery store, laundromat, or coffee shop) could produce a highly visible and desirable destination. Clustering services and businesses near successful Places can create a neighborhood hub, where people go for services, but stay for the company or the chance interactions with friends and neighbors. Having this hub situated in a walkable area can make sure everyone has equitable access. These types of Places offer something for everyone and are welcoming to all age groups.

Increasing Access to Local Food

Access to fresh, healthy, locally grown foods is vitally important to the health and general well-being of our community. As the COVID-19 pandemic revealed, we cannot always rely on traditional outside supply chains for reliable food and other household items. Producing food locally, as in a community garden, could provide nutritious food while teaching residents to grow their own.

Farm-to-School projects, like the successful partnership between Partridge Creek Farm and the Ishpeming Area Schools, could be beneficial in addressing child hunger and obesity. A community garden located at the school could likewise present such opportunities, possibly rooted in curriculum.

The ModelTown Market is an example of local food access, as well as a successful Place.



FIGURE 8.2: THE MODEL TOWN MARKET

GOALS + OBJECTIVES

Goal 8.1: Foster improved walkability and non-motorized connections to local amenities and neighborhoods.

Objective 8.1.1: Conduct a comprehensive assessment of existing sidewalks, addressing issues such as maintenance, accessibility, and continuity to create an improved pedestrian network.

Objective 8.1.2: Identify key destinations such as parks, schools, and businesses and plan and prioritize walking routes from neighborhoods that have the most need

Objective 8.1.3: Seek pedestrian infrastructure improvement grants and Safe Routes to School opportunities to address deteriorating and unsafe sidewalks.

Objective 8.1.4: Coordinate with Marquette County's development of Little Trout Lake and the Wellness Hub to explore walkability connections between Gwinn, K.I. Sawyer, and Little Lake.

Goal 8.2: Improve the health of the Township's residents through increased access to affordable locally grown foods.

Objective 8.2.1: Encourage and expand public knowledge on local zoning regulations regarding small scale agriculture and small livestock in residential areas.

Objective 8.2.2: Increase the participation and reach of the ModelTown Market through grants, fundraising, and partnerships.

Objective 8.2.3: Partner with MSU Extension and Lets Grow KI for healthy food, lifestyle, and educational programs and materials to be distributed at public institutions or in partnership with the Market.

Objective 8.2.4: Explore incentives for encouraging local grocery store development with a focus on locally grown and produced goods.



ANNUAL BIKE TO SCHOOL DAY, 2024



MODEL TOWNE MARKET

Goal 8.3: Foster improved motorized trail upkeep and connections throughout the township.

Objective 8.3.1: Collaborate with groups and businesses to sponsor wayfinding signage, trail maintenance, and cleanup.

Objective 8.3.2: Maintain relationships with local motorized recreation groups and clubs such as Forsyth Township Snowmobile and ATV Club, Team Riders, and the DNR to foster improved safety practices and continual communication on projects and initiatives.

Objective 8.3.3: Continue to support the local industry of motorized sports through trail upkeep and unique events like the annual Mud Prom and Ice Racing.



ANNUAL MUD PROM, 2025

Goal 8.4: Foster and grow a unique sense of place in Forsyth Township through local events that promote that “small town feeling”.

Objective 8.4.1: Continue to host and encourage seasonal events such as Live Music at the Market and the Big 3 Concert Series.

Objective 8.4.2: Partner with local schools, churches, and other local organizations to strengthen participation across all groups.

Objective 8.4.3: Update Forsyth Township branding to promote a cohesive identity and vision across events and promotions.

Objective 8.4.4: Consider annual residential surveys to measure satisfaction and stay aligned with what residents value most.



LIVE MUSIC AT THE MARKET 55

A map of Michigan showing the location of the study area in the Upper Peninsula. The study area is highlighted in red in the western part of the Upper Peninsula.

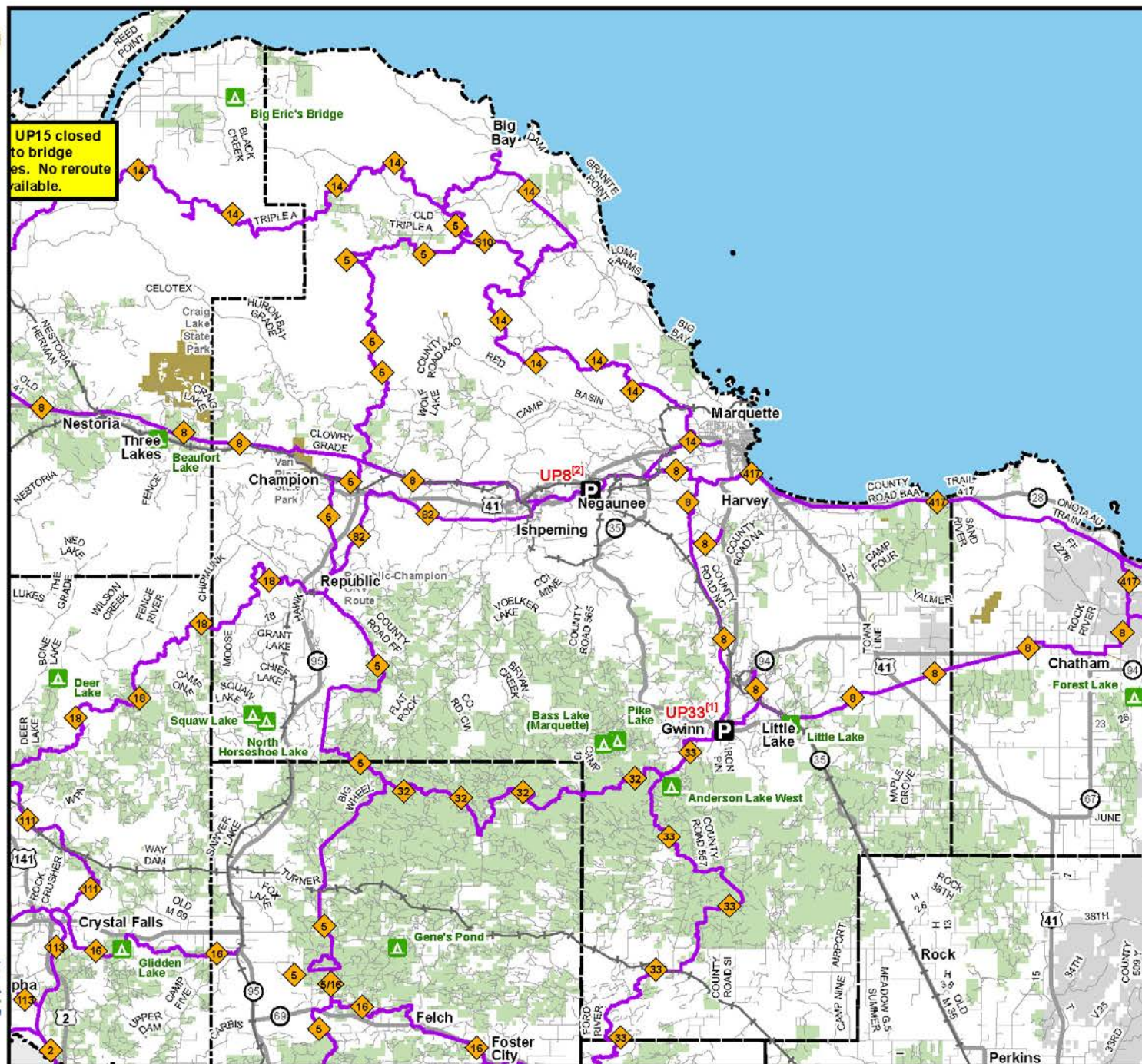


P Parking lot
 State forest campground
 Snowmobile trail
 Highway
 Paved road
 Gravel or dirt road
 Railroad
 State forest land
 State park
 Federal land
 County



**RIDE
— —
RIGHT**

Michigan.gov/Snowmobiling



More information regarding trails and recreation can be found the Forsyth Township Recreation Plan, 2024



Infrastructure + Assets

Community infrastructure and publicly owned facilities are the assets that make modern life possible. It includes our transportation networks, water and sewer lines, government buildings, public spaces, private utilities, and community services that operate oftentimes unnoticed when in working order. However, when any of these essential services become interrupted, community leaders are quick to find out from the public how much of an inconvenience it can be. In the worst case scenarios, the failure of infrastructure can lead to serious consequences for public health and safety, economic setbacks, and legal liability. It is critical that the township and its partners properly maintain and proactively plan for the resiliency these assets of the greater community, and to mitigate the risks that result from failure.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Planning Commission, along with the results of the community survey, recognizes the following strategic priorities that guide and prioritize the following goals and objectives for future community development.

Asset Management and Capital Improvement Planning

What are the assets that we own? What condition are they in and what is their remaining viable lifespan? How will we budget for their repair and replacement in the future? These are some of the questions we ask as we develop a holistic approach to infrastructure management. Asset management is a relatively new practice in Michigan, especially in rural communities. When the anticipated life of a sewer pipe is greater than

the lifespan of your average person, it is reasonable that the party who was responsible for its installation may have overlooked the fact that it may eventually need to be replaced. Nearly a century later we are experiencing these challenges that come with the end-life of many infrastructure assets, particularly water and sewer pipes that have been hidden from view.

An increasingly important tool in planning and budgeting for capital improvements is a Capital Improvements Plan, or CIP. This plan takes stock of current assets, needs, and challenges by ranking each item by importance and urgency. The CIP is formed by community leaders, the planning commission, and other governmental department heads.

Prioritizing Repairs to Existing Assets

Municipal budgets are, unfortunately, not unlimited. Leaders must be fiscally responsible and informed when making decisions that impact the community. For Forsyth Township, many infrastructure maintenance projects should take priority over expanding any services and new developments. These timely repairs are essential to local quality of life and visitor attraction alike. Construction and repairs to these systems can sometimes be streamlined and done at the same time with the help of tools such as the MIC Dig Once Project Portal, (MiDIG*) from the State of Michigan, which allows authorized entities to document ongoing and future infrastructure projects.

Applying for state and federal grants can often alleviate financial concern for larger infrastructure projects, such as pipe replacement. As a best practice, infrastructure repairs should also be implemented first where it is

the worst to protect community members and their safety. The Central Upper Peninsula Planning and Development regional commission (CUPPAD) conducts road rating for central UP communities annually, following the State of Michigan's Transportation Asset Management Council's (TAMC) recommendations using PASER. PASER stands for PAVement Surface Evaluation and Rating, which is a visual audit performed by trained raters who categorize roads from good (green), fair (orange), poor (red). The PASER ratings for 2025 can be found on the map on the next page. This creates an inventory and starting point by identifying the roads in the best and worst conditions.

Complete Streets and Walkability

Complete streets is a concept that recommends roads are designed and operated so they are safe, comfortable, and convenient for all practical users, which may include pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities. This type of policy is not intended to place additional requirements on road redesigns where compatibility is not appropriate, but rather to simply enhance considerations for incorporating improvements for uses to better serve the community. Such an example could include the placement of a high visibility crosswalk in an area where pedestrians are common, or eliminating curbing in areas where wheelchair and stroller access is needed.

Walkability and **walk appeal** are similar concepts that address a community's potential for pedestrian mobility to desirable destinations and the relative safety and comfort of the route. Walkability is usually defined as being within a 5-10 minute walk from essential services and destinations like grocery stores, schools, or churches. Walk appeal refers to the quality and desirability of the walking environment. A walk through a township park is much different than a walk on the side of the highway. A complete streets policy may provide some flexible recommendations that can enhance the prospect and



desirability of non-motorized mobility around the township. It is a well-documented trend that these types of community improvements enhance the value and marketability of real estate.

The rural nature of Forsyth Township makes pedestrian mobility particularly challenging. Focusing on destination based local hubs, such as schools, grocery stores, or post offices could provide a starting point for a neighborhood walkability assessment. Existing sidewalks could be audited for ease of use by people of all abilities and ages, and be repaired and modified to suit the community's needs. Non-motorized trails and greenways can also increase an area's walkability, especially when these are connected to larger networks that offer more mobility opportunities.

TRANSPORTATION

The basic objective of a road system is to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods. Communities depend on the safe and effective movement to sustain a functioning local economy. Transportation efficiency is a key factor in decision affecting land use and development. Making sure the transportation systems within the township are equitable, efficient, and inexpensive should be a priority for the community as a whole as it impacts community health and vitality.

AIRPORT

The Marquette Sawyer International Airport (MQT), formerly known as the K.I. Sawyer International Airport, is the only airport in Marquette County and has the only air traffic control tower in the Upper Peninsula. It occupies the site of the former K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base, which closed in 1995, and began commercial operations in 1999. The airport offers service from two airlines, American Airlines and Delta. Recently, passenger numbers have been increasing leading to a terminal renovation and added flight services. The airport continues to serve as a vital hub for medical/ emergency flights, transportation of goods, training exercises, and flying clubs. However, reliable public transportation to and from the airport remains a challenge.

RAIL SYSTEM

The township's rail infrastructure was instrumental in supporting the region's logging and mining industries, facilitating the transport of timber and iron ore to broader markets. While the prominence of railroads in Forsyth Township has diminished over the years, remnants of this rich history remain. Some rail lines are still operational, primarily serving freight needs, while others have been repurposed or abandoned. The legacy of these railroads continues to influence the township's landscape and

heritage. The Canadian National Railway has a line that runs from the mines near Negaunee, south through K.I. Sawyer and Swanzey, then runs parallel to M-35 to Escanaba.

PORTS

The nearest ports to Forsyth Township are located in the City of Marquette and the City of Escanaba where iron ore pellets are shipped from ore docks and commodities such as salt, limestone, and coal are received. Goods are then transported by rail and truck.

ROADS

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) is responsible for all state trunklines and works with the Marquette County Road Commission (MCRC) and local road agencies to provide routine maintenance. Many roads in the township, especially within the Sawyer community, are in poor condition, with noticeable distortion, cracks, and potholes. There are several factors contributing to the current road conditions, including Michigan's unpredictable freeze-thaw cycle through late winter and early spring. Another critical factor could be lack of funds with which to properly maintain the roads as citizens may like. Proactive planning can have a huge impact on local roads.

An updated road evaluation using the PASER system (PAVement Surface Evaluation and Rating) could be beneficial in prioritizing improvements.

Trunklines that run through the township include M-35, M-94, and M-553.

County Primary Roads are designated as such and utilized for roadways which provide circulation throughout the county and connect to neighboring communities. These include, Kelly Johnson Memorial Drive, Avenue D, 5th Street, County Roads 462, 545, 565, 557, and 438. These roads are maintained by the MCRC.

Local roads include all other roads within the township. These roads serve as access and minor collector roadways. Most of these local roads are located within the communities of Gwinn and K.I. Sawyer.

Private roads are common throughout the rural township, with many residents living off of one. The maintenance of these roads is generally the responsibility of the parties living along the road. The configuration of private roads can limit access of essential services like emergency vehicles and school buses.

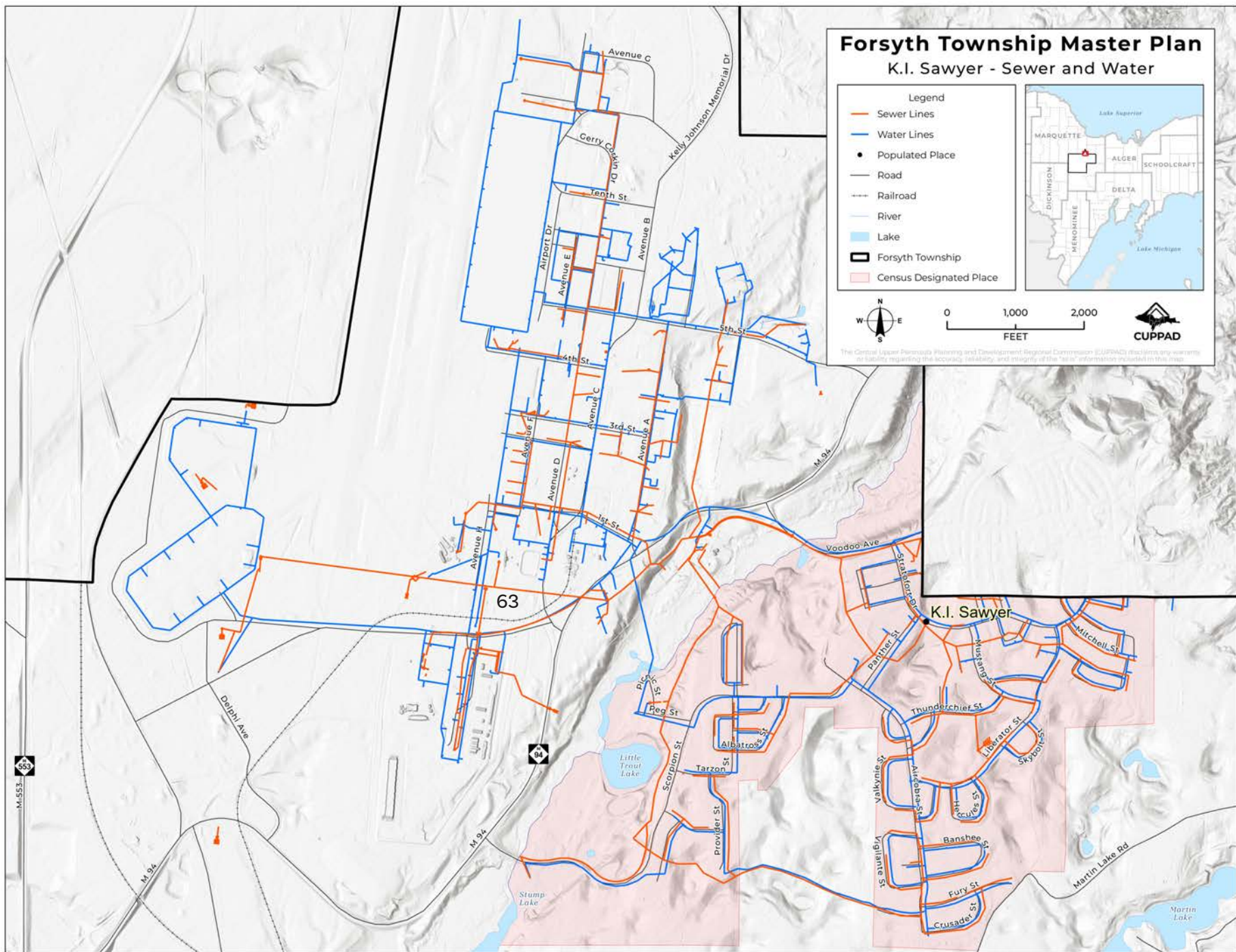


WATER & SEWER

Water services are essential to all members of a community. The township, Marquette County, and the Sawyer Operations Authority keep these services running as smoothly as possible to avoid interruptions in the daily lives of the citizenry. These services need upkeep and maintenance while also participating in upgrades as new information, guidelines, and best practices are established. As part of the Master Plan, services and facilities are described and evaluated as to their present condition, while also taking into account the adequacy to meet the future needs of the community. Currently, many communities around the Upper Peninsula are facing many economic challenges. Current budgetary restraints require innovative and responsible spending techniques that will be necessary to continue to provide services with reduced funding.

The Forsyth Township Water system includes Gwinn, the Forsyth Township subdivisions of Max Fralick and River Drive, and the communities of Austin, Princeton, and New Swanzy. Six well sites supply water to the system with all remaining residences on private wells. Mains located in Gwinn and New Swanzy consist mainly of four, six, and eight inch cast iron pipes installed prior to 1960. M-35, from Flint Street to Iron Street, was upgraded to eight inch ductile iron in 2006. In 2022 it was estimated that roughly 40% of the service lines were replaced and upgraded within the past 6-8 years, making the lines safer. In 2025 the township recieved a \$900,000 grant to repair and replace water lines and mains in conjunction with an MDOT road project, utilizing the “dig once” best practices.

There is a 200,000 gallon elevated pedestal tank in Gwinn, a 100,000 gallon ground storage tank, and a 50,000 gallon elevated pedestal tank in Austin.



The K.I. Sawyer Water System is managed by Marquette County and serves most of the former Air Force Base community. There are plans to update the water tower located at K.I. Sawyer, an elevated structure originally built during the 1950's. It needs to be refurbished, inside and out, ensuring its continued reliability and safety.

WASTEWATER

The Forsyth Township sewer system consists of municipal sanitary collection with three wastewater stabilization photosynthetic lagoons in series for seasonal discharge. It was constructed as a two-cell system, then upgraded to a third cell in the late 1970's. The lagoon system was seen as a low-cost, low-maintenance alternative to mechanical treatment plants. Recently however, one of these cells has reached the end of its service life, with the others to surely follow. Lagoon systems are under pressure to meet the minimum standards of water protection without extra equipment and the cost to replace or bring these systems up to compliance can exceed the cost of switching to a mechanical plant. Clean water grants could help to offset these costs.

The K.I. Sawyer Waste-Water Treatment Plant is a mechanical treatment system with an industrial lagoon which collects septage, leachate, and tainted water. Likewise, this lagoon system will soon need replacing or updating. Major water infrastructure upgrades for K.I. Sawyer were recently funded through a Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy grant and loan program.

Residences and businesses in outlying parts of the township (e.g., portions around Little Lake and rural areas) typically rely on private wells and on-site septic systems, which is consistent with Marquette County's mix of lagoon systems, communal systems, and private septic outside municipal service areas.

STORMWATER

There are not any established drainage districts in Forsyth Township because the soil is very sandy and most of the area does not require additional storm sewers or drainage. There is, however, a ditch collection system along M553, which drains to the sandy areas at the northeast and northwest intersection of M553 and M35 where it drains into the soil. The second traditional storm sewer system is along Carbon Street, and collects water from Birch and Pine Streets. The Carbon Street system is composed of 12 inch and 24 inch concrete pipe and catch basins, terminating at the Escanaba River, south of Mineral and Flint Streets. The Pine Street System is composed of 36 inch slotted PVC pipe and catch basins. These systems are the responsibility of MDOT and the Marquette County Road Commission.

Stormwater management is a critical component of Forsyth Township's long-term infrastructure and environmental health. As rain and snowmelt flow across roads, driveways, parking lots, and other hard surfaces, the water picks up pollutants such as oil, sediment, road salt, and debris before entering local streams, wetlands, and lakes. In Forsyth Township, with its mix of developed areas, forested lands, and sensitive wetland ecosystems, unmanaged runoff can lead to flooding, erosion, degraded water quality, and costly infrastructure damage.

Because much of the township's drainage network relies on roadside ditches, culverts, and natural waterways, heavy precipitation events—especially those becoming more frequent with changing climate patterns—can overwhelm older systems. This increases the risk of localized flooding, road washouts, and strain on downstream watersheds. Protecting and improving stormwater systems not only safeguards private property and public infrastructure, but also preserves the health of the wetlands and water bodies that are central to the township's environmental character.

Forsyth Township can reduce these risks through proactive stormwater management practices, including maintaining and upgrading drainage infrastructure, adopting low-impact development techniques, and ensuring that new construction is designed to manage runoff on-site. By integrating green infrastructure—such as rain gardens, bioswales, permeable pavements, and strategic vegetation buffers—stormwater can be slowed, filtered, and absorbed into the ground, improving water quality and reducing flooding potential.

Thoughtful stormwater management supports the township's broader master plan goals: protecting natural resources, enhancing community resilience, and ensuring that future growth is both sustainable and cost-effective. Investing in these strategies today will reduce long-term maintenance costs, protect property values, and preserve the clean water and natural beauty that residents value.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

A variety of public facilities serve the everyday needs of residents within Forsyth Township. An inventory and basic assessment of these facilities are described below.

GWINN COMMUNITY CLUBHOUSE

The Clubhouse is a recreational center that houses various programs and activities. It is the home of the Forsyth Senior Center, and a central meeting location. The clubhouse offers sports, community activities such as movie nights or trivia, and specialty activities like archery and tae kwon do. The Clubhouse can be rented for a deposit of \$100, which is returned at the end of the event.

FORSYTH TOWNSHIP LIBRARY

The library is free to use for residents of Forsyth Township and seeks to promote access to informational, educational, cultural, and recreational materials in a variety of formats and

technologies. They offer programming for all ages and have recently added the Gwinn Seed Library.

FORSYTH TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Forsyth Township Police Complex was built in 1908 and has been updated many times since. The Police Department is dedicated to serving citizens by decreasing crime and providing accident assistance while providing protection to citizens and property. They serve the community further through events such as bike safety for kids, prescription drug take-backs, and Neighbors Night Out. Most recently, the Forsyth Township Police Department has increased its ranks with a K-9 officer. K-9 Zeke is an expert in detecting firearms and explosives.

FORSYTH TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Fire Department was established in 1908. Today there are 35 paid firefighters, 2 stations, and 8 apparatus. They serve the community through fire protection, safety, and event management such as benefit dinners and fireworks.

K.I. SAWYER HERITAGE AIR MUSEUM

The museum was founded in 1993 by the Air Force Association Lake Superior Chapter to preserve the aircraft and history of the K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base following the announcement of closure. This facility is home to the Silver Wings Community Center, which can be rented for events and is free for nonprofits. A lifetime membership can be purchased for \$300.

PARKS, PUBLIC SPACES, AND RECREATIONAL ASSETS

All township parks, public spaces, and recreational assets can be found within the Forsyth Township Recreation Plan, 2024-2029, with specifications and recommendations.

GOALS + OBJECTIVES

Goal 9.1: Develop and maintain plans for the management and improvement of public assets.

Objective 9.1.1: Create and maintain a local Asset Management Plan and/or a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) that includes transportation, water infrastructure, and waste management to assist in budgeting and prioritization for improvements.

Objective 9.1.2: Continue to increase knowledge of asset management practices and priorities by taking advantage of local and statewide training programs offered to Township officials and staff.

Objective 9.1.3: Update plans annually, adjusting for priorities and financial opportunities such as grants or other funding mechanisms.

Objective 9.1.4: Expand grant writing opportunities and capabilities by creating and utilizing local and regional partnerships on projects.

Objective 9.1.5: Consider creation of a stormwater management plan to mitigate potential problems in the future.



Goal 9.2: Support the development of improved roadway designs to improve flow of traffic, pedestrian safety and access.

Objective 9.2.1: Consider performing a sidewalk audit or assessment for ease of pedestrian mobility in densely populated areas.

Objective 9.2.2: Coordinate with area road agencies and neighboring jurisdictions when considering development and access management policies.

Objective 9.2.3: Improve road and sidewalk conditions for ease of use by pedestrians and bicyclists. Consider adopting policies for sidewalk snow and sand removal.

Objective 9.2.4: Collaborate and seek grants with local schools on providing safe routes to school for all students.



Goal 9.3: Maintain and improve public utilities, communication systems, and community facilities and services to accommodate the needs of residents, business owners, and visitors.

Objective 9.3.1: Encourage work towards development of reliable high-speed internet to increase community connectivity.

Objective 9.3.2: Assess the township's sewer and water infrastructure according to Michigan's Lead and Copper rule to protect public health and minimize lead and copper levels in drinking water.

Objective 9.3.3: Encourage public education on responsible consumer usage of public utilities to limit excess use and general wear and tear on these systems.

Objective 9.3.4: Conduct an audit of local utility rates to further understand costs, identify discrepancies, and to identify improvement opportunities.

Objective 9.3.5: Encourage and support UPPCO's efforts to expand the power grid within the township to foster commercial development opportunities.

Objective 9.3.6: Plan for the needed replacement and/or upgrades to the aging lagoon systems to keep wastewater managed.





Land Use + Zoning Plan

The Land Use and Zoning Plan section is one of the most integral components in the development of a master plan. The **Michigan Planning Enabling Act of 2008** specifically requires the plan to address land use issues and recommendations for the physical development of the community 20 years or more into the future. As proposals for development are considered the Planning Commission, Township Board, and other township administrators should refer to this section to ensure that the vision, principles, and intent of districts are followed as closely as possible or amended when a new direction is determined to be necessary.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Planning Commission and township leaders recognize the growing and changing needs of the township in regards to land use and zoning.

Increasing Housing Stock and Availability

Ensuring a mix of housing options that are both accessible and affordable is crucial for the future of Forsyth Township. Strategic land use planning should involve the identification of suitable areas for residential development, including affordable housing initiatives, mixed-use developments, and making room for missing middle typologies. This helps accommodate an economically diverse population and supports both existing and potential residents looking to establish homes within the township.

A Business-Friendly Community

Forsyth Township recognizes that a strong, diverse, and resilient local economy depends on cultivating a business-friendly environment. Supporting entrepreneurship, streamlining permitting processes, improving infrastructure, and fostering collaboration with regional economic development partners are essential to attracting and retaining businesses of all sizes. As the community seeks to revitalize key areas such as KI Sawyer and capitalize on emerging sectors like outdoor recreation and digital services, creating a predictable, welcoming, and responsive business climate that meets the needs of the community is more important than ever.

Strategic partnerships between township officials, community organizations, and local business owners can help advance and strengthen the economic development of the township.

Responsible and Sustainable Land Use Practices

As Forsyth Township leans in to outdoor recreation as an economic driver, it's more important than ever to recognize the need for responsible development and sustainable preservation of the natural resources that make the area so unique. Long term land use planning is vital to ensuring a balance between commercial, residential, and preservation.

Planning for and adjusting to the needs of the community is a top priority of the land use plan. By prioritizing residential development within the township, the community could attract new residents and continue to

grow. Pursuit of grants and other modes of funding can help to eliminate blight and rejuvenate spaces with community amenities, further adding to the appeal of the township.

Wildfire Management

Wildfire management is an important consideration for Forsyth Township due to the extensive forested lands surrounding and within the community, including areas of the Marquette County Forest. Periods of dry weather, increased recreational use of forested lands, and residential development near wooded areas can increase the potential for wildfire risk. Coordinated planning and prevention efforts are therefore important to protect residents, property, and natural resources. The township's efforts align with the broader strategies identified in the Marquette County Hazard Mitigation Plan, which identifies wildfire as a regional hazard and encourages local governments to support preparedness, prevention, and interagency coordination. Ongoing forest management and wildfire mitigation initiatives within the Marquette County Forest also play an important role in reducing fuel loads, maintaining healthy forest ecosystems, and improving emergency response capacity across the region.

LAND USE

Land use categories differ from zoning districts in that the land use represents the general type of activity desired within a parcel of land, while zoning districts sets the regulatory framework for approving future uses of land on that parcel. Likewise, the future land use map depicts how the township anticipates the land use to evolve or change over the next 5-20 years, setting up the basis for zoning regulations that will enable and support the township's future vision of land use.

Future land use is a way to describe, plan for, and adapt to changes in the community, environment, and developmental needs. The Future Land Use map reflects changes from input from community leaders, the Planning Commission, and the citizen survey. The future land use and zoning changes are documented in detail in the next section, the Zoning Plan.

Land Use categories have been condensed into more flexible categories with easily understandable descriptions, encouraging development where appropriate. The Zoning Ordinance will be updated to reflect these changes. The Schedule of Regulations will be largely unchanged and will be housed within the Zoning Ordinance.

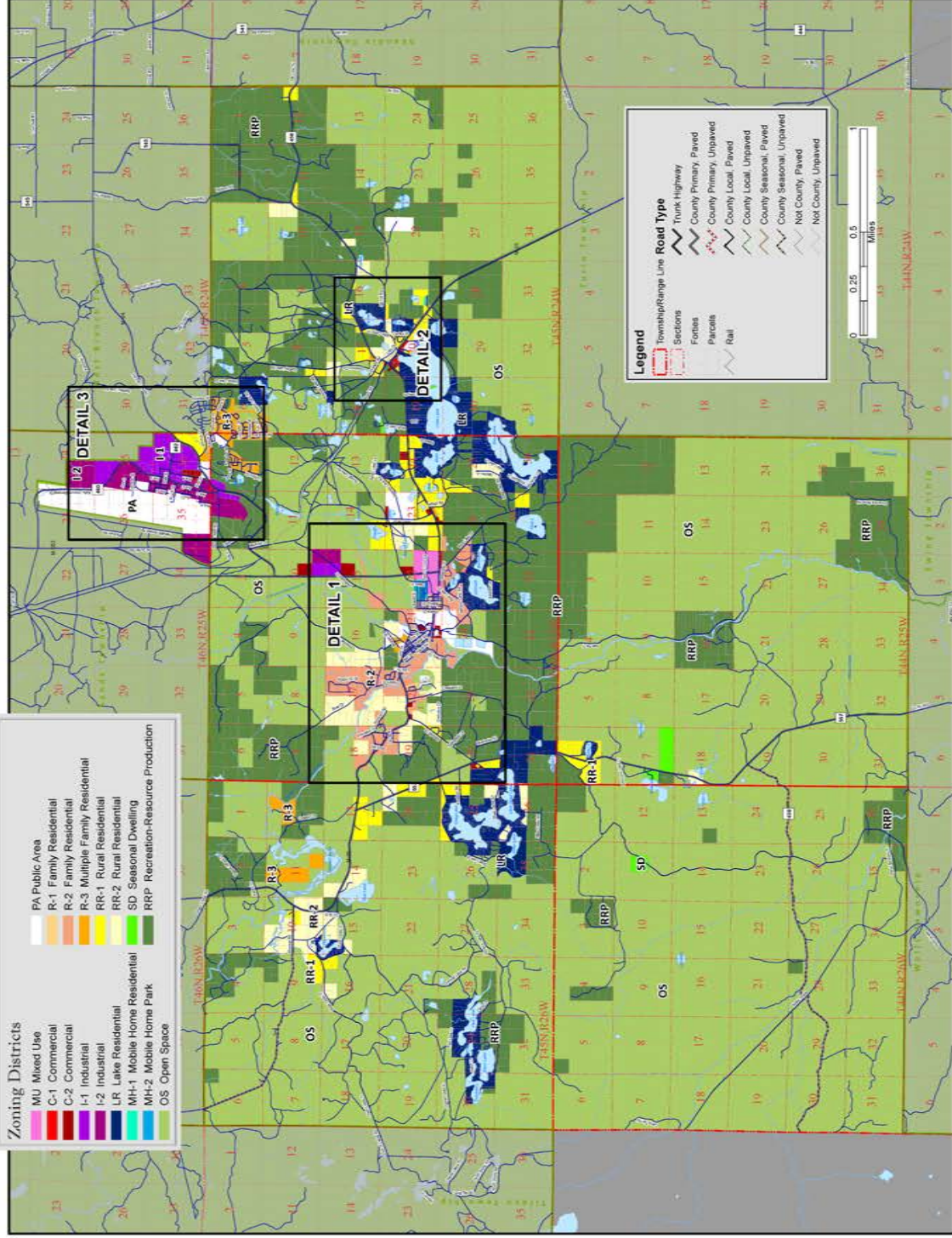




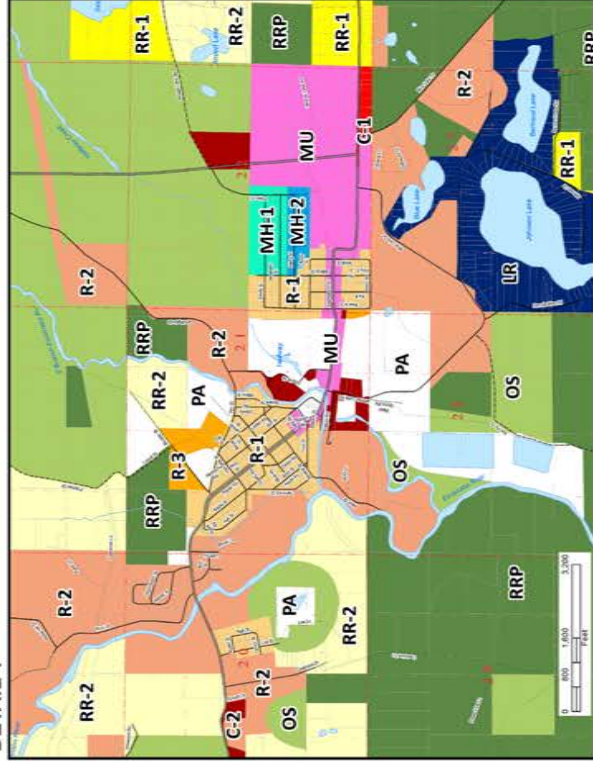
Forsyth Township Official Zoning Map

Marquette County, Michigan

- Zoning Districts**
- PA Public Area
 - MU Mixed Use
 - R-1 Family Residential
 - C-1 Commercial
 - R-2 Family Residential
 - C-2 Commercial
 - R-3 Multiple Family Residential
 - I-1 Industrial
 - RR-1 Rural Residential
 - I-2 Industrial
 - RR-2 Rural Residential
 - LR Lake Residential
 - MH-1 Mobile Home Residential
 - SD Seasonal Dwelling
 - MH-2 Mobile Home Park
 - RRP Recreation-Resource Production
 - OS Open Space



DETAIL 1



DETAIL 2



Officially adopted by the Forsyth Township Board
Marquette County, Michigan, on the 12th Day of
December 2018.
Resolved Through July 16, 2024.
Townsfolk Clerk - Angela Loomis
Townsfolk Supervisor - James Gosses

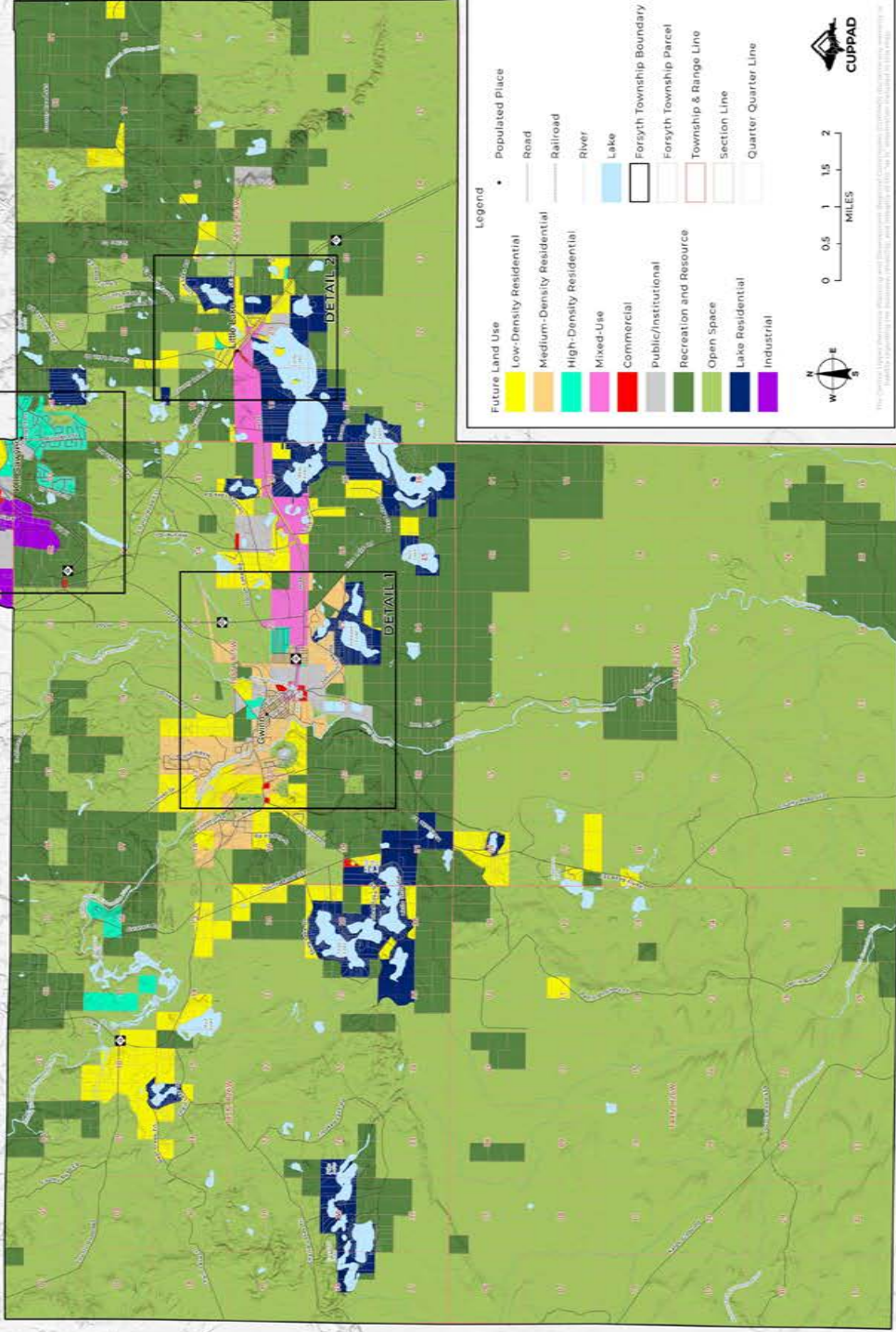
DETAIL 3



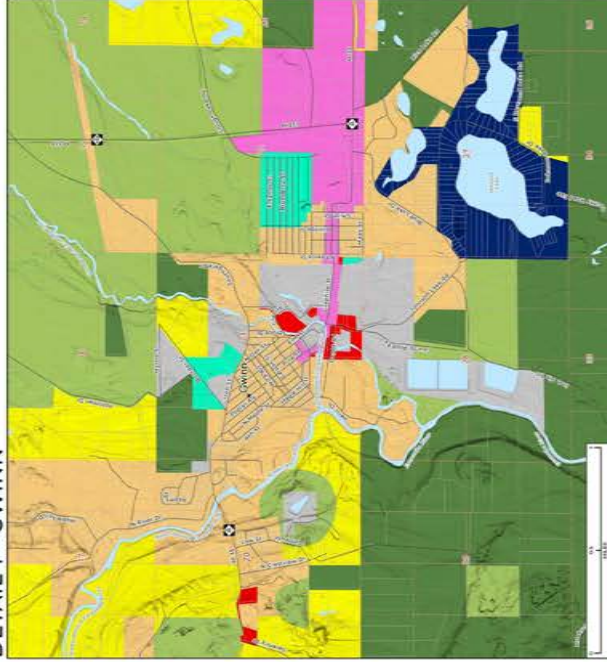
ZONING MAP AMENDMENTS			
DATE OF ADOPTION	ZONING DISTRICT	LOCATION	MAP UPDATED BY
1	PREVIOUS	REVISED	
2			
3			
4			

Forsyth Township Master Plan Future Land Use

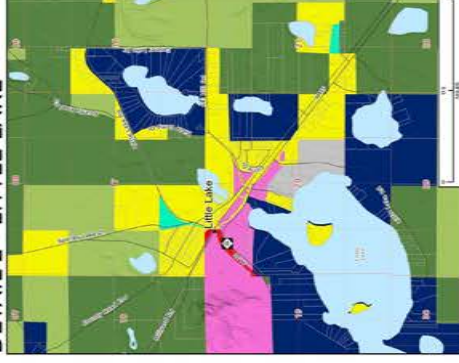
DETAIL 3



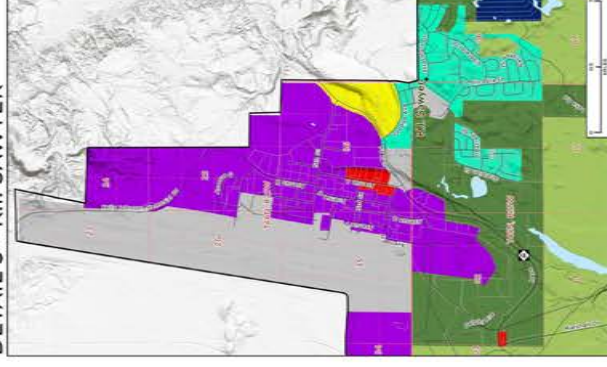
DETAIL 1 - GWINN



DETAIL 2 - LITTLE LAKE



DETAIL 3 - K.I. SAWYER



GOALS + OBJECTIVES

Goal 10.1: Ensure accessible and affordable housing through strategic development.

Objective 10.1.1: Consider proximity to community needs, amenities, infrastructure, and emergency services when planning new developments.

Objective 10.1.2: Promote infill development to make the best use of existing infrastructure and amenities while limiting sprawl into sensitive natural areas.

Objective 10.1.3: Support housing diversity through mixed-use developments, alternative housing types, and adaptive reuse of existing properties.



Goal 10.2: Maintain and update an inventory of township-owned properties and vacant sites.

Objective 10.2.1: Identify properties held by the township with designations for potential future uses for the purpose of development or redevelopment.

Objective 10.2.2: Consider future potential sites and protections for outdoor recreation amenities, such as campgrounds and trail development.

Objective 10.2.3: Engage the community in future land use discussions and decisions.



Goal 10.3: Modernize land use categories and zoning ordinances for ease of use and understanding.

Objective 10.3.1: Maintain low-density zoning to protect sensitive areas around forests, wetlands, and lakes.

Objective 10.3.2: Limit sprawl by directing new developments to areas already served with necessary infrastructure.

Objective 10.3.3: Encourage the management and reuse of underutilized properties.

Objective 10.3.4: Condense zoning districts for ease of use by administrators, citizens, and potential developers.



Goal 10.4: Continue to support economic and community resilience through zoning regulations and community feedback.

Objective 10.4.1: Continue to manage and enforce zoning regulations and ordinances such as blight and trash to keep up community aesthetic.

Objective 10.4.2: Track and report zoning variance requests annually to identify common issues and consider ordinance amendments where needed.

Objective 10.4.3: Develop zoning incentives or expedited review for developments that meet local resilience goals (e.g. workforce housing, green building, or job creation).

Objective 10.4.4: Coordinate with regional partners to support wildfire prevention, preparedness, and response efforts, including forest management initiatives within the Marquette County Forest and strategies identified in the Marquette County Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Objective 10.4.5: Consult with forest professionals and the County on evaluating feasibility and the economic benefits of Township land to be used for timber harvesting.

ZONING PLAN

The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act of 2006 is a state law that provides the authority for communities in Michigan to use zoning as a tool for the regulation of land. This law states that local zoning regulations in a community must be based upon a plan and this means particularly a zoning plan. A zoning plan describes the ways in which the current existing land uses in the community may change in the future by relating those changes to the aspirations described on the Future Land Use Map and discussion on zoning districts. The zoning plan is the legal basis for the zoning ordinance in Forsyth Township, which means any decisions contrary to what is stated in this plan could lack legal defensibility. The zoning plan is intended to guide all future rezoning activities and discretionary land use decisions in the community. Township leaders and planning commissioners should consult this section whenever these topics are under consideration. The table that follows describes the anticipated possible changes or lack thereof across the districts in Forsyth Township.



Future Land Use Category	Current Land Use and Zoning	Strategies + Potential Zoning Changes
Low-Density Residential: This district classification is designed to permit a lesser density of residential development than that provided in R1, together with other residentially related facilities, which would serve the inhabitants of the area.	RR Rural Residential 1, 2 SD Seasonal Dwelling	Primary: Preserve and Protect Secondary: Expand and Grow Changes: Relaxing and condensing these categories can make future housing development more likely. Eliminate Seasonal Dwelling District. Combine Rural Residential to fit within Low-Density.
Medium-Density Residential: To establish and preserve quiet family residential neighborhoods, for single family dwellings desired by large numbers of people, free from other uses except those which are both compatible with and convenient to the residents of such districts where urban services and facilities can be feasibly provided, including necessary public water and sewer systems.	R-1 Family Residential R-2 Residential District	Primary: Preserve and Protect Secondary: Expand and Grow Changes: Reduce setbacks to allow greater density. Swap classifications of R-1 and R-2 to reflect progressive density.

Future Land Use Category	Current Land Use and Zoning	Strategies + Potential Zoning Changes
High-Density Residential: This district classification is designed to permit the greatest density of residential uses allowed within the township, together with other residential related facilities which would serve the inhabitants of the area.	R-3 Multiple Family Residential MH-1, 2 Mobile Home	Primary: Preserve and Protect Secondary: Expand and Grow Changes: Significantly reduce setbacks to allow greater density. Consolidate MH-1 and MH-2.
Mixed-Use: This district is designed to allow a combination of residential, commercial, and office uses often in the same building or development with a goal of creating a walkable and vibrant community.	MU Mixed-Use	Primary: Expand and Grow Secondary: Maintain and Enhance Changes: Mixed use will expand into suitable areas like the area north of M35 and along the commercial corridor.
Commercial: The intent of this district is to establish and preserve general commercial areas, essential services, and shopping centers near residences, primarily reached by car.	C1, C2 Commercial	Primary: Expand and Grow Secondary: Maintain and Enhance Changes: No changes
Public/ Institutional: The intent of this district is to establish and preserve land or spaces owned, maintained, or operated by the township, recreational spaces, or public infrastructure.	PA Public Area	Primary: Preserve and Protect Secondary: Maintain and Enhance Changes:

Future Land Use Category	Current Land Use and Zoning	Strategies + Potential Zoning Changes
Recreation and Resource: To establish and protect low intensity development because of their location, accessibility, and natural characteristics are suitable for a wide range of agricultural, forestry, and recreational uses.	RRP - Recreation /Resource Production	Primary: Preserve and Protect Secondary: Maintain and Enhance Changes: No changes
Open Space: To establish and preserve as open space, those lands which, because of their soil drainage, topographical characteristics, lack of accessibility, or because they are important wildlife habitats, are not suitable for development.	OS	Primary: Preserve and Protect Secondary: None Changes: No changes
Industrial: This district is designed for manufacturing, assembling, and fabricating business and commercial activities which may require larger sites, outdoor storage, and may have an adverse effect on adjacent properites.	I-1, I-2 Industrial	Primary: Preserve and Protect Secondary:None Changes: No changes
Lake Residential: Designed to establish and preserve sensitive areas close to waterways, lakes, and rivers. Protections are designed to	LR Lake Residential	Primary: Preserve and Protect Secondary: None Changes: No changes

SCHEDULE OF REGULATIONS

ZONING MINIMUM LOT SIZE (sq feet)			Maximum no. of Rooms	Minimum Lot Width	MINIMUM SETBACKS (feet)					
DISTRICT	Single	Duplex			Multi-Family	Main Structure			Accessory Structures (K)	
			FRONT	SIDE		REAR	FRONT	SIDE	REAR	
R-1	10,000	10,000		80	25	10	25	25 (L)	6 (H)	10
R-2	10,000 (A)	15,000		100	25	10	25	25 (L)	6 (H)	10
	20,000 (B)	25,000		100	25	10	25	25 (L)	6 (H)	10
	30,000 (C)	35,000		125	25	10	25	25 (L)	6 (H)	10
	40,000 (D)	45,000		150	25	40	35	25 (L)	6 (H)	10
R-3 (G)	12,000 (A, G)	12,000 (A, G)	(G-a, d)	100	25	10	25	25 (L)	6 (H)	10
	35,000 (B, C)	35,000 (B, C)	(G-b, d)	125	25	10	25	25 (L)	6 (H)	10
	50,000 (D)	50,000 (B, C)	(G-c, d)	150	25	20	35	25 (L)	6 (H)	15
MH-1	10,000			80	25	10	20	25 (L)	6 (H)	10
MH-2 (E)	10 Acres			NONE	30	30	30	25 (L)	30 (H)	30
MH-2 (F)	4,000			40	10	10	10	25 (L)	10 (H)	10
RR-1	40,000			150	25	20	35	25	20 (H)	35
RR-2	5 Acres			300	25	20	35	30	20	35
LR	1 Acre			150	30	20	35	30	12 (H)	25
C-1 (F)	NONE			NONE	30	5 (I, J)	20 (J)	30	5	20
C-2	NONE			NONE	40	5 (I, J)	20 (J)	40	5	20
PA	NA			NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
RRP	10 Acres			400	30	30	30	30	30	30
OS	NA			NA	30	30	30	30	30	30
I-1 (F)	NONE			NONE	40	5(J)	20	40	5	30
I-2 (F)	NONE			NONE	40	5(J)	20	40	5	30

NOTES TO SCHEDULE OF REGULATIONS

NOTES TO SCHEDULE OF REGULATIONS

- A. With public water and sewage systems.
- B. With public sewage systems.
- C. With public water systems.
- D. With neither public water nor sewage systems.
- E. Standard only applies to lots or manufactured homes not within manufactured housing communities. Manufactured housing and communities are subject to the requirements as established and regulated by Act 419 of the Public Acts of 1976, as amended.
- F. Access to Commercial or Industrial lots with frontage on roadways with speed limits forty-five (45) miles per hour or higher are subject to the following regulations:
 - 1. Acceleration and deceleration lanes will be provided at all points of entry and exit to the lots, as required by Marquette County Road Commission.
 - 2. There will not be more than one entry/ exit per six hundred (600) feet of road frontage.
 - 3. Access to Commercial/ Industrial developments will be only from Michigan Department of Transportation designated Class "A" roads.
- G. In the R-3 district only:
For the purposes of computing the maximum number of rooms per the following room assignments shall control:

Efficiency	1 room
One bedroom	2 rooms
Two bedrooms	2 rooms
Three or more bedrooms	4 rooms

Plans presenting showing 1, 2, or 3 bedroom units and including a "den", "library", or other extra room shall count such extra rooms as bedrooms for the purpose of computing density. The area used for computing density shall be the total site area exclusive of any dedicated public right-of-way of either interior or bounding roads.

In the R-3 district, the total number of rooms (not including kitchen, dining, and sanitary facilities) shall not be more than the area of the parcel, in square feet, divided by:

- a. One thousand five hundred (1,500)
 - b. Two thousand five hundred (2,500)
 - c. Four thousand one hundred fifty (4,150) All units shall have at least one (1) living room and one (1) bedroom, except that not more than ten (10) percent of the units may be of an efficiency apartment type.
 - d. Where there is more than one principal structure (ex. Rental units, apartments) a minimum of twenty (20) feet shall be maintained between principal structures.
- H. A storage of accessory building shall not exceed twenty-four (24) feet in height as measured from the floor to the peak.
 - 1. If the building meets the definitions and requirements of an accessory dwelling unit, the height limit is twenty-six (26) feet as measured from floor to peak.
 - I. The side yard requirements for the C-1 or C-2 district may be eliminated under the following conditions:
 - 1. The side walls meet Marquette County building code requirements for separation rating.
 - 2. The zoning of the adjacent property is C-1 or C-2.
 - J. In C-1, C-2, I-1, I-2 districts abutting an inland lake, river, or stream, a minimum setback from said water will be:
 - 1. Seventy-five (75) feet for C-1 and C-2 districts.
 - 2. One hundred (100) feet for I-1 and I-2 districts.
 - K. An accessory building, unless attached and structurally made a part of the principle building/ structure, shall not be closer than ten (10) feet to any other building/ structure on the lot or parcel (R-1, R-2, R-3, MH-1, MH-2, RR-1, RR-2, LR, OS, RRP).
 - 1. Exemptions will be made for small storage structures under six (6) feet high and fifty (50) sq ft or less in size.
 - L. Accessory structures shall not be placed in the front yard setback area (closer to the front lot line than the principal structure).

11

Implementation Strategy

Proactive application of the Master Plan is supported by the use of a well-coordinated implementation strategy. It includes the actions necessary for the achievement of goals and objectives expressed in previous sections, as well as other statutorily-required duties that local leaders should expect to accomplish relative to the plan. Accountability for this strategy is reinforced through the identification of responsible parties, estimated costs, and time frame for completion. The tool provided in this section is a five-year workplan that should be reviewed and updated each year. For best results, commitments from responsible parties should be secured when coordinated actions are identified. The action items listed below are examples of ways to meet this plan's goals and strategies. Blank spaces are for leaders to add their own. Logging the date of completion allows for the celebration of wins, big and small.

Chapter 4. People + Community

Follows Goal / Objective	Action Item	Responsible Party/ Partner	Time Frame	Date Completed
4.1.1	Update branding and marketing strategies to promote the township as a destination	Township, Forsyth Forward	Medium	
4.1.3	Work with the schools on bond initiatives, facility upgrades, and programming.	Township, Gwinn Community Schools	Ongoing	
4.2.3, 4.3.2	Town Hall style meetings at different venues throughout the township	Twp Manager, other community groups	Ongoing	
4.5.5	Coordinate with regional childcare providers and economic development partners to assess childcare availability and identify strategies to expand capacity.	Township, LSCP, Regional partners, community groups and schools	Ongoing	

Time Frame Key

Short	1-12 months
Medium	12-24 months
Long	24+ months
Ongoing	As needed

Chapter 4. People + Community, cont.

Follows Goal / Objective	Action Item	Responsible Party/ Partner	Time Frame	Date Completed

Chapter 5. Economic Development

Follows Goal / Objective	Action Item	Responsible Party/ Partner	Time Frame	Date Completed
5.1.7	Support and facilitate the creation of a strategic planning initiative focused on KI Sawyer.	Township, Sawyer Community Alliance, Volunteers	short	
5.2.3	Continue to assist and support business development activities within the Township	Township, Forsyth Forward	ongoing	

Chapter 6. Natural Resources

Follows Goal / Objective	Action Item	Responsible Party/ Partner	Time Frame	Date Completed
6.2.1	Storm water management/ hazard mitigation planning	Township, County, CUPPAD	short	
6.2.3	Signage at environmentally sensitive areas for protection	Township	short	

Chapter 7. Housing + Neighborhoods

Follows Goal / Objective	Action Item	Responsible Party/ Partner	Time Frame	Date Completed
7.1.1 10.2.1	Create an inventory of vacant and underutilized properties.	Township, County, Marquette County Land Bank, Forsyth Forward	Long	
7.1.6	Create a best practices for landlords, new and current.	Township	Medium	
7.2.3	Create a housing committee or task force to address housing issues	Township, County, Forsyth Forward	Medium	

Chapter 8. Quality of Life

Follows Goal / Objective	Action Item	Responsible Party/ Partner	Time Frame	Date Completed
8.1.1 9.2.1	Complete a sidewalk audit and assessment	Township, CUPPAD	Medium	
8.1.4	Build walkable connections to and from Little Trout Lake Wellness Hub	Township, County	Short	
8.2.2	Apply for USDA or Rural Development grants	Township	Ongoing	

Chapter 9. Infrastructure

Follows Goal / Objective	Action Item	Responsible Party/ Partner	Time Frame	Date Completed
9.1.2	Provide training opportunities to local officials	Township, MSU E	Ongoing	
9.1.2	Coordinate with nearby municipalities on infrastructure projects	Township, County	Ongoing	

Chapter 10. Land Use

Follows Goal / Objective	Action Item	Responsible Party/ Partner	Time Frame	Date Completed
7.1.1 10.2.1	Create an inventory of vacant and underutilized properties.	Township, County, Marquette County Land Bank, Forsyth Forward	Long	
10.4.2	Track instances of variance requests to take proactive action	Township	Ongoing	
10.4.4	Coordinate with Marquette County Emergency Management and the County Forest to support wildfire mitigation planning and public education.	Township, Marquette County	Ongoing	



Appendix - Outreach

Following the start of the Master Plan project, a community survey was made available online through SurveyMonkey.com and in print (if requested). The survey opened in January, 2024 and remained open until June 21st, 2024. The survey was advertised on the Forsyth Township website, CUPPAD’s website, and facebook. Flyers were placed at the Gwinn Clubhouse, the Township Offices, and at K.I. Sawyer Heritage Museum. 234 Responses were collected and are the basis for the majority of the goals and objectives found within this plan.

Forsyth Township Master Plan Survey

Your voice matters! Forsyth Township has begun the process of updating its Master Plan. Citizen input is an integral part of a Master Plan. The Plan illustrates the goals for development in the township, and is the basis for regulating land use and identifying the needs of the citizenry for up to the next 20 years. Please complete the following questionnaire; your responses are anonymous and will be reported in group form only. Thank you!

Survey will close June 21st, 2024.

1. I live in the area of:

- ☐ Gwinn
- ☐ KI Sawyer
- ☐ Little Lake
- ☐ Forsyth Township
- ☐ Other (please specify)





WE'RE WORKING WITH CUPPAD ON REWRITING OUR MASTER PLAN AND WE NEED YOUR INPUT!

[Make your voice heard here.](#)

Posted on January 15, 2024 in Bulletin Board Announcements, Notices. [\[permalink\]](#)



FORSYTH TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN SURVEY

Posted on January 15, 2024

[Forsyth Township](#) is working with CUPPAD on rewriting their Master Plan for 2024-2030 and needs your input! Forsyth Township residents are encouraged to take a [short survey](#) regarding current and future initiatives, economic development, and outdoor recreation preferences.

Your privacy is respected and answers are reported in group format only.

[Please take the survey today!](#)

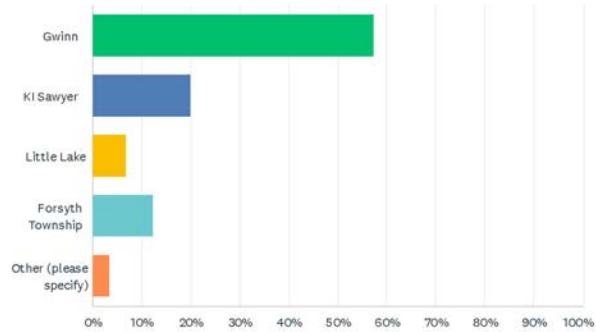
Contact Emily Bosch Soucy with any concerns or questions at ebosch@cuppad.org

This entry was posted in [News](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#).

Forsyth Township Master Plan Survey

Q1 I live in the area of:

Answered: 234 Skipped: 0

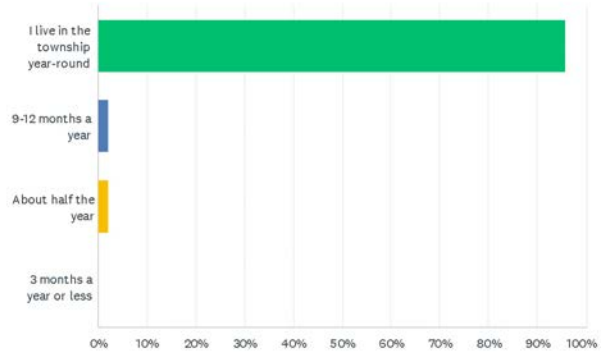


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Gwinn	57.26%	134
KI Sawyer	20.09%	47
Little Lake	6.84%	16
Forsyth Township	12.39%	29
Other (please specify)	3.42%	8
TOTAL		234

Q2 I live in the Township:

Answered: 234 Skipped: 0

Forsyth Township Master Plan Survey

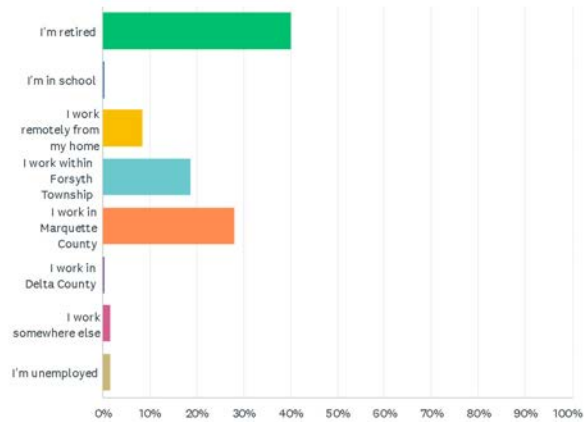


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I live in the township year-round	95.73%	224
9-12 months a year	2.14%	5
About half the year	2.14%	5
3 months a year or less	0.00%	0
TOTAL		234

Q3 Where is your place of employment located?

Answered: 234 Skipped: 0

Forsyth Township Master Plan Survey

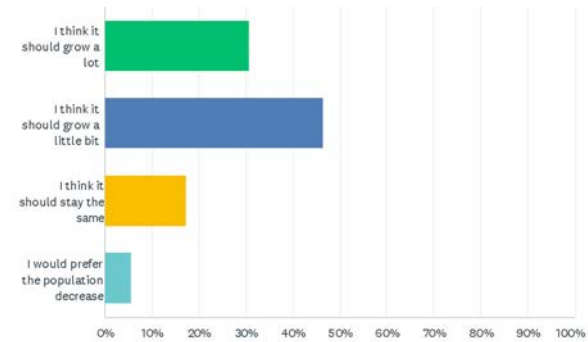


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
I'm retired	40.17% 94
I'm in school	0.43% 1
I work remotely from my home	8.55% 20
I work within Forsyth Township	18.80% 44
I work in Marquette County	28.21% 66
I work in Delta County	0.43% 1
I work somewhere else	1.71% 4
I'm unemployed	1.71% 4
TOTAL	234

Q4 How important is it to you that the Township's population continues to be maintained or grow?

Answered: 232 Skipped: 2

Forsyth Township Master Plan Survey

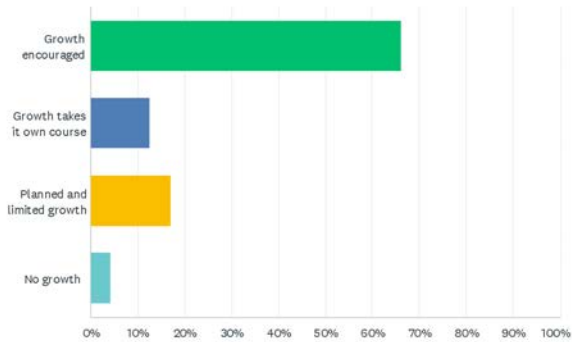


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
I think it should grow a lot	30.60% 71
I think it should grow a little bit	46.55% 108
I think it should stay the same	17.24% 40
I would prefer the population decrease	5.60% 13
TOTAL	232

Q5 What strategy would you prefer for growth of businesses or commercial opportunities?

Answered: 230 Skipped: 4

Forsyth Township Master Plan Survey



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Growth encouraged	66.09% 152
Growth takes its own course	12.61% 29
Planned and limited growth	16.96% 39
No growth	4.35% 10
TOTAL	230

Q6 If new businesses were able to locate in the township, what kinds would you like to see?

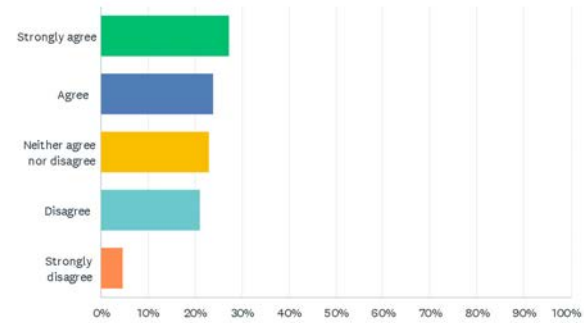
Answered: 172 Skipped: 62

Q7 Forsyth Township should seek to maintain its rural character and protect the area from development which may cause that character to significantly change.

Answered: 231 Skipped: 3

5 / 13

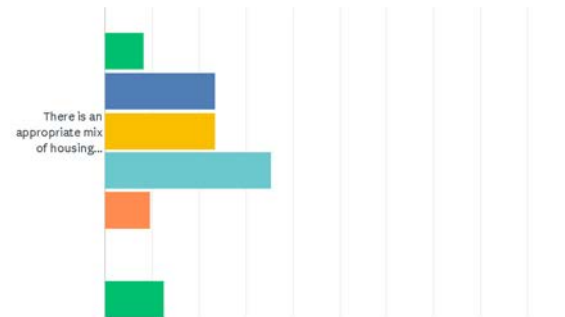
Forsyth Township Master Plan Survey



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Strongly agree	27.27% 63
Agree	23.81% 55
Neither agree nor disagree	22.94% 53
Disagree	21.21% 49
Strongly disagree	4.76% 11
TOTAL	231

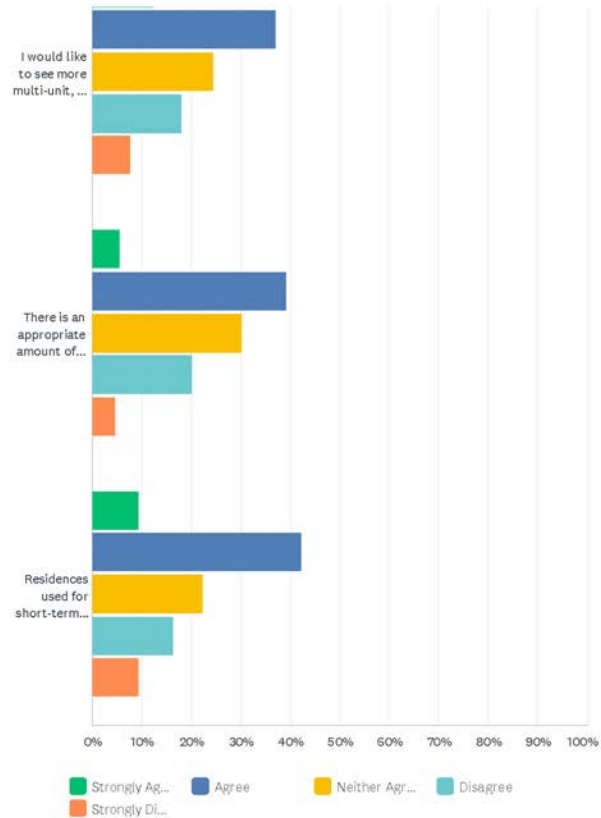
Q8 Thinking about the overall housing stock available in the Township, to what degree to you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Answered: 232 Skipped: 2



6 / 13

Forsyth Township Master Plan Survey



Forsyth Township Master Plan Survey

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL
There is an appropriate mix of housing options for residents	8.23% 19	23.38% 54	23.38% 54	35.50% 82	9.52% 22	231
I would like to see more multi-unit, or different housing options available for residents	12.50% 29	37.07% 86	24.57% 57	18.10% 42	7.76% 18	232
There is an appropriate amount of permanent residences compared to seasonal cottages and camps	5.60% 13	39.22% 91	30.17% 70	20.26% 47	4.74% 11	232
Residences used for short-term rentals offer additional economic opportunities that are appropriate for the community.	9.48% 22	42.24% 98	22.41% 52	16.38% 38	9.48% 22	232

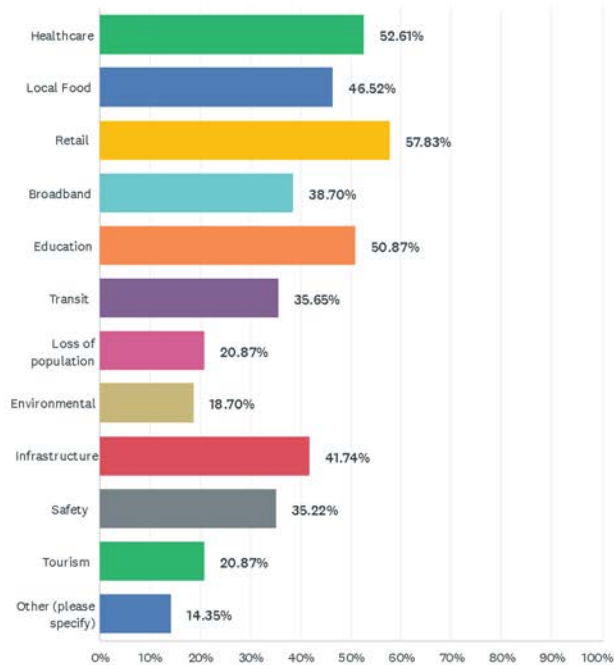
Q9 What do you love about living in Forsyth Township?

Answered: 174 Skipped: 60

Q10 What issue(s) do you think have the greatest impact on the Township and its residents? [check all that apply]

Answered: 230 Skipped: 4

Forsyth Township Master Plan Survey

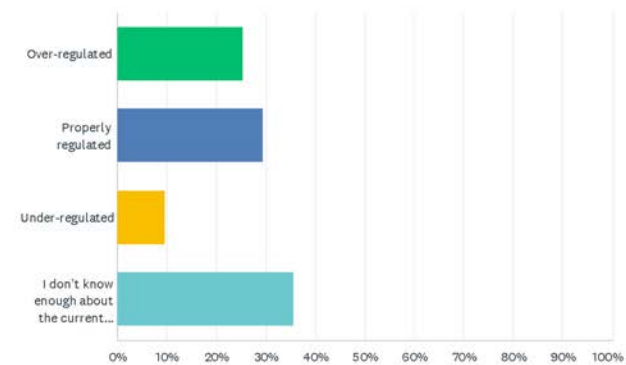


Forsyth Township Master Plan Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Healthcare	52.61%	121
Local Food	46.52%	107
Retail	57.83%	133
Broadband	38.70%	89
Education	50.87%	117
Transit	35.65%	82
Loss of population	20.87%	48
Environmental	18.70%	43
Infrastructure	41.74%	96
Safety	35.22%	81
Tourism	20.87%	48
Other (please specify)	14.35%	33
Total Respondents: 230		

Q11 Under the current zoning regulations, do you feel you are (choose one of the following):

Answered: 228 Skipped: 6



Forsyth Township Master Plan Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Over-regulated	25.44%	58
Properly regulated	29.39%	67
Under-regulated	9.65%	22
I don't know enough about the current zoning	35.53%	81
TOTAL		228

Q12 What change would you like to see within Forsyth Township?

Answered: 141 Skipped: 93

Q13 Forsyth Township is also updating their 5-Year Recreation Plan and would appreciate your response on the next few questions to help inform community recreation priorities moving forward: What recreation activities have you or a member of your family participated in in the past two years?

Answered: 169 Skipped: 65

Q14 Please list what you value about the parks and recreation opportunities in Forsyth Township.

Answered: 139 Skipped: 95

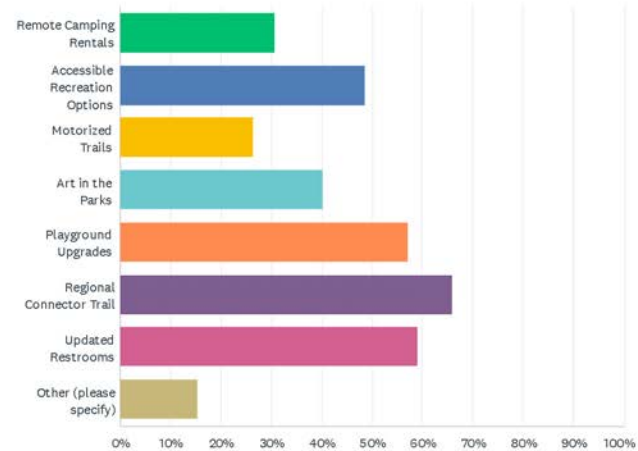
Q15 Please list what you would like to see change regarding parks and recreation within Forsyth Township.

Answered: 131 Skipped: 103

Q16 Please select the parks and recreation projects you would like to see happen within the township, provide your own ideas as well.

Answered: 208 Skipped: 26

Forsyth Township Master Plan Survey



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
 Remote Camping Rentals	30.77%	64
 Accessible Recreation Options	48.56%	101
 Motorized Trails	26.44%	55
 Art in the Parks	40.38%	84
 Playground Upgrades	57.21%	119
 Regional Connector Trail	65.87%	137
 Updated Restrooms	59.13%	123
Other (please specify)	15.39%	32
Total Respondents: 208		

Forsyth Township Master Plan Survey

Q17 Is there anything else you would like to add that was not addresses by the questions? If you would also like to expand on any of your previous responses, please do so here.

Answered: 55 Skipped: 179

