

Stewardship of a Special Place

2021 MASTER PLAN
PENINSULA TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN

DRAFT WORKING DOCUMENT 7/1/2021





Peninsula Township, Michigan

Peninsula Township (Old Mission Peninsula) has some of the most impressive scenery in all of Michigan, with rolling hills, 42 miles of Great Lakes' shoreline, stunning views of Lake Michigan bays, and farms, orchards, vineyards, and wineries. Thousands of tourists visit the area annually to enjoy the beauty of the Old Mission Peninsula, and more than 6,000 people are fortunate enough to call this area home. Residents and community leaders have long recognized the spectacular beauty of the peninsula and have consistently taken innovative steps to be good stewards of this special place. One such step is to have a current master plan that defines an achievable yet inspirational vision for the future.

...stewards of this special place.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction





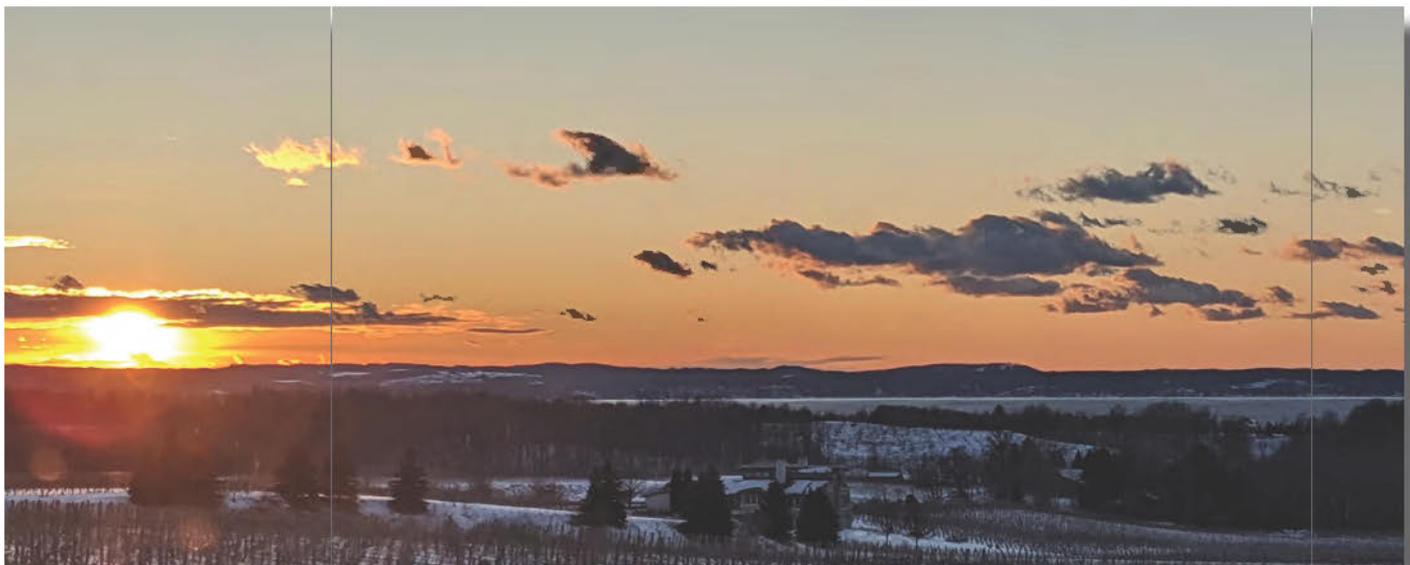
WHAT IS A MASTER PLAN?

A master plan is a document that describes a long-term and comprehensive perspective of the future of a community. It offers an educational element to frame community issues along with an aspirational and goal-oriented view of the future. Master plans often begin with a description of existing conditions, trends, and current attitudes, then look forward to define long-term community visions and goals.

The need for a master plan has been recognized perhaps as long as there have been townships and municipalities that grow and change. The places in which we live and work are constantly changing – they grow, shrink, age, develop, and redevelop over time. Sometimes, physical change is subtle and nearly imperceptible. Other times, physical change can be dramatic as large private developments or public infrastructure projects are completed. Beyond the pace of community change is the larger question of whether the direction of change is taking a community forward toward a more livable, economically stable, and attractive place.

The fuel that drives community change is decision making. The community we see today is the product of large and small past decisions made by individuals and public or private organizations. Local leaders make decisions about how to regulate land use, what public buildings and infrastructure to build and maintain, and what services to provide. The private sector makes decisions about how to respond to commercial needs and market demands. Together, these decisions produce community change. Thus, the need for a sense of direction and overall vision is apparent. The purpose of a master plan is to provide such vision, articulating the way forward based on community attitudes and preferences. Driven by such vision, master plans describe the necessary steps required to achieve goals.

One measure of valuable master plans is the degree to which they fully and completely reflect the desires of residents and stakeholders. Effective master plans typically offer a high level of community engagement at the foundation of their recommendations. They speak authoritatively about what residents desire and clearly describe the kind of community they wish to call home in the future.





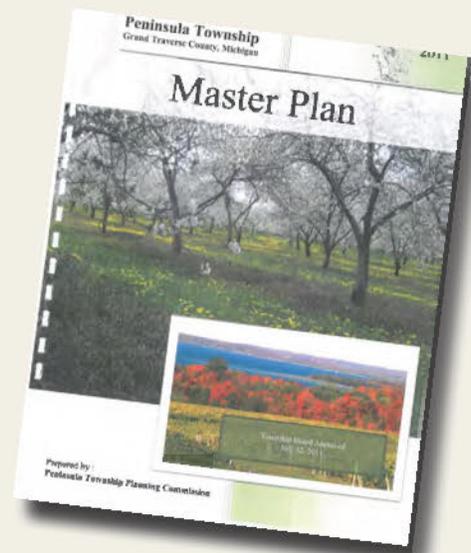
LEGAL CONTEXT

Apart from helping to satisfy the basic desire to shape the future and provide a direction for community change, there is a legal dimension to master plans. More than a dozen states actually require a local master plan (also called a comprehensive plan), and others encourage it in various ways. In Michigan, the controlling statute is the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA) of 2008. This act consolidated older, related planning statutes and defines basic requirements and procedures for developing a master plan in Michigan communities. One significant legal aspect of the MPEA relates to the connection between the master plan and zoning. The MPEA requires steps to reconcile proposed land use categories in the master plan with existing zoning districts found in the zoning ordinance. Additionally, the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act of 2006 (Section 125.3203) similarly connects to the master plan by specifically stating that a zoning ordinance shall be based on a plan designed to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare.



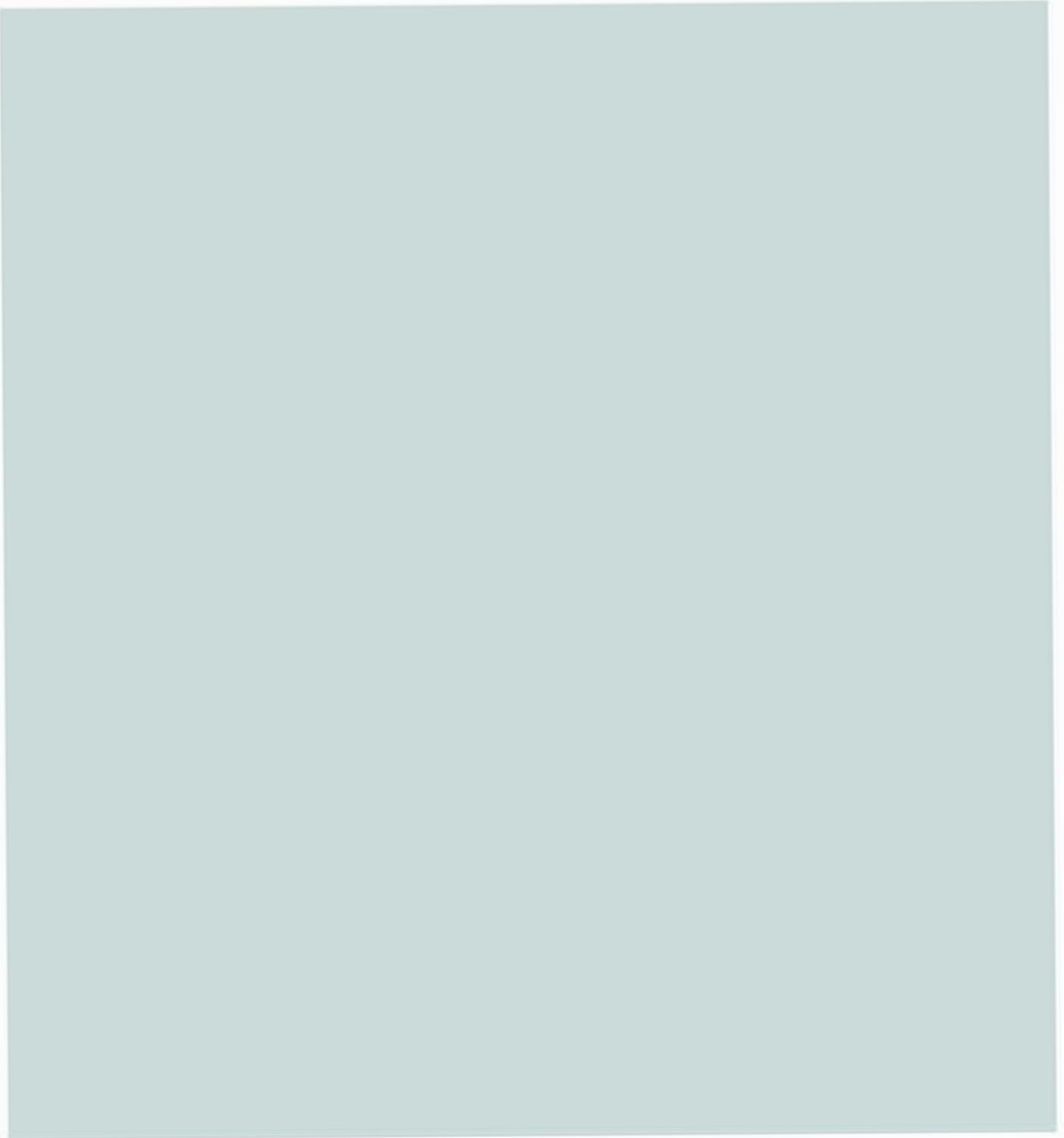
PLANNING HISTORY

Master plans are not static documents. They are regularly updated to reflect changing conditions and public attitudes. Peninsula Township has a rich tradition of looking forward and planning for the future. Its first master plan was approved in 1968 and has been amended and updated several times. The preceding and most recent master plan was adopted on July 12, 2011.



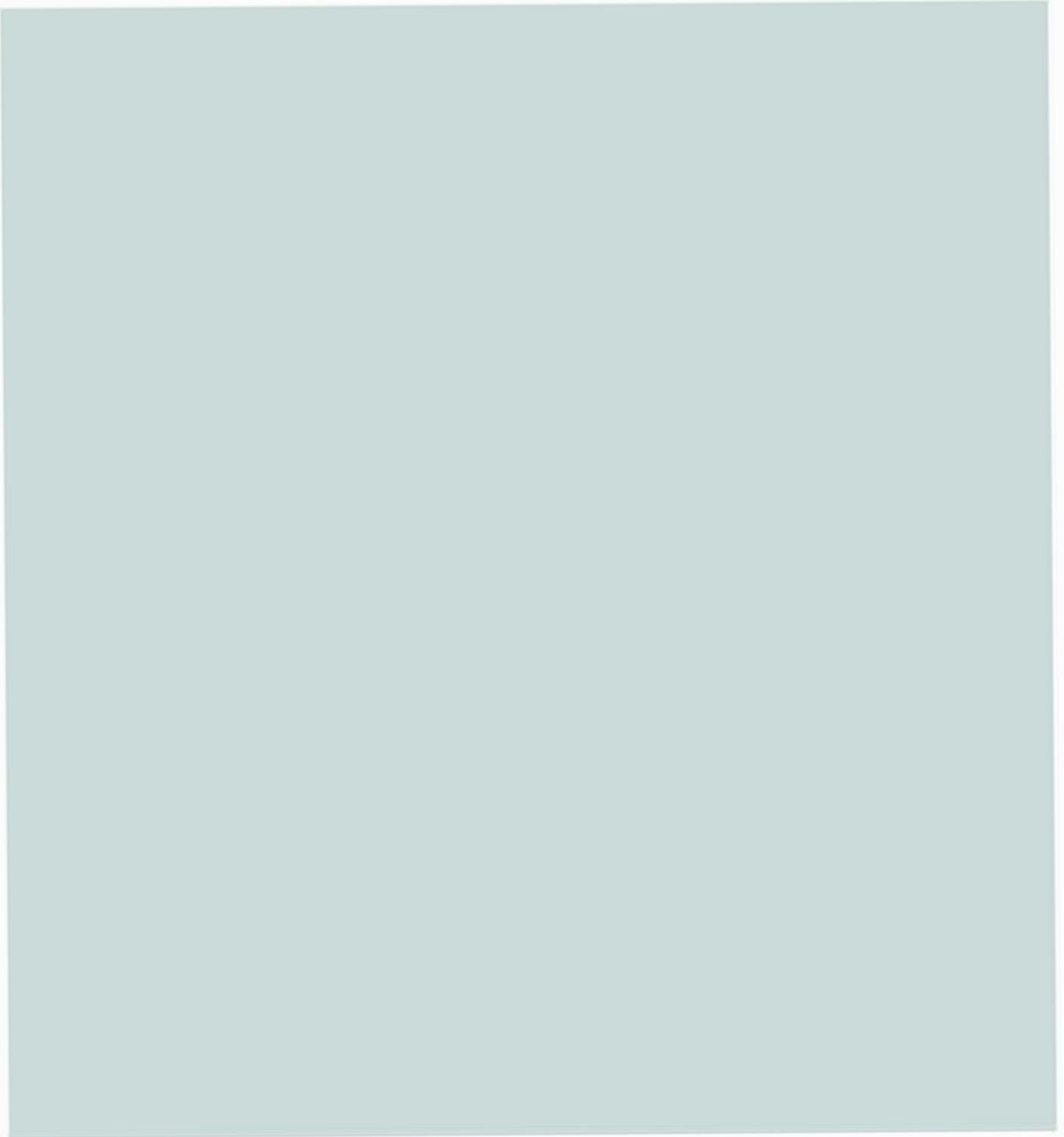


Plan Summary





Plan Summary





A SPECIAL PLACE

Peninsula Township was established in 1853 as part of Grand Traverse County. Townships are a common form of local government in Michigan, but Peninsula Township is unlike other townships in Michigan for at least six important reasons as presented below.

SIZE AND SHAPE

Michigan has 1,240 townships, and most are rectangular in shape and about 36 square miles, or 23,040 acres, in size. Peninsula Township is smaller than most with only about 28 square miles, or 17,755 acres. However, despite its smaller size, it is uniquely shaped as a long and narrow peninsula extending about 16 miles into Lake Michigan's Grand Traverse Bay. This long narrow shape creates nearly 42 miles of precious Great Lakes shoreline. At the same time, this unique shape creates transportation challenges. A single point of primary access to the Traverse City urban area occurs where Peninsula Drive and M-37 converge. This single point of traffic convergence creates a significant traffic chokepoint. Additionally, because the township is a peninsula, there is almost no potential for shared public safety services with adjacent jurisdictions. Peninsula Township has just built a third fire station so that all residents can count on reasonable and equal fire and EMS response times. Elsewhere, townships and municipalities often rely on multi-jurisdictional fire districts, mutual aid, and facilities that reach large areas.

PROPERTY VALUES

The natural beauty of the area helps make Peninsula Township a highly desirable place to live. To that end, raw land prices are significantly higher than in surrounding areas. Highly desirable waterfront lots and interior parcels with spectacular views justify high land values and the construction of expensive homes. According to MLive (posted Feb. 04, 2020), Peninsula Township was 15th among all cities and townships in the state of Michigan in terms of median home values at just under \$400,000. The most recent tax assessment records point to the fact that the total assessed value of property in Peninsula Township recently passed the \$1 billion mark.

NATURAL BEAUTY

Peninsula Township is one of the most scenic in Michigan and the nation as a whole. In 2013, *USA Today* identified M-37 as among the 10 most beautiful coastal drives across North America. Old Mission Peninsula was also designated as one of six Scenic Byways in Michigan. Elements that contribute to this natural beauty include striking views of East and West Grand Traverse bays, rolling topography, and extensive fields of fruit trees and vineyards. Clear water, sandy beaches, and protected bays also contribute to an incredible natural environment that draws tourists from around the world.



MICROCLIMATE

Because Peninsula Township is a narrow finger of land extending into Grand Traverse Bay, it has a special microclimate that helps support agriculture in the form of fruit trees and vineyards. The deep, cool waters of Lake Michigan and Grand Traverse Bay along with prevailing westerly winds and moderate temperatures help increase frost-free days in both the spring and fall. In cherry trees, for example, cool spring temperatures slow fruit and bud development, which minimizes the danger of damage due to freezes. Similarly, this unique microclimate contributed to the approval of a petition to designate Peninsula Township as a viticultural area known as Old Mission Peninsula (see Federal Register Vol. 52, No 109, Monday, June 8, 1987). This designation was granted by the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and was the fourth American viticultural area established in Michigan. An approved viticultural area is associated with an appellation of origin on wine labels and in wine advertisements.

TOURISM

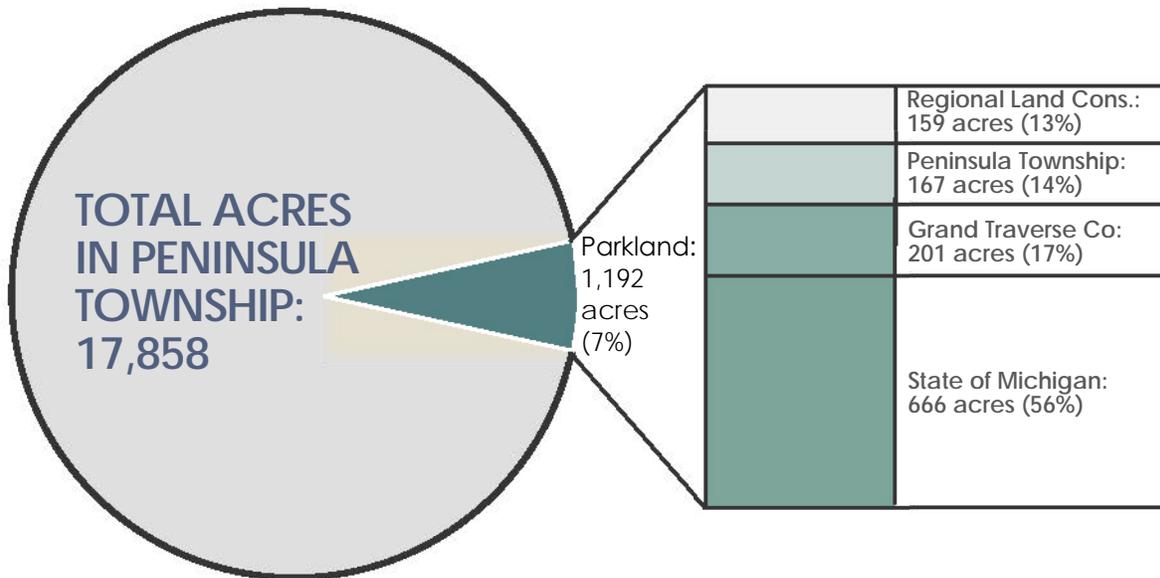
The natural beauty of the peninsula together with the wineries, Mission Point Lighthouse, and the overall popularity of the Traverse City region make Peninsula Township a popular tourist destination. The city of Traverse City reports that more than 3.3 million people visit the area each year (2012 statistics). That's about 35 times the total population of Grand Traverse County. Within this region, Peninsula Township is an oft-visited place. More than 50,000 people a year make the trip to the far northern tip of the peninsula and sign the guest book at Mission Point Lighthouse. Many more visit who don't sign the guest book. They come from all 50 states and many other countries. Additionally, the link to local tourism is so strong that one television advertisement for the tremendously successful Pure Michigan ad campaign featured images of the Old Mission General Store.

PARKS

Old Mission Peninsula is a magnet for recreational activities due to a combination of parkland, scenic vistas, shoreline roads, and Grand Traverse Bay. The township owns or manages 833 acres of publically accessible lands. The Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy protects another 159 available acres at Pyatt Lake Natural Area: The Bill Carls Nature Preserve. Power Island's 200 acres are county managed and within township boundaries. The DNR manages two boat launches, and the township will manage a third at Kelley Park. The shoreline roads attract countless cyclists, runners, and walkers. Nearby schools send athletes to train on our shoreline roads and in our parks. Cycling and track groups promote peninsula rides and runs, and nationally publicized races are hosted here as well. Residents and visitors use the bays for power boating, water skiing, fishing, sailing, and exercise via kayaking, paddle boarding, and swimming. When the bay freezes, here come the ice fishermen, skiers, and ice sailing boats. For residents and visitors alike, recreation is undeniably a sacrosanct feature of this peninsula.



Relative to its size, Peninsula Township enjoys an extraordinary number of acres of parkland. Seven acres out of every one hundred are set aside in some way for park and open space uses and owned by a unit of government or the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy.



Archie Park



Kelley Park



Haserot Beach



Bowers Harbor Park



Chapter 2 – Community Overview



OVERVIEW

The jurisdictional boundaries of Peninsula Township extend approximately 18 miles into Grand Traverse Bay, covering 17,755 acres and roughly 42 miles of shoreline. Adjacent to the township's southern boundary lie the city limits of Traverse City. Access to the township is limited, given the single state highway, M-37, which leads from M-31 to the very tip of the peninsula.





HISTORY

Old Mission Peninsula has a rich history. A more extensive description of archaeological resources, native residents, early European settlements, and historic events can be found in several books and from resources provided by organizations such as the Old Mission Peninsula Historical Society and the Peter Dougherty Society. Peninsula Township also gratefully acknowledges Karen Rieser, who prepared the following summary of local history based on her research and knowledge.

As part of the Great Lakes ecosystem, the glacially created Old Mission Peninsula has provided a home for many peoples and cultures. The first to reside on the peninsula were the Anishinabek, specifically members of the Odawa and Ojibwa tribes. Before settling here, the Anishinabek made their home on the southern shores of Lake Superior. All went well until 1740, when the soil in the Mackinac area began to fail. The tribes moved south, with some individuals choosing to settle on the resource-rich peninsula extending into Grand Traverse Bay.

The Anishinabek lived peacefully in the area as successful farmers, fishers, and hunters. Contemporary visitors to the area would have observed numerous birchbark wigwams, Three Sisters gardens containing corn, beans, and squash, a shore lined with fishing nets, canoes venturing out onto the bay to harvest fish, and racks of fish drying in the sun. On occasion, hunting parties would search the heavily timbered forests seeking game such as rabbit, squirrel, deer, and turkey. A variety of social interactions would also have been observed: grandmothers working with the very young, adults teaching boys or girls necessary skills, and others working to maintain the emotional and physical health of the tribe.

In 1838, the Native Americans living on the Old Mission Peninsula first encountered Europeans, including Reverend Peter Dougherty, a Presbyterian missionary



Replica Log Church



Peter Dougherty House



Old Mission Inn



Mission Point Lighthouse



sent by the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions to create a mission and school on newly acquired government land. The objective of this mission was to civilize, Christianize, and Europeanize the Native American population.

Over the 13 years that Rev. Dougherty lived on the peninsula, he built a school, a framed home for his family, a church, and a community of converts. Meanwhile, a variety of signed treaties increased the land available for white settlement, and European settlers soon occupied the land running along Michigan's southern border.

By the mid 1800s, Michigan had become the 26th state. In 1852, hearing rumors they were going to be relocated west of the Mississippi, a portion of the tribe moved across the bay to the Leelanau Peninsula, where they were able to purchase land. Rev. Dougherty accompanied his converts and created a new mission. The remainder of the tribe migrated to Canada.

The area formerly used for Dougherty's mission began to be casually referred to as "Old Mission." The community's name officially changed when Traverse City postmaster George Hebben renamed the local post office the Old Mission Post Office.

As the years went by, the peninsula became home to more European settlers. Log cabins appeared and were soon replaced by clapboard farmhouses. Tourism and agriculture became big business. A variety of produce was grown, including potatoes, apples, cherries, hops, hemp, grapes, blueberries, lavender, and Christmas trees. Livestock such as mink, cattle, whitefish, and trout were raised or harvested from the bay.

Successful farming produced more than peninsula residents and tourists could consume. The need to quickly move these products led to the development of a maritime shipping industry. The deep waters of Bowers and Old Mission harbors became prominent ports. Soon, each provided a massive dock, storage sheds, and office space.

In 1909, schooners such as the *Boyce* left Bowers Harbor headed for Chicago loaded with up to 8,000 pounds of potatoes. Later, steam-driven ships transported goods up and down Michigan's west coast, along the eastern coast of Wisconsin, into Illinois, and into the large city port of Chicago. Eventually, water transportation was replaced by train and truck transport, which is still the method of choice today.

In 1870, the increase in maritime activity prompted the construction of a lighthouse station at the tip of the Old Mission Peninsula to warn sailors of the shoal surrounding the point. The *Metropolis*, a cargo ship, was just one of the many vessels captured by the shoal; its wreckage can be seen just yards off Haserot Beach.





Tourists also arrived by schooner, steamship, train, and auto. A variety of lodging destinations were available, some of which are still in business today. Visitors could choose to stay at Hedden Hall, also known as the Porter House and today the Old Mission Inn. The Pines and the Neahtawanta Inn were also available to house summer visitors. The Stonewall, Bowers Harbor, and Rushmore inns, once popular destinations, are no longer available for lodging.

Over the years, commercial enterprises were established on the peninsula; several are still with us today. In 1853, the popular Brinkman Shoe Store was located on Woodland Road. Grocery stores came and went, among them Lardies, now the General Store in Old Mission; the Bowers Harbor Store, now the Boathouse Restaurant; and Watson's Grocery,

once located across the road from what is now Peninsula Market. John Emory, the great-grandson of maritime sailor Captain Emory, developed the Big Jon Company that designed and produced downriggers and fishing equipment that is now sold nationally.

Descendants of the Ojibwa, Odawa, and early pioneers still reside in the area; their devotion to the land runs deep. Land preservation, continued agricultural growth, and walking a respectful path into the future is of great importance to protect the past and enhance the future of this beloved peninsula.

The current presence of Native Americans in the area is also apparent with the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians. Tribal offices are



located in Peshawbestown, Michigan, about 20 miles north of Traverse City in Leelanau County. The Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians is a federally recognized Native American tribe with a reservation extending into portions of six counties as well as Grand Traverse Bay, the eastern shore of Lake Michigan, Lake Leelanau, and Elk Lake. The tribe owns and operates the Turtle Creek Casino & Hotel, Leelanau Sands Casino & Lodge, and Grand Traverse Resort and Spa.

With these historic roots, the Old Mission Peninsula remains a thriving agricultural area and continues to host tourists from all over the world. Visitors and residents enjoy breathtaking landscapes, clear waters, sandy beaches, a variety of events, multiple restaurants, award-winning wineries, and fabulous historical sites.

Fortunately, several of the peninsula's more prominent historical resources are designated as such at the state and federal levels, including the National Register of Historic Places, which is the official list of our country's historic buildings, districts, sites, structures, and objects worthy of preservation. The National Register was established as part of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and is overseen by the National Park Service. Three properties in Peninsula Township are included on the National Register:

- Hedden Hall (also known as the Old Mission Inn and the Porter Hotel)
- Stickney Summer House and Bowers Harbor Inn (where Mission Table and the Jolly Pumpkin are now located)
- Dougherty Mission House

The state of Michigan also identifies historic sites; these sites may or may not also be on the national register. Current state of Michigan listings include:

- Hedden Hall (also known as the Old Mission Inn and the Porter Hotel)
- Joseph Hessler Log House
- Old Mission Peninsula Lighthouse Park
- Mission Point Lighthouse
- Old Mission Congregational Church

- Dougherty Mission House
- Old Mission Congregational Church

Soils

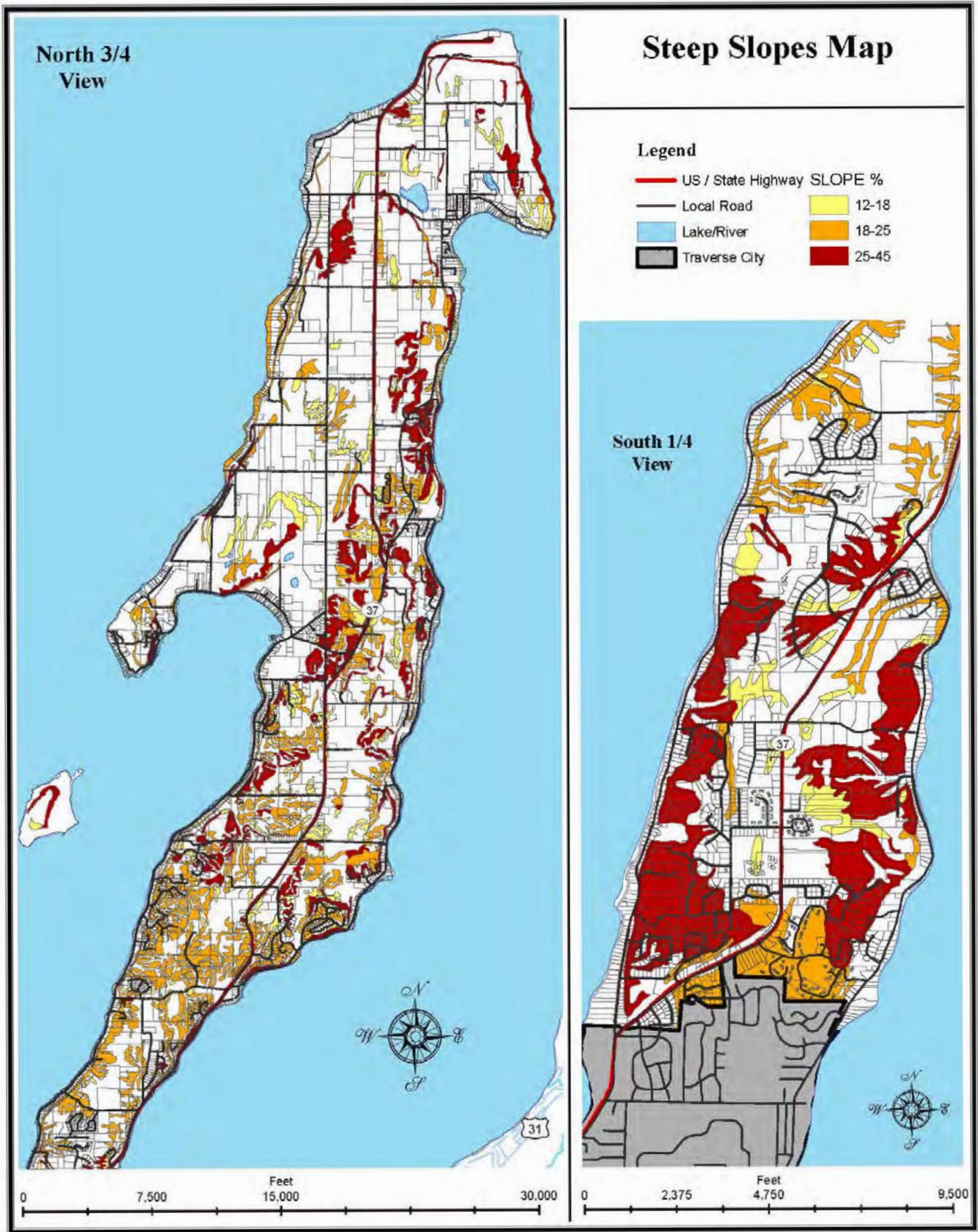
According to the U.S. Soil Conservation Service, there are six general soil associations in Grand Traverse County. One of these soils associations is the Emmet Leelanau association on the Old Mission Peninsula north of Traverse City and in the northeastern and north-central portion of the county. This soil association is described as well-drained, slightly acid to neutral sandy loams and loamy sands occurring on gently to steeply sloping areas.

Topography

Glacial topography on the peninsula consists of rolling hills, valleys, and wetlands. Some bluffs rise dramatically from the shores of the bays to more than 200 feet in elevation, affording spectacular views of East and West Grand Traverse bays. The slope and aspect of the hillsides provide excellent locations for orchards and vineyards. An illustration of areas with steep slopes is shown on the map on the next page. Most steep slopes are found toward the south.

Climate

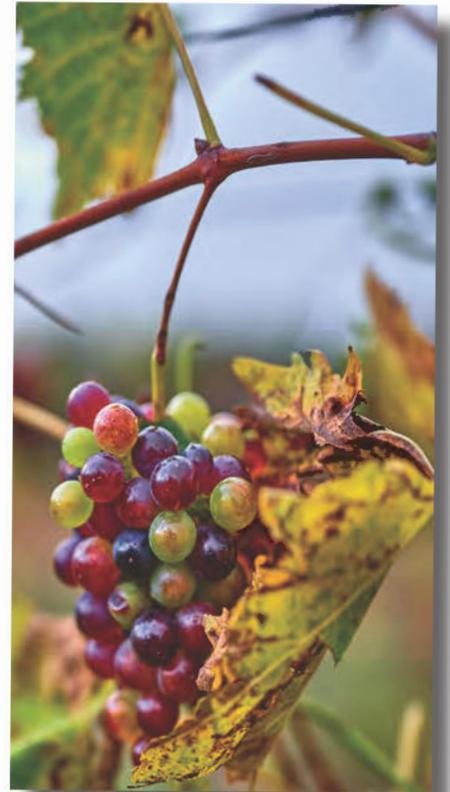
Climate combines with topography and soil types to make Peninsula Township a uniquely ideal area for agriculture, particularly fruit crops. Classified as a humid continental maritime climate, peninsula weather is moderated by the presence of the two bays. The microclimate, tempered by the insulating quality of the bays, protects vulnerable buds from early- and late- season frosts and results in a longer growing period. The frost-free season on the peninsula ranges from 140 to more than 150 days compared to fewer than 100 days inland near Fife Lake. Annual snowfall averages 120 inches in the southwest portion of Grand Traverse County compared to fewer than 90 inches on the peninsula.





Agriculture

Agriculture has played an important role in the lives of residents for many generations. In the 1800s, a group of settlers hired a state geologist to survey the area and prepare a report. The findings indicated that the climate and soils were favorably suited for fruit production. Shortly after the report was published, George Parmalee planted cherry trees. Other pioneers followed Mr. Parmalee's example, concentrating on developing orchard agriculture on the peninsula. By 1904, the census indicated that 1,369 acres of apples and 202 acres of cherries had been planted. In recent decades, a number of landowners have planted grapes for wine production, which now represents an important industry on the peninsula. Other industries that support agriculture have also developed. While there has traditionally been little heavy industry on the peninsula, the township is currently home to many agriculturally-based businesses such as fruit processing plants.



Historical Context of Agriculture and Agribusiness

The first township master plan was adopted in 1968, and farmland protection was among the goals identified. Subsequently, a zoning ordinance was adopted in 1972 that defined an agricultural A-1 zoning boundary that is essentially the same today as it was then. Chateau Grand Traverse was among the first commercial vineyard and winery operations to appear in the 1970s at a time when cherries and other tree fruits were the major agricultural activities on the peninsula. The grape/winery industry continued to grow throughout the late 1970s and early '80s with most growers selling to processors in Peninsula Township and Leelanau County.

The combination of increases in land values and a growing trend of prime farmland being converted into subdivisions created a concern among farmers and homeowners about the future of Old Mission Peninsula. George McManus, county extension agent and later state senator, wrote an article for the Soil Conservation Service newsletter in 1973 asking a profound question: in the future, would there be cherries on Old Mission Peninsula? This article crystalized the concern about farming versus development in the minds of farmers and homeowners alike. The farmers were concerned about non-farm persons in close proximity to producing farmland and their complaints about the dust, noise, and odors of normal farming practices. Homeowners were concerned about the loss of character of the township and increased pressure on the roads and utility systems as well as increased taxes.

In the late 1980s, these trends prompted a review of the township's master plan and zoning ordinance. The resulting master plan and zoning rules were based on the carrying capacity of roads and utilities. Recognizing the unique geography of the Old Mission Peninsula, the documents called for a reduction in the sewer and water municipal service area. At the same time, increased flexibility for home occupations and employees



in residences was proposed as a way to add economic opportunity. It also increased value-added opportunities for farming operations while keeping non-farm persons from close proximity to production activities. Further, a study by township staff showed that residential development did not always pay for the full cost of public services it used while farmland and open space required fewer services while paying a comparatively high level of taxes.

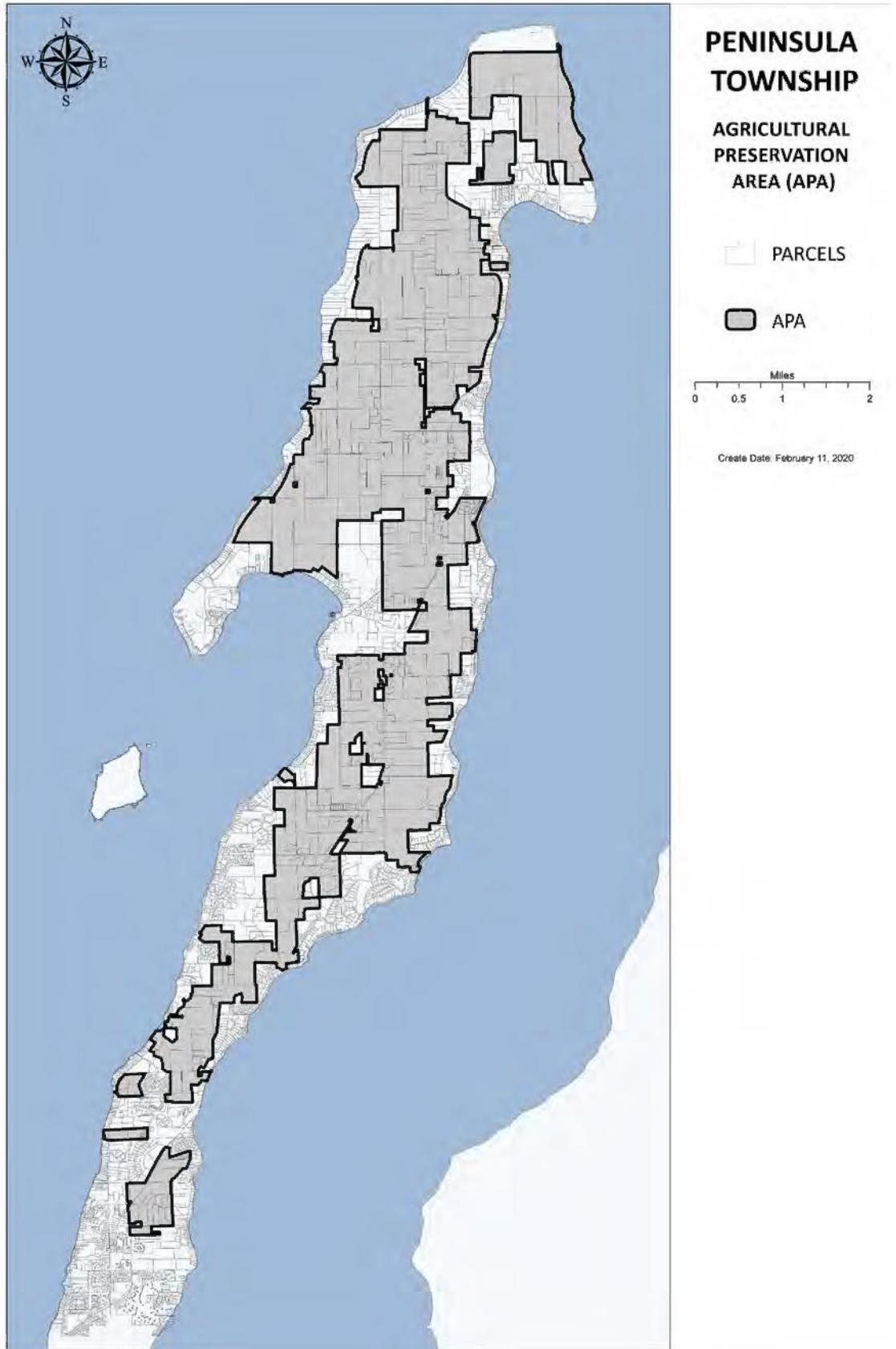
With the prospect of growth pressure and expectation of the loss of unique agricultural land in sharper focus, a purchase of development rights (PDR) program

was created and supported by residents. In 1994, the voters in Peninsula Township approved a tax increase of 1 ¼ mills for (HOW LONG?) to preserve in perpetuity the agricultural and open space character of the township. This program was among the first of its kind in the nation. In 2002, voters again confirmed the plan by approving a second millage vote of 2 mills for 20 years. The second millage vote, while for an increased amount over a longer period, was approved by 60 percent of the votes cast. Today, the money generated from past millage votes has largely been spent, and the PDR citizen committee is beginning to explore residents' interest in once again renewing the PDR millage.





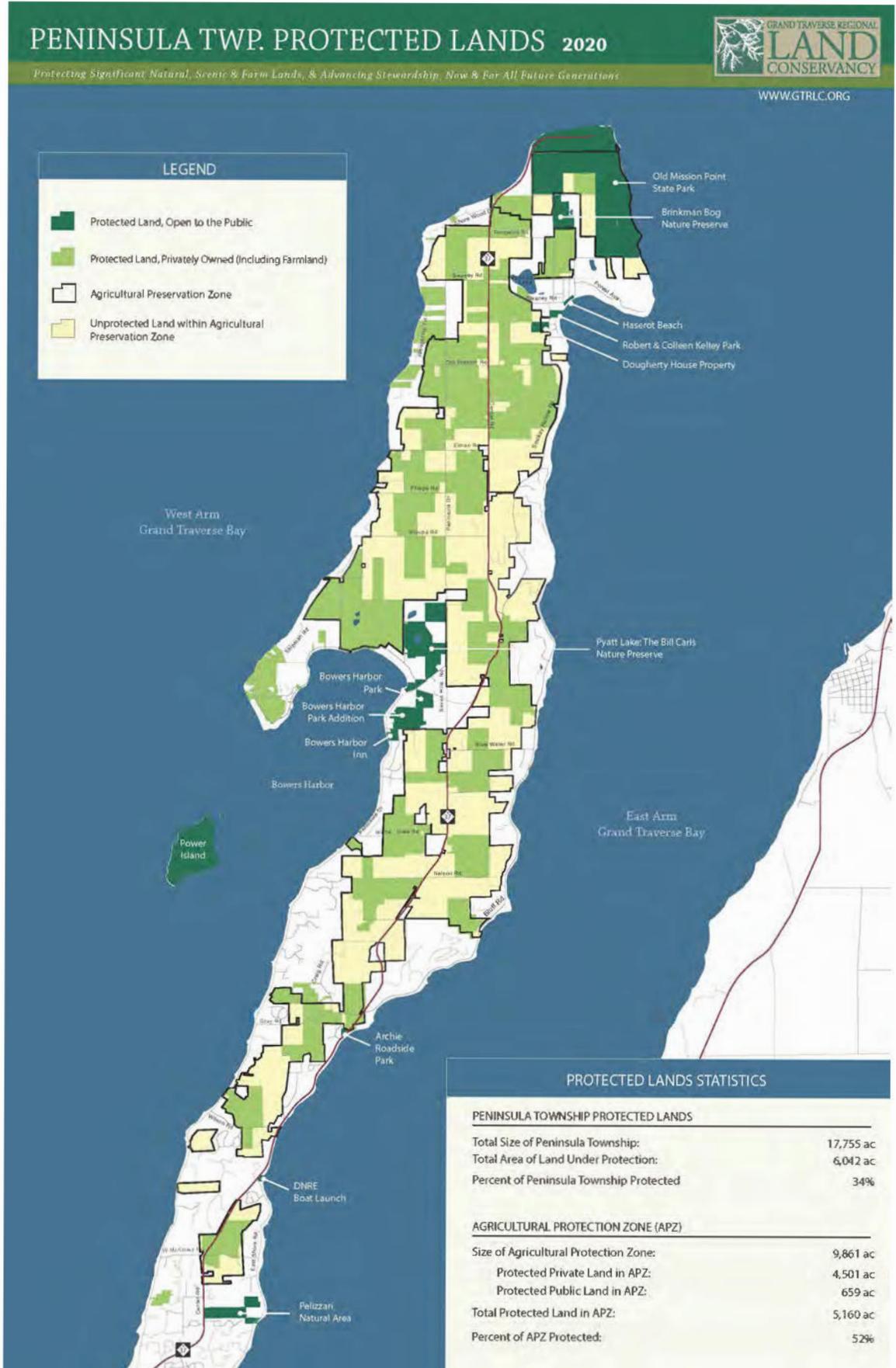
Past planning efforts in Peninsula Township led to the definition of the Agricultural Preservation Zone (APZ). This map closely aligns with the A-1 agricultural zoning district and depicts all high quality agricultural land that is technically eligible to participate in the PDR program if a voluntary application is completed by the property owner. As shown, the APZ covers a significant portion of Peninsula Township.





After many years of planning and implementation, the map to the right shows the total amount of protected land in the township. PDR program program, together with with other forms of land protection, now exceeds 6,000 acres, or 34% of the township.

Considering only the agricultural preservation area (APA - about 9,990 acres), the total amount of protected land covers about 60 percent of the total acres.



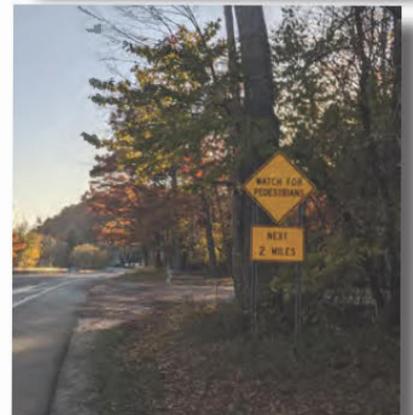


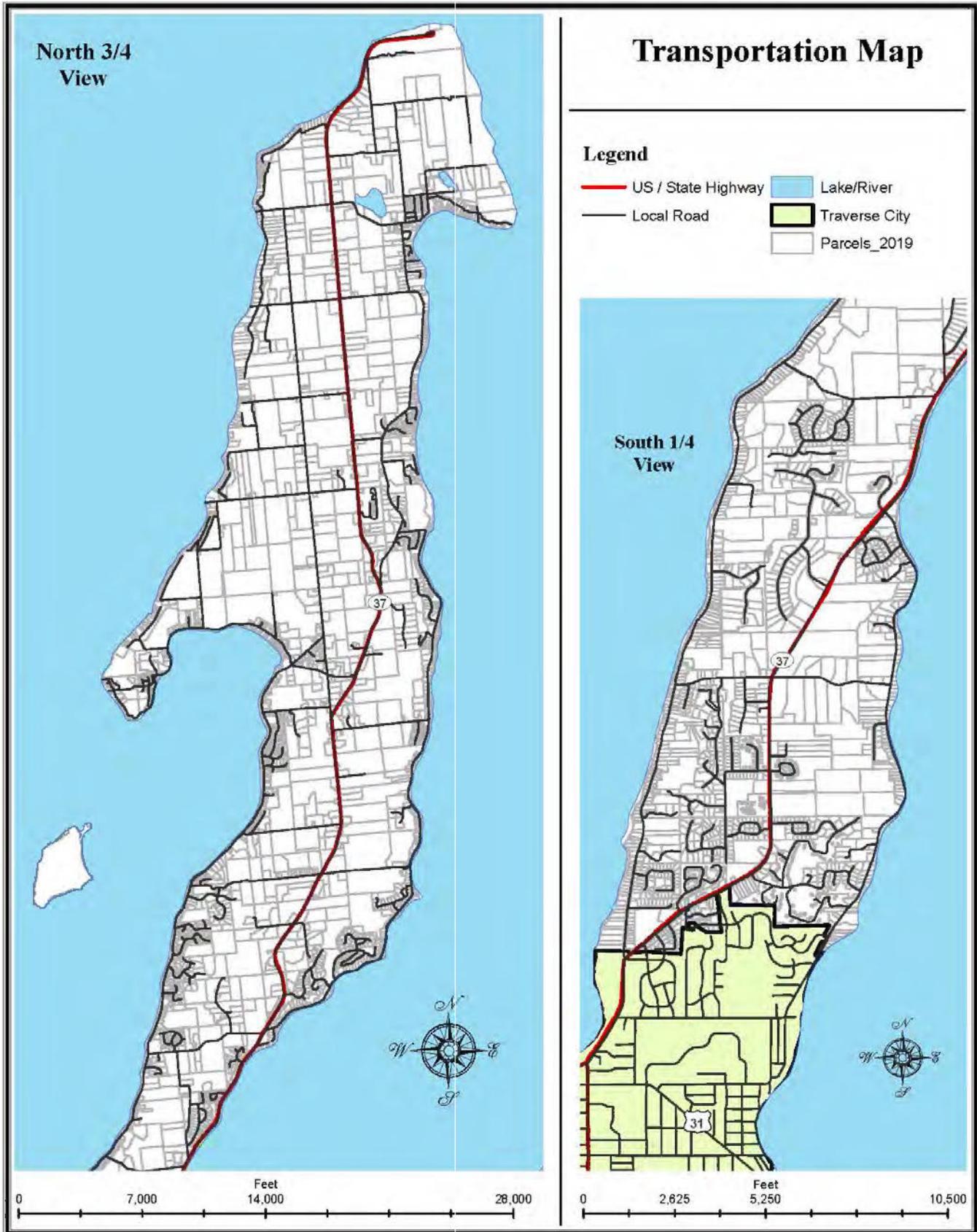
Transportation

Elements of the transportation system we see today are deeply rooted in the past. As a result of the sinking of a large ship on a rocky shoal extending out into the bay in the 1800s, the lighthouse we see today at the tip of the peninsula was constructed in 1870 just south of the 45th parallel. The first public road in Grand Traverse County, built in 1853 by volunteers, stretched from Traverse City to the village of Old Mission. Other local roadways followed Native American trails and later became familiar roads such as Peninsula Drive and East Shore Road.

The peninsula's main thoroughfare, Center Road or M-37, provides the primary means of transportation north and south through the township. Center Road is managed by the state of Michigan's Department of Transportation (MDOT) and provides the connections to the state and federal highway system. As described later, M-37 is also a Scenic Heritage Route. A map showing the existing vehicular transportation system is provided on the following page.

Within a few miles of the base of the peninsula, residents of the township have access to three state highways that serve as major east-west and north-south corridors as well as to Cherry Capital Airport. However, accessing Peninsula Township is a key planning issue that universally impacts almost all others. With only one primary route on and off the peninsula, the capacity of that road and related intersections restricts traffic flow significantly. Significant growth in Peninsula Township would undoubtedly increase traffic congestion at these intersections.

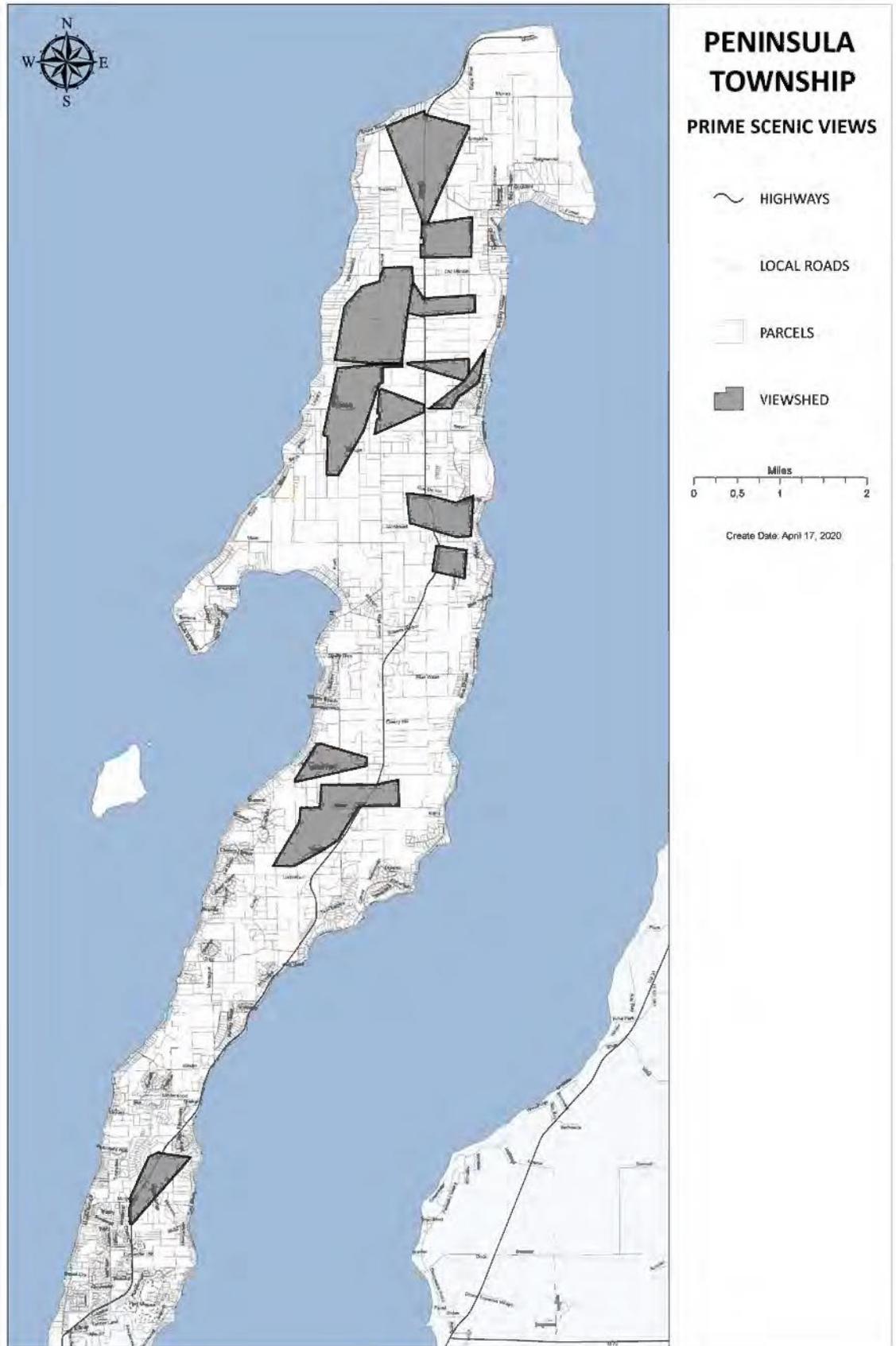






Views

The amazing views provided by Pensinsula Township's unique geography and proximity to Lake Michigan have been specifically identified for planning purposes. Recently, the map illustrating major viewsheds was updated and is provided on this page.





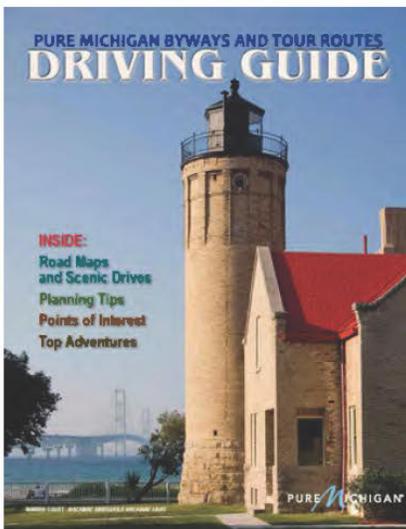
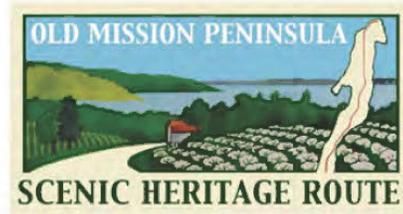
PURE MICHIGAN BYWAYS

Pure Michigan Byways are state trunkline routes with special significance. They are designated according to an eight-step procedure and fall into categories based upon intrinsic qualities such as scenery, history, and recreation.

The Old Mission Peninsula Scenic Heritage Route (M-37) was designated in 2008 and keeps company with a few other scenic byways and heritage routes in the area such as the Leelanau Scenic Heritage Route, M-22, and M-119 (Tunnel of Trees).



Tourists enjoying the view along M-37 near Chateau Grand Traverse



Old Mission Peninsula

Jetting out into Lake Michigan's Grand Traverse Bay, M-37 is the peninsula's main route, running a northerly course between beautiful scenery from rising bluffs, vineyards, orchards, and farms.

The Old Mission Peninsula divides Grand Traverse Bay and has a long history, starting with the Ottawa and Chippewa tribes. In 1839, Rev. Peter Dougherty established a mission for those tribes. The first public road in Grand Traverse County was built in 1853 by volunteers, stretching from Traverse City to the village of Old Mission. Europeans discovered that this "finger of land" along the 45th parallel was ideal for growing fruit. In 1935, the road was designated "Queen's Highway" in honor of the annual cherry blossom celebration's elected queen.

The byway is entirely within Peninsula Township, where you'll find amazing views of Lake Michigan, orchards, vineyards, farm fields, rolling hills, parks, trails, and a lighthouse. There are many value-added agricultural destinations, such as wineries, bed and breakfasts,

u-pick farms, and farm stands, just off the byway to the east or west on county roads. Many wineries offer spectacular views of east and west Grand Traverse Bay/Lake Michigan and farm stands provide seasonal fruit, such as cherries, blueberries, peaches, apples, etc., and fruit products. Peninsula Township was the first local government in the state of Michigan to implement a voter-approved "Purchase of Development Rights" program to preserve the orchards, farmlands and scenic view areas from development.

US-31 to Bowers Harbor Road

The southern section of the byway is more residential, with many year-round and seasonal homes and clustered residential developments. Two miles north of Traverse City's busy US-31 corridor is the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy's 62-acre **Pelizzari Natural Area**, which was once the Pelizzari family farm. Its location amidst relatively dense development makes it a backyard park for many, as well as a destination worth traveling to. There are nearly 3 miles of trail that meanders through wide-open fields, former orchards, quiet upland forests, and cool lowlands with giant hemlocks, and are suitable for hikers, skiers, and snowshoers. Visitors are likely to encounter several bird species. The upland hardwood forest is dazzling in autumn.



Further north, the **East Grand Traverse Bay Boat Access Site** provides launching of pleasure and fishing boats, canoes and kayaks into East Grand Traverse Bay. **Archie Roadside Township Park** provides bicyclists a parking lot and staging area for tours of the Old Mission Peninsula, with access to Grand Traverse Bay. Further north, visitors can pull off at the **Center Road Scenic Overlook** to take in the spectacular view of east and west Grand Traverse Bay and take pictures.

Just off the byway on Bowers Harbor Road is **Bowers Harbor Park**, a major township park with access to natural and recreational resources that includes tennis and volleyball courts, baseball, softball and soccer fields, playgrounds, picnicking amenities (such as pavilions, grills, and tables), a restroom, and nonmotorized trails. North of Bowers Harbor Park on Peninsula Drive is the conservancy's 159-acre **Pyatt Lake Nature Preserve**, one of the last remaining examples of a "wooded dune and swale complex" habitat in northern Michigan. The pristine landscape and unique habitat mosaic make it a haven for more than 250 plant species. In the spring, lady slipper orchids and trillium carpet the ground. Migrating waterfowl use the lake as a resting place, while warblers, winter wrens, woodpeckers, and owls all flourish in the maturing forest. With its geological and botanical features and abundant wildlife, Pyatt Lake is a must see.



Public Water System

Construction of the Peninsula Township water distribution system began in the late 1980s out of the need for reliable potable water for domestic demand and fire protection. Through the years, population growth and construction in select commercial and residential locations has generated the need to expand the system. The sole water source is supplied by the City of Traverse City through a bulk water agreement regulated by the two governmental entities. Several mutual connection points between the city and township systems are monitored utilizing master meters that are recorded monthly by the Grand Traverse County Department of Public Works (GTC DPW) for tracking and billing purposes. Presently, the entire system operates under two centralized service districts, the Peninsula Drive District and the Huron Hills District; both provide both domestic and fire flows. The limits of each service district are defined by the primary infrastructure that supplies the users.

Currently, there are 820 customers connected to the township's public water system. It is important that water pressure in a consumer's residence or place of business be neither too high nor too low. The normal operating pressure range for water distribution systems is 40 to 90 psi and a minimum of 20 psi during fire flow (emergency) conditions. Water is distributed to users located within the two service districts by infrastructure owned, operated, and maintained by the township. This infrastructure is comprised of one booster station, one water storage tank, seven

reducing valve stations, and approximately 15 miles of distribution piping. Booster stations pump water to outlying districts at higher elevations, and water is fed back down towards the city of Traverse City to some extent through pressure reducing valves (PRVs). The operating pressures for each service district are dictated by gravity (ground or elevated) storage.

As an owner of a public water and sewer system, Peninsula Township is responsible for ensuring compliance with both the Safe Drinking Water Act, Act 399, and the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, Act 451, as enforced by the Michigan Department of Environment Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE). Part of the role of the township engineer (Gourdie-Fraser) is to ensure the township's system complies with these requirements. This includes performing ongoing evaluation of the existing system to ensure adequate capacity to accommodate existing and future growth demands, maintain inventory and condition of all assets, coordinate with DPW for maintenance of infrastructure, and define a capital improvement plan for each system. The following two maps illustrate the extent of the public water system in Peninsula Township and the location of proposed capital improvement projects recommended for the next 20 years. These improvements also appear in the table below.

Areas not served by the public water system rely on on-site septic systems as regulated by the Grand Traverse County Health Department.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS			
PROJECT	STATUS	COST	RECOMMENDATIONS
Water Main Upgrades (1 to 5 Year)	None	\$233,584.00	Increase Fire Flow
Water Main Extensions (1 to 5 Year)	None	\$632,905.00	Expand Service Area
Emergency Booster Station	None	\$260,000.00	Increase Reliability / Capacity
Water Main Extensions (10 to 20 Year)	None	\$3,091,790.00	Expand Service Area
Special Assessment District Improvements	None	\$2,332,967.00	Expand Service
MAINTENANCE			
Complete Tank Inspection and Cleaning	Last Completed in 2010	\$2,200.00	Needs to be performed every 5 years



Peninsula Township Water System

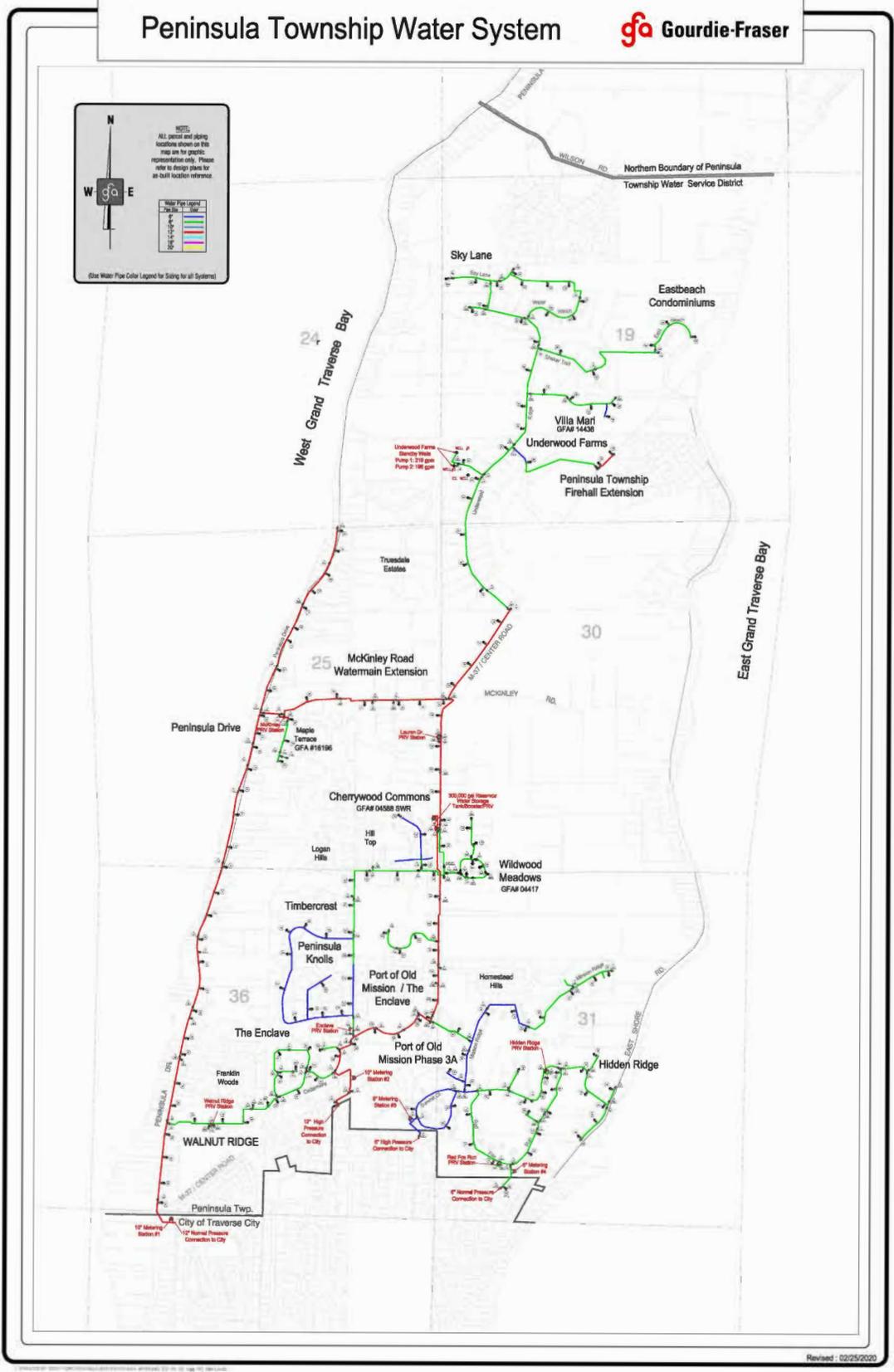


NOTES:
 ALL points and piping locations shown on this map are for general representation only. Please refer to design plans for an exact location reference.

Water Pipe Legend

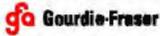
12"	Blue
10"	Green
8"	Red
6"	Orange
4"	Yellow
3"	Purple
2"	Light Blue

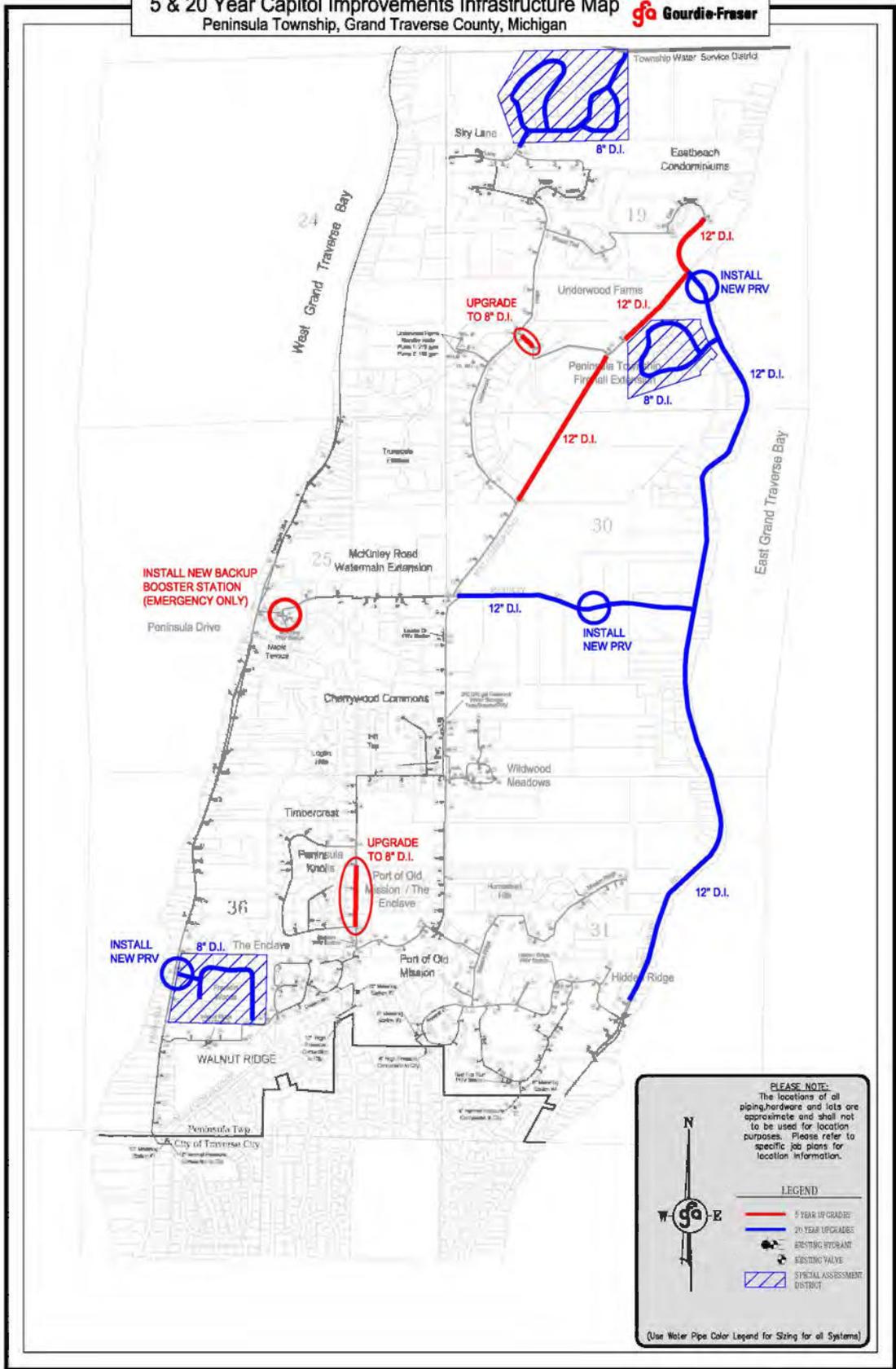
(Star Water Pipe Color Legend for Sizing for all Systems)



Revised: 02/25/2020



5 & 20 Year Capitol Improvements Infrastructure Map  **Gourdie-Fraser**
 Peninsula Township, Grand Traverse County, Michigan





Public Sewer System

The Peninsula Township sewer system began to be constructed in the 1970s and has expanded through the years with the growth in population. Wastewater treatment for the township is accomplished through a contractual relationship with the Traverse City Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility (TCRWTF). The sole treatment source is provided by the City of Traverse City through a bulk sewer agreement regulated by the two governmental entities. Several mutual connection points between the city and township systems are monitored utilizing master meters that are recorded monthly by the GTC DPW for tracking and billing purposes.

Currently, there are 650 customers connected to the Peninsula public sewer system. The system is comprised of three major sewer system districts by infrastructure owned, operated, and maintained by the township. This infrastructure is comprised of three pumping stations, 2,500 linear feet (0.5 miles) of force main, and approximately 8.6 miles (45, 500 linear feet of gravity (collection) piping.

The map on the following page illustrates the extent of the public sewer system in Peninsula Township. Areas not served by public sewer rely on on-site septic systems as regulated by the Grand Traverse County Health Department.





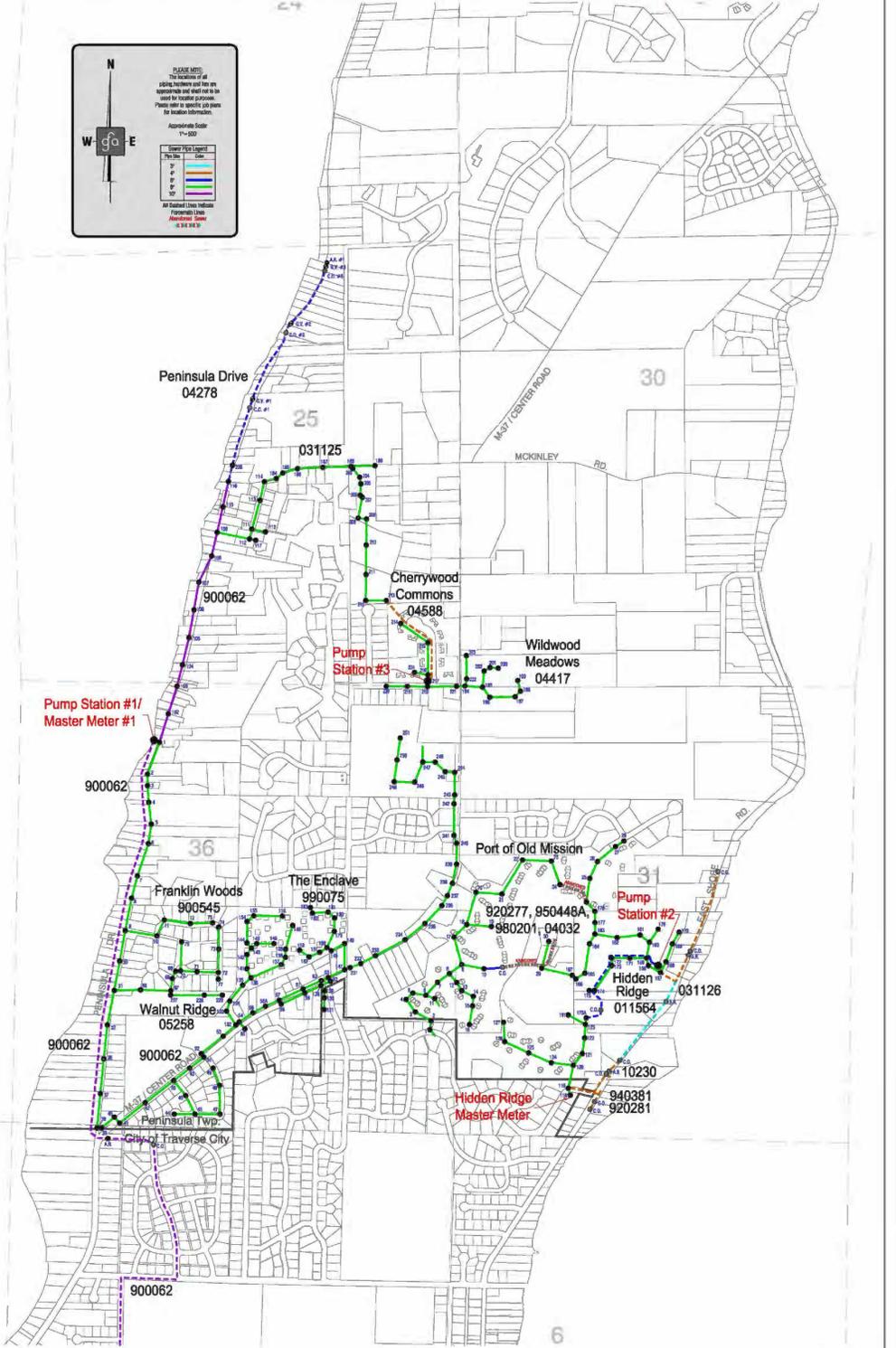
Peninsula Township Sanitary Sewer System Gourdie-Fraser

PLEASE NOTE:
The locations of all
structures and lines are
approximate and shall not be
used for location purposes.
Please refer to specific job plans
for location information.

Approximate Scale
1"=500'

Structure / Line Type	Color
Sanitary Sewer	Green
Storm Sewer	Blue
Water	Red
Gas	Yellow
Electric	Purple
Telephone	Orange
Other	Black

All Sanitary Lines Within
Greenlined Area
Abandoned Sewer
is Not Shown



Revised: 02/25/2020



Demographics

Peninsula Township’s population has grown steadily for many decades and continues to represent about six percent of Grand Traverse County. As developable land becomes scarcer, however, it is expected that Peninsula Township will likely represent a decreasing amount of the total population of Grand Traverse County in the coming decades.

Year	Peninsula Township Population	Change from Prior Decade	Grand Traverse County Population	Change from Prior Decade	Peninsula Township as a % of Grand Traverse County
1930	1107		20,011		5.5
1940	1146	3.5	22,702	13.4	5
1950	1531	33.6	27,826	22.6	5.5
1960	2013	31.5	32,687	17.5	6.2
1970	2642	31.2	38,169	16.8	6.9
1980	3883	47	54,899	43.8	7.1
1990	4340	11.8	64,273	17.1	6.8
2000	5265	21.3	77,654	20.8	6.8
2010	5433	3.2	86,986	12	6.2
2018 (est)	5799		92,573		6.3

Resident Profiles

One way communities are unique is in terms of the characteristics of residents. The characteristics of people who call a community home is important because the lens by which a livable community is defined align





with attributes such as age, family size, income, educational levels, etc. For example, the quality of a local school district and employment opportunities are far more important to young families than to retired or elderly households.

According to Census Bureau QuickFacts data, a Peninsula Township resident is:

- **More likely to be of retirement age.** About a third of all Peninsula Township residents are 65 years old or older (compared with 17.2 percent statewide).
- **More likely to live in an owner-occupied home.** More than nine out of 10 housing units in the township are owner-occupied (compared with 71 percent statewide).
- **More likely to have lived in the same home one year ago.** More than 91 percent of residents lived in the same home one year ago (compared with 85.8 percent statewide).
- **More likely to live in a household with fewer people.** The average household size in Peninsula Township is 2.21 (compared with 2.49 statewide).
- **More likely to be 18 years old or older.** Only 17.3 percent of Peninsula Township residents are under 18 years old (compared with 21.7 percent statewide).
- **More likely to have a computer at home with broadband internet.** More than 96 percent of Peninsula Township residents have a computer and nearly 92 percent have broadband internet (compared with 88 percent with a computer and 79 percent with broadband internet statewide).
- **More likely to live in a household with a substantially larger household income.** The median household income in Peninsula Township (2018 dollars) was \$100,949. (compared with nearly half (\$54,938) statewide).
- **Far less likely to live in poverty.** The census bureau reports only 3.3 percent of people living in poverty in Peninsula Township (compared with 14.1 percent statewide).



The Current Moment in Time

Planning is naturally forward looking, but it also takes place through a lens that reflects past and current viewpoints. In 2021, Peninsula Township finds itself looking forward from a perspective of recent accomplishments and future challenges. Some recent accomplishments (in no order of importance) include:



OLD MISSION PENINSULA SCHOOL

In October 2015, Traverse City Area Public Schools (TCAPS) announced it would close three elementary schools, including Old Mission Elementary School. Thanks to extraordinary community efforts over many months driven by the recognition of the importance of preserving a sense of community on Old Mission Peninsula, a foundation was formed by local residents and 1.1 million dollars were raised to purchase the school building and continue the education legacy on the peninsula. In September of 2018, Old Mission Peninsula School opened to the public.



PENINSULA COMMUNITY LIBRARY

Given the changes occurring with TCAPS and the local elementary school, in 2016, the leadership of Peninsula Community Library mounted a campaign to raise funds to build a new library and move the former library out of the elementary school. More than 2.5 million dollars were raised, and our beautiful new 5,600-square-foot facility opened in September of 2019.





CONTINUED IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS (PDR) PROGRAM

Peninsula Township is well known for creating one of the first publicly funded PDR programs in the United States and the first in the Midwest. In 1994, voters agreed to tax themselves to fund a voluntary program to purchase development rights from agricultural landowners. Outside funding from the State of Michigan, American Farmland Trust, the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy (GTRLC), and the federal Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program subsequently added to this effort. In the years that followed (between 1996 and 2009), the PDR program protected more than 2,800 acres from development. Today, more than 110 agreements covering 3,347 acres are subject to PDR restrictions held by Peninsula Township. When combined with GTRLC-held conservation easements and other public land, roughly 6,500 acres have been permanently protected in Peninsula Township, or 36 percent of the total land area. The recent community survey suggests continued support for this program.



EXPANDING LOCAL WINE INDUSTRY

The beginnings of the local wine industry can be traced back to the early 1990s with the establishment of entities such as Chateau Grand Traverse and Chateau Chantel. Today, 11 wineries support local agricultural products and preserve farmland. The success of the wineries supports and promotes the popularity of Old Mission Peninsula viticulture.



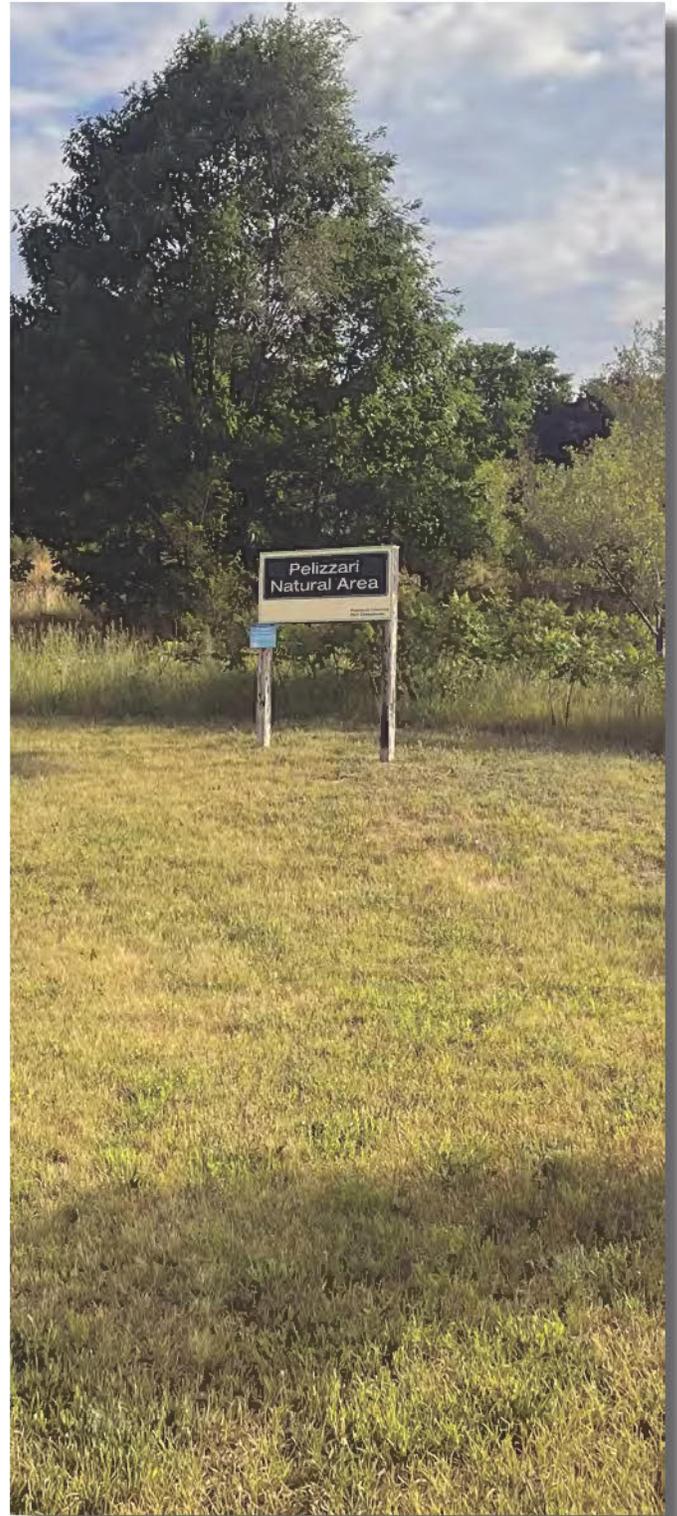


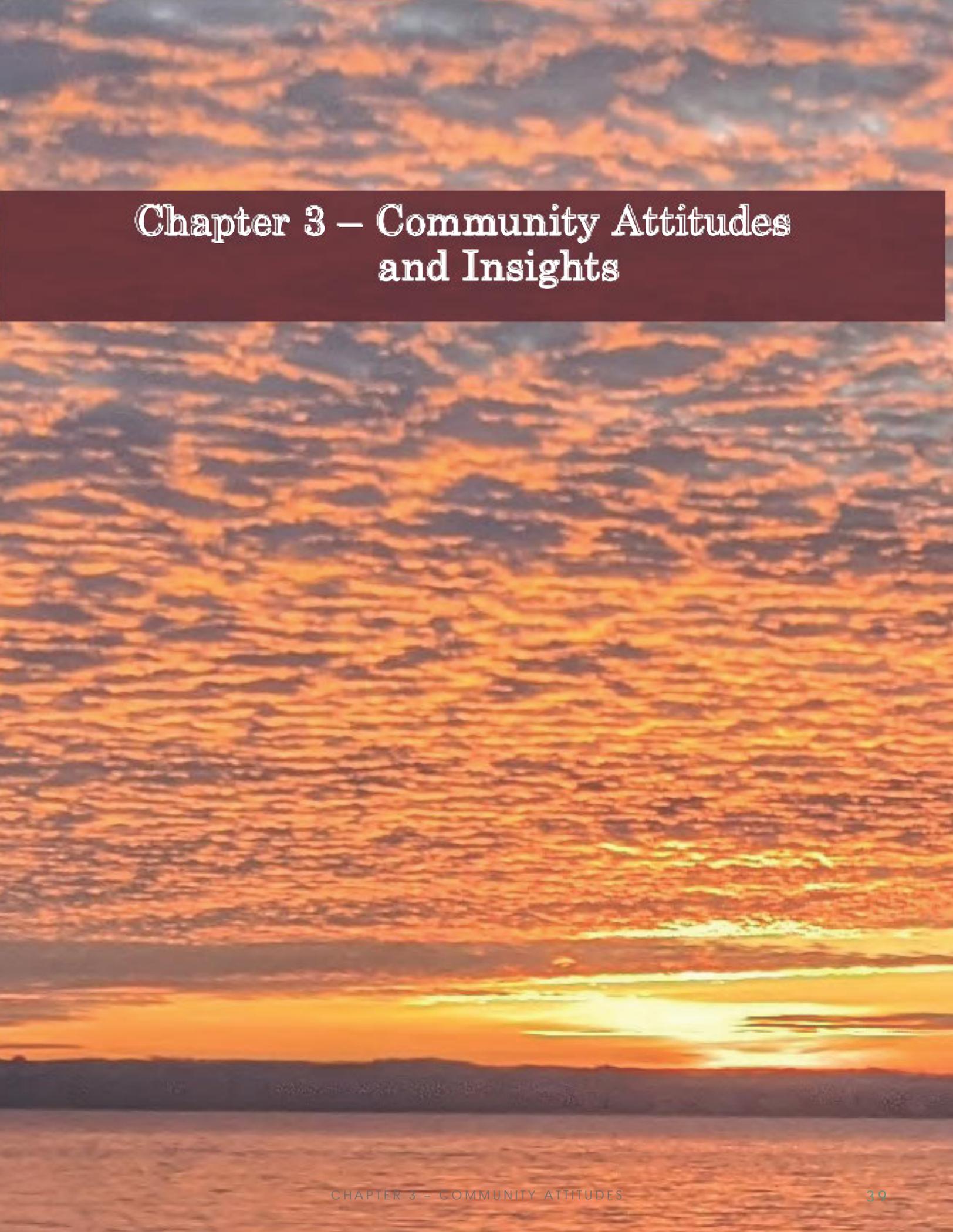
PARK EXPANSIONS

In late 2015, using funds from private donations, a Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant, and the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, Peninsula Township acquired nearly 60 acres of land to expand Bowers Harbor Park. A development plan that includes an extensive walking trail system, parking, pavilions, and toilets was prepared. **This major project supplements prior recent efforts to establish Mission Point Lighthouse Park at the tip of the peninsula, the 62-acre Pelizzari Natural Area at the base of the peninsula, and Kelley Park in Old Mission. Altogether, the total amount of parkland available to residents and guests is now nearly 1,200 acres (for more information on local public lands, see p. 14).**

FIRE PROTECTION

Fire Station No. 3, completed in early 2021, offers improved emergency response times for those living in the northern part of Peninsula Township. This significant milestone is accompanied by related steps to increase staff, place automatic external defibrillators (AED) in businesses, and get working smoke detectors in every home. All these steps add up to increased resident safety and lowered Insurance Service Offices (ISO) ratings, which can lower insurance costs.



The background of the page is a photograph of a sunset over a body of water. The sky is filled with a dense layer of clouds, which are illuminated from below by the setting sun, creating a vibrant palette of orange, yellow, and red. The sun is positioned just above the horizon line, which is visible as a dark, silhouetted band across the middle of the image. The water in the foreground is calm, reflecting the colors of the sky. At the top of the page, there is a dark red horizontal banner with the chapter title in white, serif font.

Chapter 3 – Community Attitudes and Insights



General Community Attitudes and Insights

Master plans are fundamentally about choices regarding the future guided by resident preferences and wishes. Understanding resident preferences and wants often includes some form of community engagement, which can occur in different forms and at different times during a planning process. For this master plan, initial community engagement included steps to conduct a new community survey. Past community surveys were done in 1990 and again in 2006. Information from these surveys provided useful background data but offered little to support an understanding of current attitudes.

In the summer of 2019, Peninsula Township hired EPIC ▪ MRA to assist staff with a new resident survey. From September 26 through September 30, 2019, live operator telephone interviews with 200 adult residents of Peninsula Township were conducted. This phone survey was performed so that a set of results would be provided from a random sample of residents. Soon after the phone survey, the township offered an online version of the survey to residents and other stakeholders to provide an avenue for all who wished to participate. However, while it was expected that the online version would likely generate more responses, the results might be less random for a variety of reasons. Therefore, having survey results from two methods would help paint a more accurate picture of local attitudes.

The online survey was based on unique residential addresses in the county that appeared on the secretary of state's qualified voter file. This list was augmented with addresses supplied by the township assessor's office to include individuals not otherwise found on the secretary of state file. Once the augmented list was compiled, postcards were sent via first class mail to approximately 3,800

addresses. These postcards, bearing the Peninsula Township logo, informed the recipient household of the reason for the communication and instructions regarding how to access the questionnaire online. The postcard contained a four-digit code required to complete the survey. The online survey was open for participation from October 18, 2019, through November 6, 2019. A total of 980 usable responses were collected from this portion of the project.

IMPORTANT SURVEY TAKEAWAYS

The new survey results validated common perceptions about what residents value. They also revealed some unexpected results. While a full reporting of survey data is available in the appendix, some key takeaways include the following:

- Among all attributes, **residents say they like living in Peninsula Township mostly because of the rural, quiet atmosphere followed closely by scenic views and the quality of the environment.** Looked at from the opposite angle, growth/overdevelopment and traffic/congestion topped the list of open-ended responses offered by respondents who believe the quality of life in the township has "gotten worse" in the past few years.
- Looked at another way, when residents were asked to identify areas where the township could do more, strongest support went to the statement urging the township to **keep as much of the rural character and historic landscape as possible.**
- One area where there is **unequivocal support for a new initiative is in the development of a non-motorized transportation plan.** More than three-quarters of respondents from both methodologies support this initiative, and two-thirds of that total support is strong support. Fleshing out the specifics of such a plan will, of course, be a comprehensive process, but the survey data clearly indicates



support for pedestrian safety features in the way of signals, pavement markings, and signage along with attention to walking trails and bike paths.

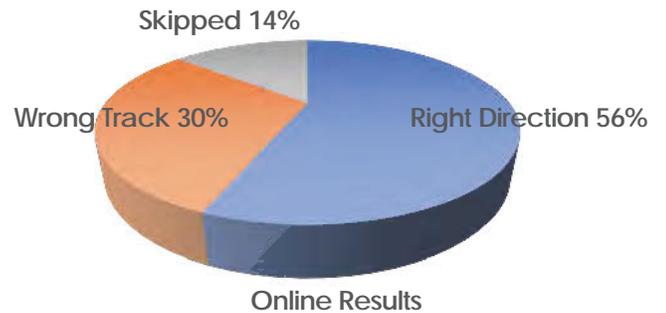
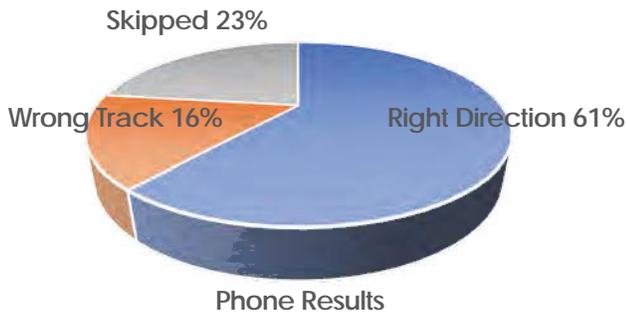
- A practical, albeit less direct, expression of residents' preference for a rural setting is manifested in the responses to the series of questions concerning the township's purchase of development rights (PDR) program. **Well over half of all respondents in both survey methods reported awareness that Peninsula Township currently has a taxpayer-funded PDR program, and well over half purport to have at least some familiarity with its provisions.**
- Finally, in keeping with residents' environmental awareness tempered with a desire for viewshed preservation, **there is receptivity to the idea of some form of wind and/or solar energy sourcing on the**

peninsula. Again, the survey only briefly touched on the issue, but the greatest receptivity is for small-scale systems serving a single property followed by systems capable of serving a limited collection of properties or a small neighborhood.

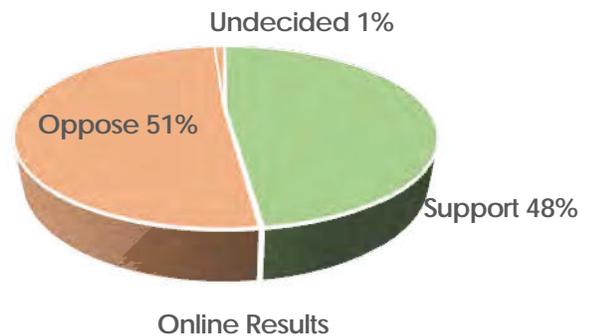
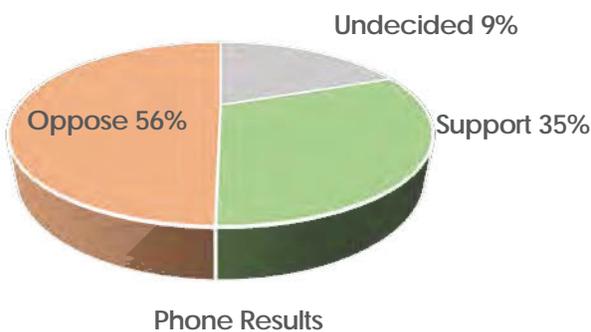
- **In sum, township residents are, by and large, content with the status quo.** To the extent there is an expression of openness to change, it reveals itself in policies directed at addressing growth, traffic congestion, and preservation of viewsheds.

In addition to these details, the following charts illustrate some findings on key issues.

Respondents were asked if, overall, they believe Peninsula Township is headed in the right direction or is going down the wrong track:

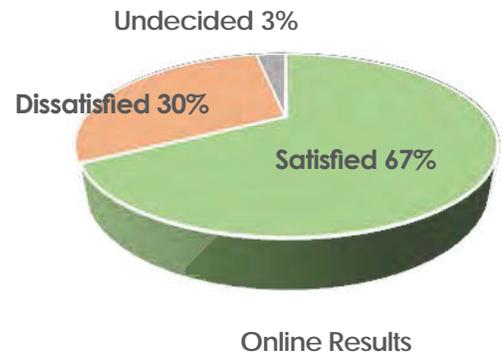
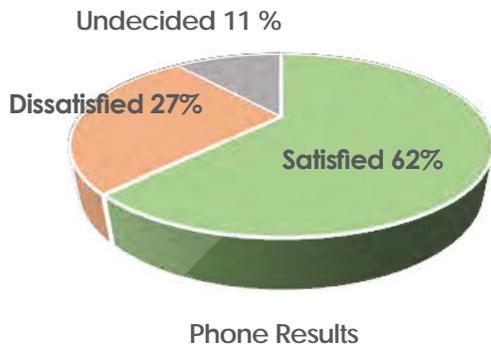


Respondents were informed of the growth in the number of wineries in the township over the past couple of decades and asked if they supported or opposed the continued development and growth of these types of establishments:

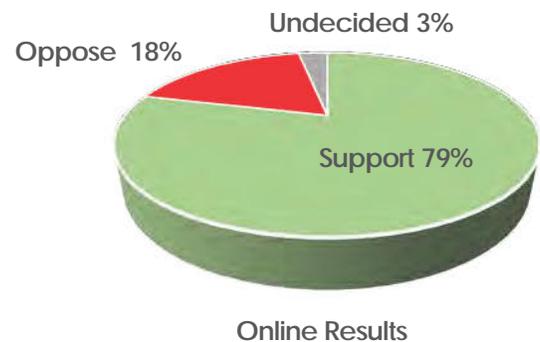
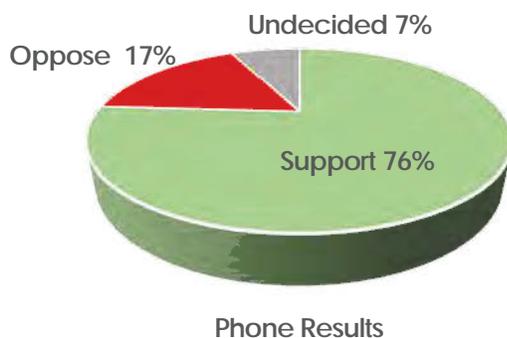




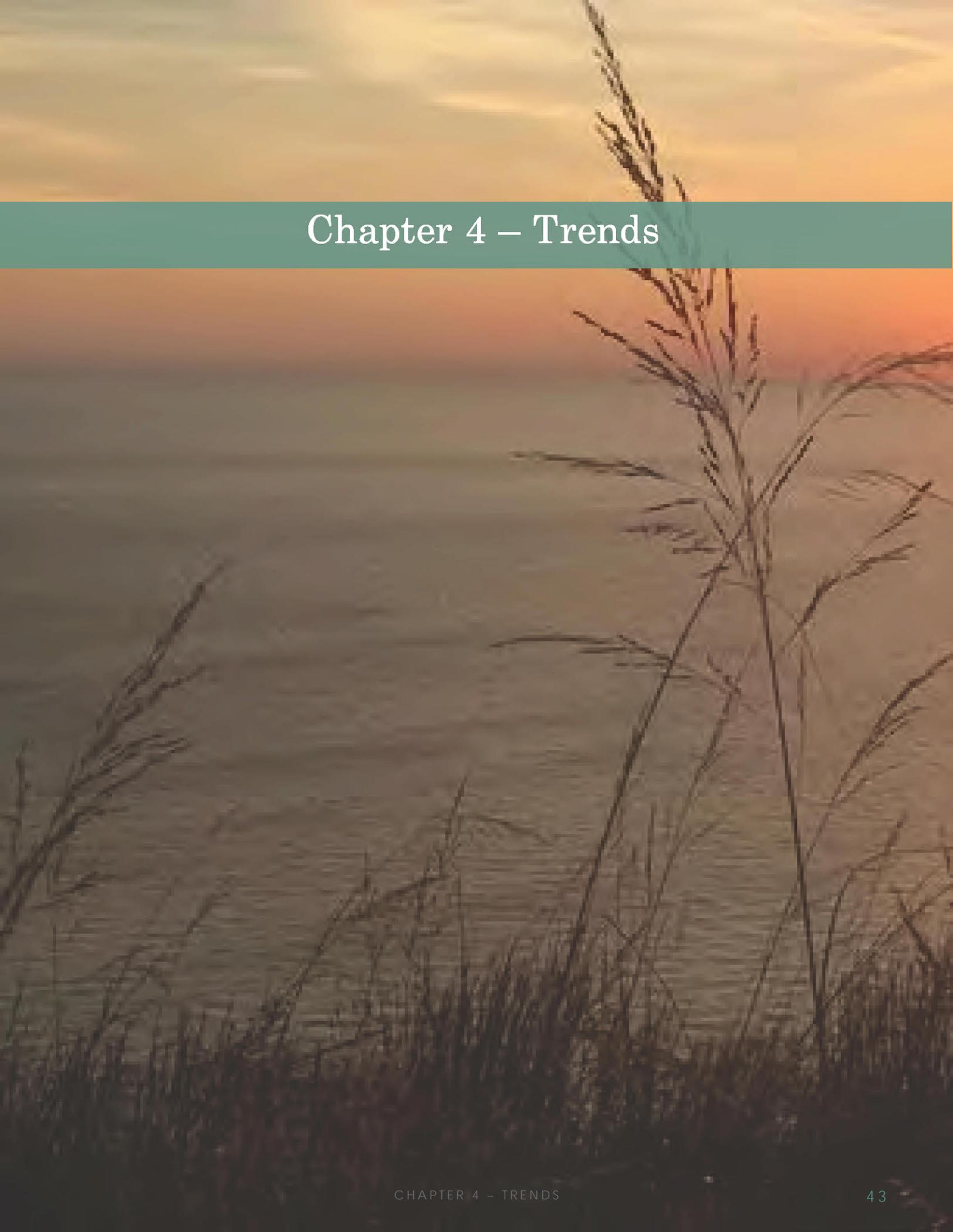
Respondents were apprised of the township's policy prohibiting short-term rentals (if not at a bed and breakfast establishment or winery-chateau) and were asked if they were satisfied or dissatisfied with that policy:



After being presented with a statement noting the regular presence of runners, bicyclists, and pedestrians on township thoroughfares, the comparatively narrow width of many area roads, and the adoption of non-motorized transportation policies in nearby jurisdictions, respondents were asked if they would support or oppose the township initiating the process of developing its own non-motorized transportation plan.



In addition, according to early feedback from the Participate Old Mission platform, early and preliminary results from a "quick poll" suggest that not only do people support non-motorized transportation, but they might also be willing to pay for it. According to nearly 50 respondents, nearly 90 percent said they are likely or very likely to be willing to help pay for an improved bicycle and/or pedestrian system in Peninsula Township.



Chapter 4 – Trends



Trends Impacting the Township

Trends can and often do change, but the following material provides a brief description of clear and relevant trends Peninsula Township should be mindful of as we look ahead.

HOME VALUES HAVE DOUBLED

In 2010, the median value of homes that sold in Peninsula Township was about \$217,500. By 2020, the median value was \$446,300. In other words, median home values in Peninsula Township have doubled in the last 10 years. As recently noted, due in part to this steadily increasing trend in home values, the total assessed value of property in Peninsula Township recently crossed the \$1 billion mark. Comparable and final information is not yet available for the state or nation, but this rapid increase in local home values is believed to be significant.

AGING POPULATION

As noted earlier, Peninsula Township residents are generally likely to be 65 years old and older (see page 26). Perhaps just as important, the national trend also points to a growing elderly population. Longer life spans and other demographic factors support the U.S. Census Bureau's projection that, by the year 2034, for the first time in history, the number of adults 65 and older in the U.S. will exceed the number of children under 18. Given this projection, it is reasonable to assume that older residents will represent an ever larger segment of the local population. The planning implications are important.

The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) has been active in providing research into what older residents desire from the communities in which they live, including rural communities. Key findings from a report titled *2018 Home and Community Preferences Survey: A National Survey of Adults Age 18 – Plus a Look at Rural Communities* (June 2019) include these takeaways:





- Nearly three-quarters of rural adults say they want to remain in their communities and homes as they age.
- Almost half of rural adults report they will stay in their current homes and never move compared to only a third or fewer of urban and suburban adults who say they will never move from their current homes.
- About three-quarters of rural adults own their own homes; nearly two in five report that major modifications to their homes will be needed to accommodate their needs as they age.
- The presence of accessory dwelling units is low among rural adults, but eight in 10 say they would consider building one for a loved one who needs care.
- The large majority of rural adults (89 percent) drive themselves to get around their communities.
- Other popular modes of transportation include walking and having someone else drive them.
- Well-maintained streets and easy-to-read traffic signs are very important to aging rural adults.

REMOTE WORKING

Thanks to COVID-19, more companies are offering hybrid or remote working arrangements, and increasing numbers of people feel less inclined to live close to where they work. It has been reported that about one in four Americans (26.7 percent) will work remotely in 2021 (*Forbes*, March 19, 2021). This means that more people will be less tied to a specific area and more able to choose where to live based on amenities and the quality of life. If this trend is sustained into the future, it will continue to represent an important factor in local growth.



TRANSPORTATION AND HEALTH

Decades ago, health experts began documenting the health benefits of physical activity. Obesity rates have increased dramatically over the last 30 years, and obesity is now considered to be an epidemic in the United States. Diabetes is also responsible for huge health-care costs, and the incidence of diabetes is expected to continue increasing. At the same time, there is a growing recognition



that the transportation infrastructure built in recent decades typically accommodates only vehicular traffic. This realization has led all levels of government to shift toward an increased emphasis on developing safe places to walk, bike, and engage in physical activity. Myriad programs and design strategies such as complete streets, traffic calming, context-sensitive design, safe routes to schools, and others are all aimed at increasing transportation options beyond vehicle travel to encourage non-motorized travel and physical activity.

Chapter 5 – Legacy, Challenges, and Vision





PLANNING LEGACY

For many decades, Peninsula Township's rolling hills, miles of Great Lakes shoreline, and stunning views of bays, farms, orchards, and vineyards have drawn people to live and visit here. Nearly 50 years ago, community leaders saw mounting development forces and recognized the threat to farmland, environmental values, and quality of life. This realization led the township to develop a zoning ordinance in 1972 that established a basic order to development patterns, notably a large interior agricultural district, coastal residential districts, and limited commercial districts as well as minimum lot sizes and setbacks in each district. Many of the zoning provisions enacted in 1972 continue to guide development patterns today.

In subsequent decades, as planning efforts in the township continued, recognition grew that strong growth pressures would continue to fuel construction activity and increases in population. Early projections suggested that Peninsula Township could reach 30,000 people or more if fully built out unless other measures were taken. Residents and township leadership viewed this level of development with alarm, as it would inevitably reduce the viability of agriculture, diminish scenic views, add huge additional infrastructure costs (i.e., water, sewer, and roads), and contribute to an overall decline in environmental quality. Such a large population would also create major traffic issues in Traverse City as previously discussed (see page 24).

Peninsula Township demonstrated bold and proactive leadership and a core commitment to land preservation by creating one of the first publicly funded township Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) programs in the United States and the first in the Midwest. On August 2, 1994, voters agreed to tax themselves to the tune of six million dollars to purchase the development rights from willing farmers who wanted to keep their land in farming forever. Outside funding from the State of Michigan,

American Farmland Trust, Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy (GTRLC), and the federal Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program subsequently augmented this effort (see pages 23-26). This bold and proactive leadership came from not only elected and appointed officials but concerned residents such as John Wunsch and many others.

Between 1995 and 2009, more than 2,800 acres in Peninsula Township were protected from development. The PDR program was so successful, with more farmers interested in selling their development rights than money to buy them, that voters approved a second PDR millage renewal and increase in 2001 for 20 years, a period that is now ending.

Today, more than 110 parcels totaling 3,347 acres are subject to PDR restrictions held by Peninsula Township. When combined with GTRLC-held conservation easements and other public land, roughly 6,500 acres have been permanently protected in Peninsula Township, or 36 percent of the total land area. **Considering only the agricultural preservation zone (APZ), the total amount of protected land covers about 52 percent of the total acres identified in the APZ (see maps on pages 24 and 25).**

This is a great start, but, as before, we have willing farmers who wish to sell their development rights and preserve their farms with insufficient funding available to accomplish these goals.

Given the program's success to date, the maximum population of the peninsula if fully built out would be approximately 12,000 people, a far cry from the original projection of 30,000 had action not been taken but significantly higher than it is today.



NEW CHALLENGES

As previously described, Peninsula Township has a newly established public charter school, a newly constructed library, and recent park expansions. The township also has 18 wine manufacturers (as licensed by the Michigan Liquor Control Commission); 11 wine tasting rooms; a market and gas station; three restaurants; four churches; many farm markets, nurseries, and farm stands; historical buildings; and governmental services, including township offices, three fire stations with fulltime fire and emergency medical services, and a full-time community police officer to supplement law enforcement services provided by the Grand Traverse Co. Sheriff's Dept.

The Peninsula Township community has long recognized and valued the quiet, rural, and scenic character of the Old Mission Peninsula and the critical need to protect these defining values. Recent planning efforts such as the 2019 community survey and the launch of the online engagement tool called Participate Old Mission provide a more current understanding of resident preferences, values, and desires. As the population has grown and residential and winery development has increased, the desire to protect the township's scenic views and quiet rural character has amplified. Protection measures have been highlighted in township planning documents since the early 1980s, with each plan reiterating and building upon this concept.

According to the 2019 survey, the majority of residents believe the township is "headed in the right direction" and that the quality of life "has remained the same." At the same time, there is growing evidence that the local story of stewarding this special place may be at a pivotal juncture. As a case in point, we now see the following:

There is growing evidence that the local story of stewarding this special place may be at a pivotal juncture.

- The local wineries filed suit against the township in late 2020 over limits on allowed commercial activity;
- Record-high water levels in 2020 damaged vast segments of shoreline, causing severe erosion, millions in property damage, and the closure of a section of Bluff Road;
- A potential renewal of the PDR program will require continued support from residents at the ballot box;
- Growing recognition of the need for better traffic control and accommodation for non-motorized travel;
- The recent determination that the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) will continue to control and maintain M-37 (Center Rd.); recently, MDOT had considered relinquishing control and responsibility to the Grand Traverse County Road Commission;
- Growing questions about whether our township form of government is best for the long haul;
- Lingering questions over state and local responses to the demand for short-term rentals and other dimensions of the hospitality market;
- Development pressures that continue to remain strong along with property and home values that continue to dramatically rise at a fast pace;
- The remaining effects of COVID-19 that hamper community engagement efforts; and
- Tremendous increase in use during and after COVID-19 and greater attention shifting toward township parks. Under contract, the Land Information Access Association (LIAA) is leading a new effort to define needs, operating and capital improvement budgets, and funding sources to better develop and maintain park facilities.



OVERARCHING VISION AND ORGANIZING PLANNING PRINCIPLES

Peninsula Township’s leaders recognize that the Old Mission Peninsula is a special place for all the reasons described in Chapter 1. They also recognize that the current issues facing the township mean that careful and deliberate planning has never been more important if the township is to retain its current amenities and reach its full potential as the best possible gift to future generations. These challenges align with 12 overarching vision targets that can also be thought of as organizing planning principles for Peninsula Township. These vision targets surfaced from 2019 survey results, results from Participate Old Mission, and deliberations during master plan steering committee meetings.

...responses to challenges align with 12 overarching vision elements that can also be thought of as organizing planning principles for Peninsula Township.

No.	VISION	SUBJECT AREA	SUMMARY
1	Recognize and make the most of an “island-like geography.”	Land Use	The ability to maintain the quality of life in the township will be highly influenced by the reality that the peninsula is more or less an “island” with a single “bridge” that carries residents to and from Traverse City and beyond. This “bridge” is a two-lane street that has a finite carrying capacity and few options for expansion/widening. Shoreline routes such as East Shore Road and Peninsula Drive are not desirable options as roads because they serve neighborhoods with strong recreational and aesthetic value. Detailed vehicle traffic counts and studies are needed annually to help monitor change over time and to help guide township development policies. Recognizing the need to limit growth and associated traffic generation is a major underpinning and foundation for nearly all other vision elements and planning policies.



No.	VISION	SUBJECT AREA	SUMMARY
2	Continue to implement any and all steps that reduce build-out potential.	Land Use	<p>Looking ahead to this new decade and beyond, we see thousands of acres of agricultural land that could still be developed into homes. Demand for homes on the Old Mission Peninsula is strong and likely to grow stronger given existing trends. At the same time, residents clearly want to preserve and maintain a rural atmosphere.</p> <p>Renewing the PDR program that expires in 2021 is crucial to completing the task of land preservation that began in the early 1990s. Protecting the remaining 4,680 acres of agricultural land identified in the agricultural preservation zone (APZ) is an essential step toward limiting population growth and additional traffic congestion.</p>
3	Ensure that future development is constructed in ways that thoughtfully balance all land use needs.	Land Use	<p>Regardless of even the most aggressive steps to reduce buildout potential, some degree of development is inevitable. People who own land that is not encumbered with a conservation easement are free to legally propose new construction within the limits of the zoning ordinance. However, what is not necessarily inevitable is where development occurs and how it is designed. In the past, the township explored the concept of a transfer of development rights as a mechanism to concentrate future development in a way that adds housing choices and opportunities to meet local needs. Going forward, a transfer of development rights (TDR) program will be studied and implemented if feasible and if there is adequate support. Such a program would enable the “transfer” of density from property that should be preserved or property where development is not feasible because of topography to property where development is preferred.</p> <p>The TDR program, coupled with mixed use development in the commercial zones to include first floor retail/ commercial with second floor residential, could help make local businesses that serve residents more attractive to developers. Properly designed and constructed commercial uses could also help reduce the need to travel to Traverse City for goods and services, thereby reducing some traffic.</p>



No.	VISION	SUBJECT AREA	SUMMARY
4	Constructively and collaboratively work toward the goal of adding value to local agricultural products without creating large commercial centers that add noise and traffic congestion.	Land Use	Agricultural operations of all types struggle to maintain viability in global markets. There is increasing interest in finding ways to support local agriculture in ways that retain rural character and find the balance between adding value to locally produced products while not creating commercial centers of activity that add traffic and noise and detract from rural ambiance and character.
5	Protect the shoreline and wetlands to the maximum extent possible through both regulation and education centered on vegetation protection and enhancement. Areas like Pyatt Lake Natural Area and other beach and coastal wetlands are an important buffer against pollution and flooding.	Land Use	The last several years of high water levels on the Great Lakes have had a profound impact on coastal communities throughout Michigan. Coastal erosion and flooding have impacted residents with substantial costs and damages. Predicting lake levels in the future is all but impossible, but it is prudent to improve regulations and education efforts regarding vegetation removal so that future high water levels are less damaging and water quality is protected from erosion. Similarly, it is important to continue to educate residents on the value of all wetlands and shoreline vegetation cover as a means of reducing both flooding and pollution.
6	Make pedestrian and bike travel safer and more convenient.	Mobility	Residents and visitors alike deeply appreciate all that Peninsula Township has to offer pedestrians and bicyclists. However, planning for and implementing even modest local projects to support non-motorized travel have been nonexistent. Evidence of support for steps in this direction is abundantly clear from recent survey results. There also seems to be increasing recognition that it is time for ramped-up non-motorized transportation planning, even among those who are not inclined to bike or walk, simply from the standpoint of safety and impacts on vehicular traffic flow.
7	Make vehicular travel safer and more convenient	Mobility	Associated with the desire to make pedestrian and bike travel safer and more convenient is the need to control vehicular speeds and improve safety.



No.	VISION	SUBJECT AREA	SUMMARY
8	Operate under the best possible form of government, with suitable and essential public facilities.	Places, Character, and Governance	As unique and special as Peninsula Township is, it shares one key attribute with most other townships in Michigan: its form of government. Increasingly, people are asking if a township is the optimal form of government for the residents of the Old Mission Peninsula. State laws provide options for changing the structure of local government, which could improve service delivery and local control.
9	Continue to view alternative energy (solar/wind) as having a potential role in Peninsula Township.	Land Use	Peninsula Township's geography presents challenges for delivering public utilities to property owners. An electric grid, common in other areas to ensure uninterrupted energy, is not practical for the peninsula. Alternative energy sources will be required. The township will continue to implement policies to allow solar energy generation while protecting viewsheds.
10	Balance demand for a local hospitality industry against the need to control growth and manage traffic.	Land Use	There is a role for a local hospitality industry in Peninsula Township in three major categories: wineries (with guest rooms), bed and breakfasts (independent of wineries), and possibly small, quaint "boutique" hotels. The balance between additional hospitality functions and added traffic is a critical one related to numbers of available rooms and specific locations. The connection between offering accommodations in a rural B&B and supporting agricultural viability is also recognized.
11	Continue developing an outstanding park system throughout the township with "hubs" at Mission Point Lighthouse Park, Bowers Harbor Park, and Pelizzari Natural Area.	Land Use	The township maintains three large parks strategically located at the north, middle, and south latitudes of the township along with several additional smaller parks. The township will continue to improve these parks through upgrades and expansions consistent with the needs of each area. Additionally, the township is now also poised to move forward with a new boat launch at Kelley Park.
12	Continue preserving, enhancing, and celebrating local history and culture.	Places, Character, and Governance	People enjoy living in an area with a sense of place, and an important attribute of our identity is local history and culture. There are four primary historical sites in the township: the replica Log Church and Peter Dougherty Home in Old Mission and the Hessler Log Cabin and Mission Point Lighthouse at the tip of the peninsula. Two historic businesses also survive, the Old Mission Inn and the Old Mission General Store, along with three remaining historic private resort associations, Illini, Leffingwell, and Neahtawanta. Much of the story of nineteenth- and twentieth-century local history arcs through and across historic businesses these places. More can and should be done to strengthen and support these offerings.

Chapter 6 – Land Use





Introduction

Peninsula Township encompasses approximately 17,870 acres of land. Wise land use decisions made over time are often at the heart of why some places are more livable, attractive, and appealing than others. Fundamental private and public decisions about how land on the Old Mission Peninsula is used are central to a sense of careful stewardship of Peninsula Township.

EXISTING LAND USE PATTERNS

A map illustrating existing land use appears on the following page. Reflecting data provided by the Peninsula Township assessor and generalized to some degree in terms of residential density (dwelling units per acre), the map provides a platform for developing the future land use map provided later in this chapter. It also provides a means to track and monitor land use changes over time. The table below categorizes and quantifies existing land uses shown in the following map.

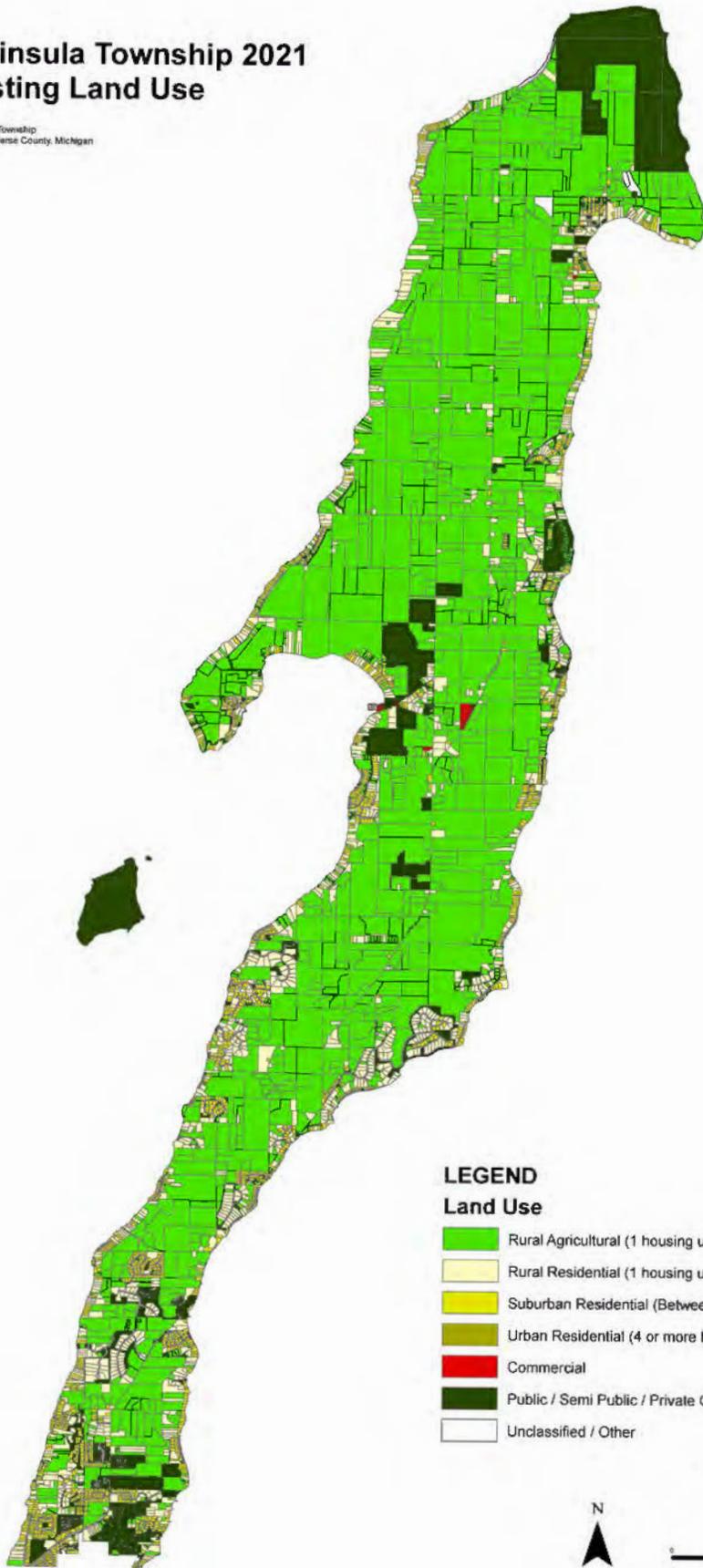


Land Use	Parcel Count	Related Zoning District	Acreage	Percent
Rural Agricultural (1 housing unit for each 5 acres or more)	1,231	A-1	12,698.90	71.1%
Rural Residential (1 housing unit for between 1 and 5 acres)	991	R1-A	1,881.90	10.5%
Suburban Residential (between 1 and 4 housing units per acre)	1,511	R1-B, R1-C	922.85	5.2%
Urban Residential (4 or more housing units per acre)	60	R-1D	15.72	0.1%
Commercial	56	C-1	19.96	0.1%
Public/Semi Public/Private Open Space	137	Varies	1,910.27	10.7%
Unclassified/Other	488	Varies	418.00	2.3%
Total	4,474		17,867.60	100.0%



Peninsula Township 2021 Existing Land Use

Peninsula Township
Grand Traverse County, Michigan



LEGEND Land Use

-  Rural Agricultural (1 housing unit for each 5 acres or more)
-  Rural Residential (1 housing unit for between 1 and 5 acres)
-  Suburban Residential (Between 1 and 4 housing units per acre)
-  Urban Residential (4 or more housing units per acre)
-  Commercial
-  Public / Semi Public / Private Open Space
-  Unclassified / Other

Base Map Source: MCGI, Grand Traverse County GIS
Data Source: Peninsula Township
2021 Parcel Boundaries
May 2021





PDR PROGRAM

As described in Chapter 2, the PDR program has had a tremendous impact on land use in Peninsula Township, and, along with the zoning ordinance, has been the most impactful land use policy the township has adopted. To date, this program, along with other forms of land protection, has protected about 34 percent of the township from development. The PDR program was originally put in place to protect valuable and unique farmland and to limit the build-out potential of Peninsula Township. “Build out” is a largely theoretical term that gauges what happens if development trends continue under existing regulations and other constraints; it refers to the state at which Peninsula Township would not have any available parcels for development given current zoning restrictions. The desire to limit build out is associated with the need to protect farmland and rural character and reduce the number of vehicles on the roads as well as congestion at the base of the peninsula.

The PDR program is largely viewed as a tremendous success. To date, the funds from the two prior tax levies (in 1994 and again in 2002) have been expended, and a new millage is being contemplated in the near future. An oft-overlooked element is the fact that PDR programs require attention well beyond the time devoted to acquiring the PDR easement. In other words, Peninsula Township has an ongoing obligation to monitor program compliance and to be sure that land use and construction activity are compliant with easement terms. Additionally, when all or part of an agricultural parcel is encumbered by a PDR easement, the relationship between the PDR easement and the zoning ordinance can become more complicated.

Initiatives and Action Steps

PDR Renewal

Renewal of a PDR levy is an essential step if Peninsula Township is to complete the job of preserving agricultural land and limiting growth. The importance of renewing the PDR program cannot be overstated in terms of expanding upon the local legacy of land stewardship and resource protection. It is also critically important in terms of reducing future traffic congestion. The 2019 community survey provides clear evidence that overdevelopment and traffic congestion are among the top reasons given by residents who perceive a declining quality of life on the peninsula. Renewing the PDR program is one direct way to address this concern. In simplistic terms, for every 100 acres of land that might be included in a PDR easement funded by a future levy, the number of new homes potentially drops by as many as 20 and the corresponding vehicle trips drop by as many as 200. See calculations below:

- The A-1 zoning district allows a home to be constructed on a five-acre parcel.
- A 100-acre parcel theoretically yields 15-20 homes (assuming lot frontage and related requirements are met).
- According to the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) and its published Trip Generation Manual, the number of vehicle trips associated with a single-family home is about 9.57 per week (it ranges from 4.3 to more than 21).
- Therefore, it might be said that for every 100 acres of new PDR land, future potential traffic traveling on Peninsula Township roads is reduced by between 140 and 200 vehicles per day.



ZONING

For about five decades, land use in Peninsula Township has been guided by regulations contained in the Peninsula Township Zoning Ordinance. Although the zoning ordinance has been amended many times to address specific issues, the basic framework remains unchanged in terms of zoning districts, allowed land uses, and basic development requirements such as minimum lot sizes and building setbacks.

In the summer of 2021, a comprehensive update of the zoning ordinance was under consideration. It was passed by the planning commission in May 2021 after several years of effort and is moving on to the township board for final approval. This

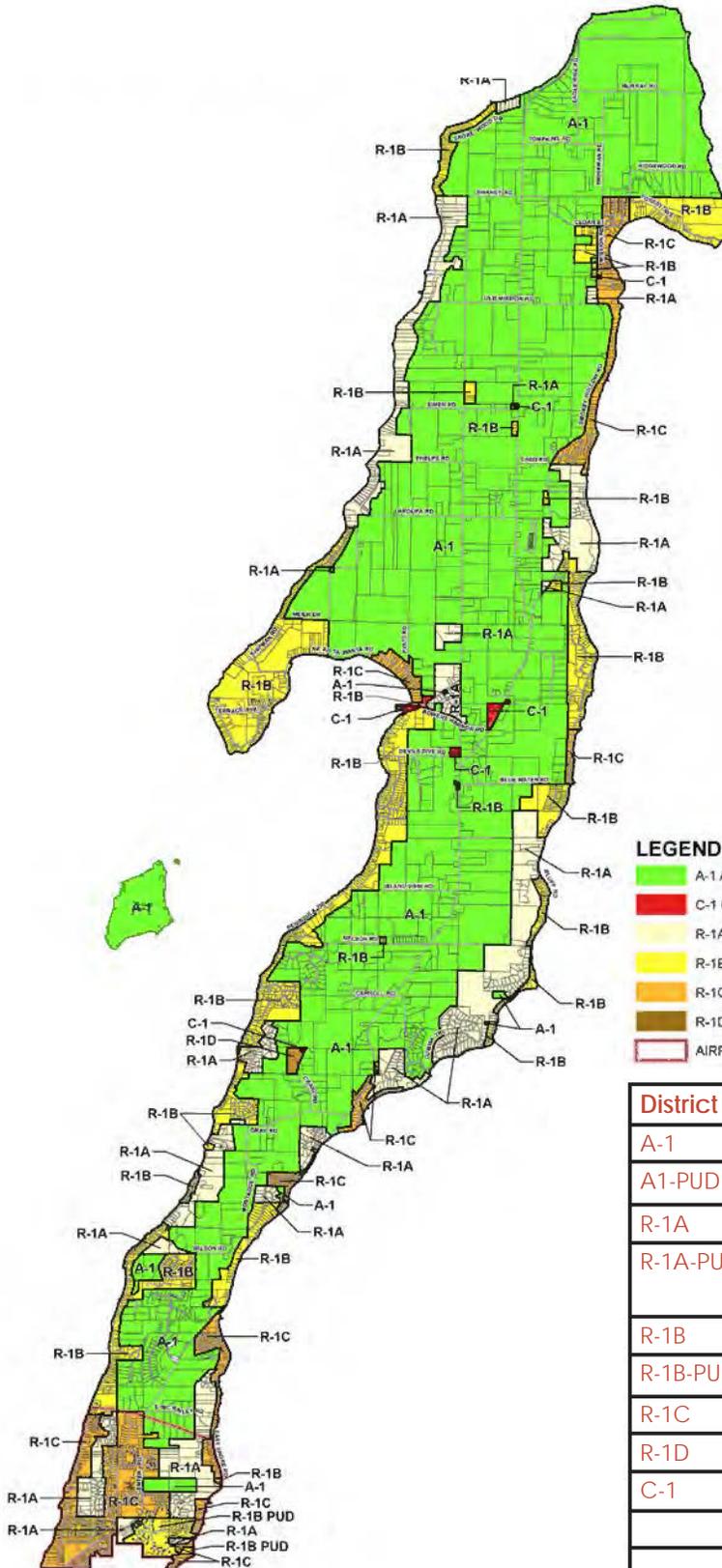
update is aimed at issues such as organization, improved graphics, added definitions, improved cross-referencing conformance with other laws, and regulatory clarification. In large part, substantive changes to regulations were set aside until after this master plan is complete and are described later in this chapter.

Six primary zoning districts apply to all parcels in the township. Generally, the interior portions of the township are zoned agricultural (A-1), and the waterfront areas are zoned residential (R-1A, R-1B, R-1C and R1-D). There are also several small areas zoned commercial (C-1). Descriptions of each zoning district, acreages related to each, and a map showing the location of zoning districts follow.

Zoning District Name	Description / Purpose
A-1 Agricultural District	The agricultural district is intended to recognize the unique ecological character of the peninsula and to preserve, enhance, and stabilize existing areas within the township that are presently being used predominately for farming purposes while recognizing there are lands within the district that are not suited to agriculture; therefore, the district allows other limited uses that are deemed to be compatible with agricultural and open space uses.
R-1A Districts: Rural and Hillside Residential District	The R-1A rural and hillside residential district sets standards for the continued development of: (1) rural areas suited to very low-density residential development; (2) fragile hillside areas; and (3) interface areas between more intensive residential uses and agricultural land uses. This district includes existing low density residential developments as well as areas within which such development appears both likely and desirable.
R-1B District: Coastal Zone Residential District	The R-1B coastal zone residential district sets standards for the development of residential properties of a semi-rural character along lakeshore drives and in areas of high scenic value where more intensive development would deteriorate the peninsula's environment and less intensive development is essential to maintain the established environment.
R-1C Districts: Suburban Residential Development District	The R-1C suburban residential district encourages medium density residential development associated with proximate areas of Traverse City. Such development shall fall within the logical service pattern of the Regional Wastewater Treatment System, whether or not serviced by that system.
R-1D Districts: Community Residential District	The R-1D community residential district encourages moderately high density development where community services such as fire protection, schools, commercial development, community parks, and services are available.
C-1 Commercial District	The C-1 commercial district allows for convenience-type shopping for township residents and for limited marina and transient lodging facilities. It is the purpose of this regulation to avoid undue congestion on major highways and to promote smooth and safe traffic flow along highway routes. Commercial activities within this district are those that primarily offer goods and services that are generally required by a family at intervals of a week or less.
PUD Planned Unit Development	The PUD district can be applied to a zoning district to allow for more creative and imaginative land development and a more desirable living environment by preserving the natural character of open fields, stands of trees, and steep slopes as well as brooks, ponds, lakeshore, hills, and similar natural assets. PUDs require additional plan review steps. When approved, PUD developments include the PUD notation with the zoning district.



Zoning Map



LEGEND

- A-1 AGRICULTURAL
- C-1 COMMERCIAL
- R-1A RURAL AND HILLSIDE RESIDENTIAL
- R-1B COASTAL ZONE RESIDENTIAL
- R-1C SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
- R-1D COMMUNITY RESIDENTIAL
- AIRPORT OVERLAY ZONE

District	Zoning District Name	Acres	%
A-1	Agricultural	11,609.5	65.0%
A1-PUD	Agricultural - PUD	34.9	0.2%
R-1A	Rural and Hillside Residential	15,55.5	8.7%
R-1A-PUD	Rural and Hillside Residential - PUD	8.2	0.0%
R-1B	Coastal Zone Residential	1,924.1	10.8%
R-1B-PUD	Coastal Zone Residential - PUD	138.0	0.8%
R-1C	Suburban Residential	966.8	5.4%
R-1D	Community Residential	0.4	0.0%
C-1	Commerical	27.8	0.2%
	Dual Zoning	1,111.7	6.2%
	Other	490.7	2.7%
	Total	17,867.6	100.0%



LAND USE ISSUES

Along with the central issue of PDR renewal, a number of primary land use issues surfaced from results from the 2019 community survey, information gained from Participate Old Mission, and discussions among the master plan steering committee.

Shoreline Protection

The shoreline and water quality are precious to residents. According to the 2019 survey, protecting the water quality of the bays should be a top priority for the township. At the same time, current high lake levels have produced erosion and obvious concerns. According to the Army Corps of Engineers in its *October 2020 Great Lakes Water Level Summary*, the mean level of 581.53 feet was 31 inches above the long-term average and just 10 inches below the record high. This recent report actually indicates a drop in lake levels from similar reports earlier in 2020.

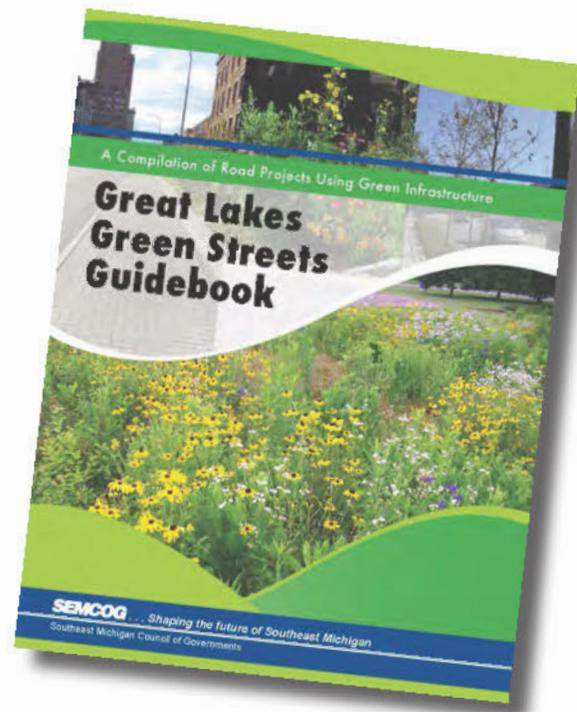
Record lake levels combined with storm events produced well-documented and severe erosion problems that are very evident on Bluff Road, where the magnitude of erosion led to the road's recent closure. Similar problems are familiar to residents who live along the shoreline elsewhere in the township and in the greater region.

Many shoreline areas also include roadways that provide access to waterfront residences. These include principally Bluff Road, East Shore, and Peninsula Drive. The relationship between roadway maintenance and shoreline management has been challenging. In most areas, pavement and shoulder drainage improvements have not included sufficient measures to prevent erosion and, in some areas, conditions have been made worse by tree and vegetation removal. The classic example of this occurs along Bluff Road, where a variety of factors contributed to the recent road closure, creating substantial tension between area residents, the Grand Traverse County Road Commission, and Peninsula

Township. Going forward, more efforts to utilize “green infrastructure” in road projects is needed to help slow and purify runoff draining into the bays. An excellent resource for roadway-related green infrastructure techniques is found in the *Great Lakes Green Streets Guidebook* produced by the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG).



Erosion damage at Bluff Road





In response to high water problems, a common approach is to “armor” the shoreline with seawalls, boulders, or structures. While these efforts can provide short-term relief, experts warn that such structures can actually worsen erosion elsewhere, and the issue of what seawalls will look like when water levels recede also becomes relevant. Fewer than 10 years ago, Lake Michigan water levels were at very low levels. More “natural” solutions are often promoted by professionals to help prevent erosion. These include establishing and/or protecting existing natural deep-rooted vegetation, which can hold soil in place, and requiring buildings and structures to be set back further from the shoreline so that the natural shoreline can be more “elastic” and adjust to changing lake levels over time.

The Peninsula Township Zoning Ordinance has related requirements in place to help ensure vegetated cover along the shoreline. Most significantly, tree cutting along a strip paralleling the shoreline and extending 35 feet inland from all points along the normal high-water mark of the shoreline is limited to 30



percent. In other words, at least 70 percent of this strip must remain vegetated.

In large part, these requirements need attention and updates to clarify and better articulate requirements that benefit both landowners and zoning enforcement. Additional measures to consider include potential limitations on construction of specific types of shoreline armoring.

Initiatives and Action Steps

Update Shoreline Regulations

A complete review and update of the shoreline regulations are needed to better align with best practices. Definitions and explanations of best management practices are available from national resources as well as state and local sources. Much more clarity is needed to more specifically and completely define requirements that limit vegetation removal along with a strong and reliable enforcement mechanism. A detailed survey of coastal characteristics may also be needed to support the development of new regulations. This study could identify wetlands, unique coastal features, and relationships between local permitting and state and federal regulatory measures. The 2011 master plan identified the potential for overlay zoning districts to address environmental issues. There are other options as well that should be explored. The goal is to achieve a high level of clarity in terms of what shoreline vegetation may be removed along with an effective enforcement mechanism.

Encourage Shoreline Protection Education

Past efforts and events aimed at educating residents about shoreline protection have been well received. In November, 2019, township resident Monnie Peters organized a workshop for township residents who



own shoreline property to help educate property owners on how to be good stewards of the shoreline they own and how they might go beyond basic regulatory compliance. Experts who spoke at this workshop included Baykeeper Heather Smith of the Grand Traverse Bay Watershed Center and Mark Breederland from Michigan Sea Grant. Copies of the recently updated booklet published by the Watershed Center, “Up North Shoreline: Stewardship Guide for Living on Grand Traverse Bay,” was given to residents who attended the workshop. The township should continue to support and encourage the education of shoreline property owners.

Alternative Energy

The subject of alternative energy (both wind and solar designed to serve on-site energy demands) and larger community systems has become more relevant in recent years for both environmental and economic reasons. In Peninsula Township, the issues are complex, given the desire to protect significant views while maintaining the valued rural atmosphere. To some, alternative energy equipment and fixtures diminish scenic views and rural character.

Roof-mounted solar panels have been allowed in Peninsula Township for some time. More recently, zoning amendments were enacted to allow free-

standing solar panels of various sizes. In all scenarios, free-standing solar panel installations are related to a net metering agreement; this means that the power generated is roughly equivalent to the power needs of the site. In this way, energy generated on site simply offsets demand for power from the grid. In other words, there is no net production of electricity beyond the need of the property upon which the solar panel equipment is located.

There have been no discussions about larger-scale solar energy systems that would connect directly to the electric grid and serve off-site customers. Such a project in Peninsula Township might resemble a 50-acre (nine-megawatt) array proposed in Acme Township to be constructed by Prism Power Partners. This project was approved in the spring of 2021 after Acme Township amended its zoning ordinance in 2018 to allow solar energy farms as a special use.

Wind energy is also a component of the alternative energy discussion. Existing zoning regulations permit wind energy conversions systems (WECS) as a special use in all zoning districts. These provisions require attention to address shortcomings. As examples, existing WECS provisions do not reference a “net metering” agreement as recent solar amendments do, and they allow for heights of up to 100 feet in all districts.





Initiatives and Action Steps

Update Alternative Energy Provisions in Zoning Ordinance with More Public Input

The 2019 community survey provided some evidence of support for alternative energy equipment, particularly as it relates to equipment generating power for on-site needs (i.e., as part of a net metering agreement). However, support seems to decline with the potential for larger equipment and facilities. More public opinion research is needed to explore this issue further as wind and solar are lumped together under the heading of “alternative energy.” It is not clear if an alternative energy facility similar to what is being constructed in Acme Township would be acceptable anywhere in Peninsula Township. Setting that question aside, it is clear that the existing WECS provisions require attention and updating so that they better align with the recent solar amendments.

Mixed-use Commercial Area/ Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)

In the 1990s, considerable effort went into studying a village center concept in Peninsula Township. One past effort considered the Mapleton area as a potential location for a town/village concept. More recently, the 2011 Peninsula Township Master Plan recommended reconsidering this conceptual development idea. Conversations at that time occurred along with the notion of a new PDR program.

At the present time, a commercial area concept has no identified details, potential sites, or specific parcels. Generally, the concept consists of a small mixed-use area with small-format buildings providing consumer service establishments as well as limited retail, housing,

and offices. A range of potential uses could include establishments such as bakeries, small restaurants, specialty markets, art studios, barber/beauty shops, etc. Offices and/or housing in upper floors could also be part of the land use mix. The appeal of the concept includes the potential to offer greater local housing choices and opportunities to provide limited goods and services while showcasing local culture, art, food, agricultural products, and community identity. Providing some services on Old Mission Peninsula might help reduce the need for residents to travel to Traverse City (and thereby potentially reduce traffic congestion at the base of the peninsula).

An important underpinning of the 1997 “Preservation Village Concept Planning Report” was the idea of transferring development density from the agricultural preservation area to a new village development area. A program called Transfer of Development Rights (which exists elsewhere across the country) was proposed in which landowners could sell the right to develop houses on properties they own in a “Transfer Sending Area” to someone wishing to develop land in a “Transfer Receiving Area.” In this way, the transfer of development rights would help maintain rural areas by redirecting development toward a specific area, in this case, a mixed-use village development. Housing units could continue to be scattered across the landscape on five-acre lots or could be concentrated in a more mixed-use setting with a greater variety of housing formats supported by a limited number of commercial/retail facilities. An overarching goal was for the outcome to remain “density neutral,” meaning the amount of potential development activity would remain unchanged with or without a TDR program/village center concept. If, after more community dialogue and study, a TDR program/village center concept receives more attention, the focus should also include investigating a form-based code as a means to control and design the development of a village center so that future building mass, lot placement, and other site design elements correctly relate to the site.



Initiatives and Action Steps

Continue to Study and Investigate the Concept of TDR and a Commerical Center

The 2019 survey asked one question about the village center concept without mentioning the connection to “density neutral aspects” of a TDR program. Only a minority of residents favored this concept, but it is complex, and a more complete explanation may be necessary. Developing a TDR program/commerical center should only be pursued if and when there is evidence such a concept aligns with community goals. More research, community dialogue, and study are needed to fully define, assess, and consider the TDR and commerical center concept. This work should include identifying best practices and success stories from elsewhere.

Agri-tourism and Agricultural Viability

Peninsula Township has made major strides toward preserving agricultural land. Working in partnership with the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy (GTRLC) since the early 1990s, the township has now permanently preserved about 34 percent of the township’s agricultural areas. Existing easements with restrictions on future development guarantee that this land will be used solely for agricultural purposes. As important as these strides are, most people agree that since residential development pressure remains high, more efforts are needed to continue protecting agricultural land to preserve the township’s rural character.

Preserving agricultural land inevitably invites discussions about the continued viability of agricultural operations. Between fluctuating





commodity prices, weather-related issues, operational costs, and the like, the profitability of farming often comes into question and drives the conversation toward the delicate balance between allowing additional activities that make the land more profitable and maintaining rural character. Possible additional activities might include those that add value to agricultural products grown on site. Of course, if the property is subject to a purchase of development rights (PDR) easement, all options are subject to the restrictions contained in the easement.

Existing township zoning sets boundaries concerning the extent to which agricultural land can be used for activities that begin to approach the realm of commercial activity. For the most part, these restrictions have been in place for many years. For example, roadside stands selling fresh or processed farm produce are allowed. On the other side of the spectrum, larger uses such as food processing plants, farm processing, wineries, and greenhouses are potentially permitted only by special use permit on larger tracts of land.

Wineries

Wineries have become an area of conflict in recent years. Existing zoning regulations were put in place years ago to carefully allow owners of large tracts of agricultural land to develop wineries that offer tastings and some level of guest activities. An important objective was the desire to support local wine-related agriculture. Peninsula Township became designated as a viticultural area known as Old Mission Peninsula (a viticultural area is associated with an appellation of origin on wine labels and in advertisements). Over time, the number of wineries expanded to about a dozen; many now seek to develop business models with a greater variety of events and activities to draw customers. Interest in establishing new wineries also continues.

In late 2019, work began on updating the winery regulations to clarify and simplify the requirements.

Ultimately, winery owners filed a lawsuit against the township, and the matter is being litigated over constitutional issues at the time this master plan is being updated. Some or all winery regulation issues may be addressed as the lawsuit concludes. In the meantime, concerns remain regarding the need to reduce traffic, noise, and other off-site impacts. If existing wineries continue to expand activities (and new wineries come into play), traffic naturally increases. Winery patrons are largely tourists who must travel through the “chokepoint” at the base of the peninsula.

Past regulatory efforts have attempted to limit the commercial aspects of wineries by describing allowed events and activities. This description should shift toward more of a site capacity perspective, with less emphasis on trying to define allowable and prohibited types

History of Winery-Related Zoning Amendments

Winery regulations have been amended multiple times in past decades. Specifically:

- Amendment 79, Dec. 6, 1989, added winery-chateau use.
- Amendment 95, April 14, 1992, Section 6.7.2 (8), removed the ability to sell alcohol at roadside stands.
- 1994 PDR vote approved 1.25 mills.
- Amendment 120, May 12, 1998, added remote wine tasting.
- 2002 PDR vote approved 2.0 mills.
- Amendment 139, July 9, 2002, added farm processing facilities.
- Amendment 146, Dec. 10, 2002, allowed residences in farm processing buildings.
- Amendment 141, August 10, 2004, added guest activity uses for non-registered guests.
- Amendment 181, August 11, 2009, added sales of wine by the glass.
- Amendment 197, Jan. 8, 2019, increases farm processing facility building sizes.



of activities and varieties of events. Capacity issues relate to water/wastewater (most areas in Peninsula Township are on wells and septic systems) and parking while maintaining a substantial portion of the site planted in crops that produce fruit that can be made into wine (currently 75 percent of the site if the site is a winery chateau). Additionally, as wineries can be among the largest traffic generators on the peninsula, it makes sense that all future wineries should be located on M-37 to help reduce traffic on local roads.

Other Agri-business

Apart from wineries, other agricultural operations add value to agricultural produce and sell products on site. However, it is generally felt that the zoning ordinance does not provide adequate flexibility for a more complete range of potential agri-business uses. The township has many farm stands, but farm stands are limited to 150 square feet in size. Farm processing facilities (including wineries) are allowed in the agricultural zoning district as a permitted use (use by right), but 40 acres are needed. Food processing plants are allowed in A-1 but only as a special use. Greenhouses and nurseries are also special uses in A-1. In essence, there are limited opportunities for owners of agricultural land to grow or raise products, add value to these products, and sell them.

Relaxing certain requirements is considered to be a logical step toward enhancing and supporting local agri-business. The associated challenge is to do so in a manner that does not diminish rural character by allowing an excessive amount of commercial activity in more rural areas, in viewsheds, and in other sensitive locations. As with wineries, it makes sense that larger agri-businesses should be located on M-37 to help reduce traffic on local roads.

Initiatives and Action Steps

Pursue Development of Updated Zoning to Address Winery Issues and Add More Flexibility to Other Agri-businesses

There are multiple regulatory options to consider regarding how to address wineries and provide more flexibility for other forms of agri-businesses. In terms of refinements to winery regulations (apart from the need to wait for a resolution to the lawsuit), the planning commission has developed a framework that can be revisited and refined. Regulatory options are varied and include updating special use and use-by-right requirements. Finally, consideration can be given to allowing shared remote sales and/or processing facilities. New buildings of modest size could be built (or existing under-utilized buildings could be repurposed) on M-37 to increase opportunities for processing and sales of local agricultural products. This concept aligns with the desire to keep commercial activity off local roads and on M-37, which has the capacity to support higher traffic volumes in the safest manner possible.

It should also be noted that since residents of Peninsula Township have paid for PDR easements in the agricultural preservation areas, they have a right to express a strong preference regarding land use issues as they relate to maintaining a rural atmosphere with lower levels of traffic and noise.

Lodging and Short-Term Rentals

Under current ordinances, lodging options include bed and breakfasts (B&Bs), guest rooms in winery chateaus, and hotels (hotels are only allowed under a special use permit [SUP] within the 26 acres of land zoned C-1 in Peninsula Township). Apart from guest rooms at winery chateaus and a few rooms at B&Bs, there are few lodging options in Peninsula Township.



Short-term rentals (STRs) are now prohibited in Peninsula Township, and the 2019 survey results suggest residents support this policy. Additionally, Peninsula Township officially opposes STRs (see Resolution 2021-05-11 passed on May 11, 2021). However, a proposed bill in the Michigan legislature seeks to limit local governments' ability to regulate short-term rentals by changing the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act. A similar bill introduced in past legislative sessions received considerable attention. It is interesting to note that the impacts of STRs are not felt evenly across the state. According to a recent *Record-Eagle* article (May 9, 2021), this region is home to only three percent of the state's population but has 25 percent of the short-term rental units in all of Michigan. Nationally, a similar trend towards more short-term rentals exists. In highly desirable vacation/tourist areas, it is not uncommon for single family homes to be purchased by out-of-town investors who buy properties for the sole purpose of using them exclusively as STRs. This drives up housing prices and erodes the notion that people know their neighbors and are part of a familiar neighborhood.

Public opinion supports the current position/policy of the prohibition on STRs. Regarding other forms of local lodging, there is support for investigating options to improve policies with respect to B&Bs, guest rooms at winery chateaus, and hotels and to perhaps create a new category of "country inns." The exact definition of a "country inn" needs to be developed further and should be distinguished from existing B&Bs or winery-chateaus with guest rooms. Conceptually, a country inn is a building with unique character, food offerings, and guest rooms on a large rural tract of land. There is also the potential to connect lodging with an offering of a deeper agricultural experience and appreciation that includes opportunities to learn about agricultural practices, methods, challenges and food processing.

The subject of hotels should also be addressed. Presently, a hotel is permitted on the limited amount of C-1 zoned land as a special use. A five-acre parcel

size is also required. This minimum parcel size should be reviewed, as it might have unintended consequences such as nudging developers toward larger facilities than would likely be desired. Given a five-acre site and the existing maximum lot coverage of 35 percent, a building footprint could be more than 75,000 square feet. A building this size would likely be way out of scale with the surrounding rural area. For this reason, a revision is needed.

Initiatives and Action Steps

Develop updated regulations for B&Bs and/or create a new category of lodging called "country inns." A review of allowed numbers of guest rooms given the size of a site and allowed guest activities is particularly relevant. Often, a related issue is the topic of allowed events such as weddings and other gatherings for small groups, which should be clearly addressed and limited. As mentioned previously, residents of Peninsula Township have paid for PDR easements and have a right to express a strong preference regarding land use issues as they relate to maintaining a rural atmosphere with lower levels of traffic and noise.

Special Land Use Permits

The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (MZEA) of 2006 establishes parameters under which a local zoning ordinance can be created and administered. A component of these parameters is the authority to define special land uses and activities that

(continued on page 71)





Special Use Permits in Peninsula Township

Zoning ordinances typically divide communities into different zoning districts that include the distinct land uses allowed in each one and the development standards that must be met. Uses listed in each zoning district include those permitted “as-of-right” or by right and those that are “special uses,” which are also known as SUPs. (“SUP” literally stands for “special use permit.”) Uses permitted “as-of-right” or by right can be approved administratively when the applicant demonstrates that the proposed project meets all zoning requirements (minimum lot sizes, setbacks, height restrictions, lot coverage, etc.). Generally, these uses include construction projects such as single-family homes, home additions, garages, decks, sheds, sea walls, etc. SUPs, on the other hand, are more intense and potentially more impactful and include uses such as winery chateaus and churches. Potential impacts from these uses in terms of traffic and noise justify an additional review process, requirements, and examination. The town board can approve projects with specific conditions and safeguards put in place to address potential impacts.

The process to approve an SUP or PUD takes several months. The first requirement is for the landowner to file an application with the township’s planning commission. The planning commission then considers the application at one or more scheduled meetings, a key part of which is a legally advertised public hearing. The advertisement for the public hearing is placed in the *Record-Eagle*, and people within 300 feet of the project are required by law to receive a written notice in the mail. Ideally, before the public hearing, interested residents take the time to learn what is being proposed. Township staff welcome questions about proposed projects, and residents can also seek answers from the comfort of their own homes by asking questions at www.participateoldmission.com.

The planning commission considers the testimony provided at the public hearing and works with staff and outside assistance from engineering and legal resources to produce a document that describes how the proposed project does or does not meet the requirements of the zoning ordinance; this document also defines any specific approval conditions that are necessary to address concerns. After the planning commission reaches consensus on an actionable document and votes to approve it, the matter moves to the township board. Similarly, the township board holds a public hearing and considers the findings of the planning commission before taking final action. The process, while time consuming, is designed to provide ample opportunities for public comment and deliberation by appointed and elected officials. At the conclusion of the process, the township may act to deny, approve, or approve a project with conditions.



may be approved subject to special standards and requirements. The Peninsula Township Zoning Ordinance relies heavily on special land use approvals to address sensitive issues such as wineries and related commercial activities. Since the zoning ordinance was first adopted 50 years ago, nearly 140 SUPs have been approved. Public hearings are conducted and notices are sent to adjoining property owners before an official statement of findings and conclusions is produced; this document specifies the basis for the decision and any conditions imposed.

One area of concern is the need for minor amendments to previously approved SUPs. Typically, SUP approval requires at least four months of time to provide for two public hearings and both planning commission and township board approval. That requirement can be onerous, especially when a change or modification is small and inconsequential. The MZEA seems to allow for such procedural flexibility.

Initiatives and Action Steps

Review and update procedures for SUP approvals and amendments.

The zoning ordinance should be amended to provide for an abbreviated process to consider minor amendments to SUPs. The choices could include only staff approval or just planning commission/township board action. Again, the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act of 2006 allows for options to be considered in terms of how SUPs are reviewed and acted on.

General Review of Uses and Development Standards in All Zoning Districts

The list of uses permitted as-of-right and by SUP has been largely unchanged for many years. Land

uses exist today that did not exist in 1972 when the ordinance was adopted. Some particular areas to consider include the following:

1. The MZEA generally states that a zoning ordinance shall not have the effect of totally prohibiting the establishment of a land use within a local unit of government in the presence of a demonstrated need for that land use. Given this requirement, a review of permitted and special uses should be conducted. Few (if any) land uses have been added to the zoning ordinance since its adoption nearly 50 years ago.

2. The C-1 zoning district does not include any permitted uses. Uses are only allowed as an SUP, and land use descriptions are very broad. For example, the term “retail sales” is used, but that term potentially includes everything from a small market to a big box superstore. Only a small amount of land is zoned C-1 in Peninsula Township, and no areas are appropriate for large-format commercial activity. C-1 should be clearly defined in the context of “neighborhood scale” establishments that include retail sales and consumer services (barber/beauty shops, drycleaner, salons, photo studio, computer repair, etc.). To address concerns over building mass and scale, development standards such as maximum building size should be considered.

Development of a form-based code should also be investigated and considered. According to the Form-Based Code Institute, this regulation is adopted as an alternative to conventional zoning regulation that provides more predictable build results and a high-quality public realm by using physical form rather than separation of uses as the organizing principle for the code. This tool could prove to be useful in the future to more clearly and specifically define the form, mass, and placement of new buildings in C-1 zoning districts.

3. Existing provisions related to “dark sky” issues should be addressed. Peninsula Township demonstrated leadership many years ago with regulations aimed at



curbing light pollution. Existing provisions in Peninsula Township's Zoning Ordinance could be improved, however, by utilizing material found in a model ordinance produced by the International Dark Sky Association and the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America.

4. Parking standards should be reviewed and updated. The cost of building and maintaining parking areas plus environmental issues related to impervious surfaces and the volume and velocity of runoff that washes chemicals into water sources are strong reasons to ensure that minimum parking standards do not require larger parking lots than necessary. Parking standards in the Peninsula Township Zoning Ordinance have been in place for several decades, and better research now exists to consider updated standards for Peninsula Township such as including bike parking equipment and areas and delineating non-motorized use space in parking lots (see Parking Standards, American Planning Association, *PAS Report 510/511*). Bike parking requirements can be based on the amount of floor area or as a fraction of vehicular parking requirements. Requiring bike parking is another way to promote non-motorized travel in Peninsula Township.

5. Efforts are needed to examine existing zoning requirements in places like Neahtawanta. Areas such as these were platted long before local zoning was enacted and include many non-conforming lots. The Neahtawanta area is zoned R-1B, which requires 100 feet of frontage and 25,000 square feet of lot area in order to comply with the minimum lot size in that zoning district necessary for home construction.

6. Improvements to regulations concerning the number of docks and hoists permitted and shared waterfront access is needed, particularly as it relates to new developments located on or near the bays. The updated zoning ordinance clarifies existing requirements for docks and hoists for individual properties, but the larger issue of shared waterfront

access and allowable docks and hoists still needs attention.

FUTURE LAND USE

A future land use map has been prepared that largely reflects existing land use patterns in Peninsula Township. Future land uses throughout large portions of Peninsula Township are likely to be unchanged in the future for several reasons. First, township PDR easements restricting development were created to run with the land in perpetuity. Second, much of the land along the shorelines has been built upon, and few vacant sites remain. The table on page 73 illustrates land use categories and their associated acreages.

It is important to note that this master plan does not propose potential large-scale rezoning of land in order to achieve the future land use pattern illustrated in the map on page 74. The differences between the existing land use map provided earlier and this future land use map largely reflect some degree of "build out" that will naturally occur within the confines and parameters of existing zoning requirements. It should also be noted that the designated rural agricultural areas are not to be regarded as "undeveloped" properties awaiting development plans. Land designed as rural/agricultural is land that is intentionally designated for agricultural use now and into the future.

This master plan does, however, recognize that some "small scale" rezonings (i.e., involving only a few acres) may prove to be necessary in the future in two specific ways. First, minor adjustments to zoning district boundaries might be needed in instances where odd-shaped parcels are involved and impacted. Second, more than 1,100 acres of property in Peninsula Township are considered to be "dual zoned," which means a zoning district boundary divides a given parcel. That said, dual-zoned properties are generally avoided with good planning and zoning practices that reduce ambiguity and confusion over requirements.



Future Land Use Parameters	Acreage	Percent
Rural Agricultural (1 housing unit for each 5 acres or more)	11,251.45	63.0%
Rural Residential (1 housing unit for between 1 and 5 acres)	1,635.9	9.2%
Suburban Residential (between 1 and 4 housing units per acre)	3,034.3	17.0%
Urban Residential (4 or more housing units per acre)	15.72	0.1%
Commercial	19.96	0.1%
Public/Semi Public/Private Open Space	1,910.27	10.7%
TOTAL	17,867.6	100.0%

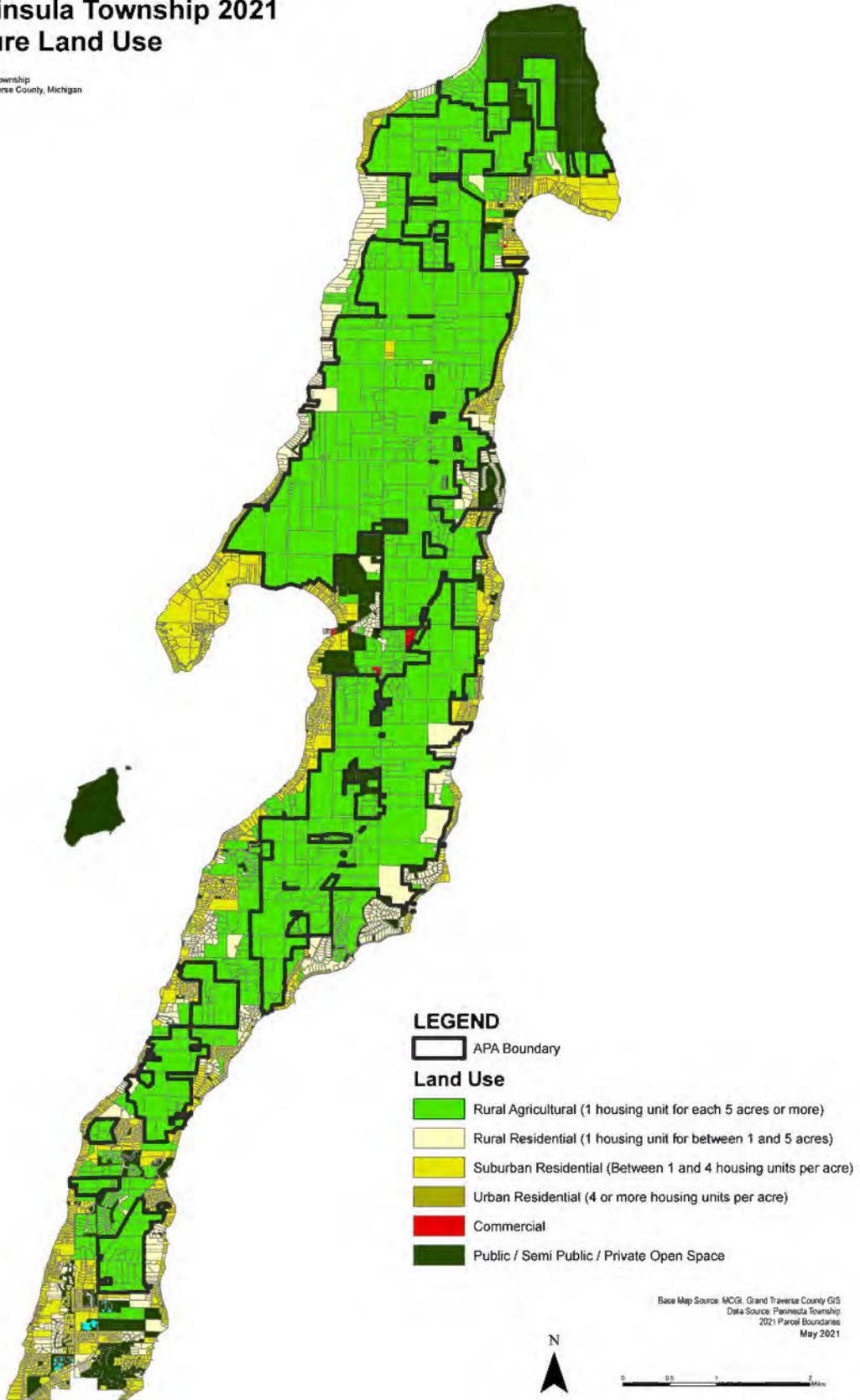


It should be clear that the designated rural agricultural areas are not to be regarded as "undeveloped" properties awaiting development plans. Land designed as rural agricultural is land intentionally designated for primarily agricultural use now and into the future.



Peninsula Township 2021 Future Land Use

Peninsula Township
Grand Traverse County, Michigan



Chapter 7 – Mobility





According to the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, a master plan addresses land use and infrastructure issues and shows the planning commission’s recommendations for physical development. It also includes all components of a transportation system and interconnectivity between streets, bridges, public transit, bicycle facilities, pedestrian ways, freight facilities, port facilities, railroad facilities, and airports with the aim of providing safe and efficient movement of people and goods for the community now and in the future. Mobility issues fall into several groups in terms of both vehicular and non-motorized travel.

Vehicular Mobility

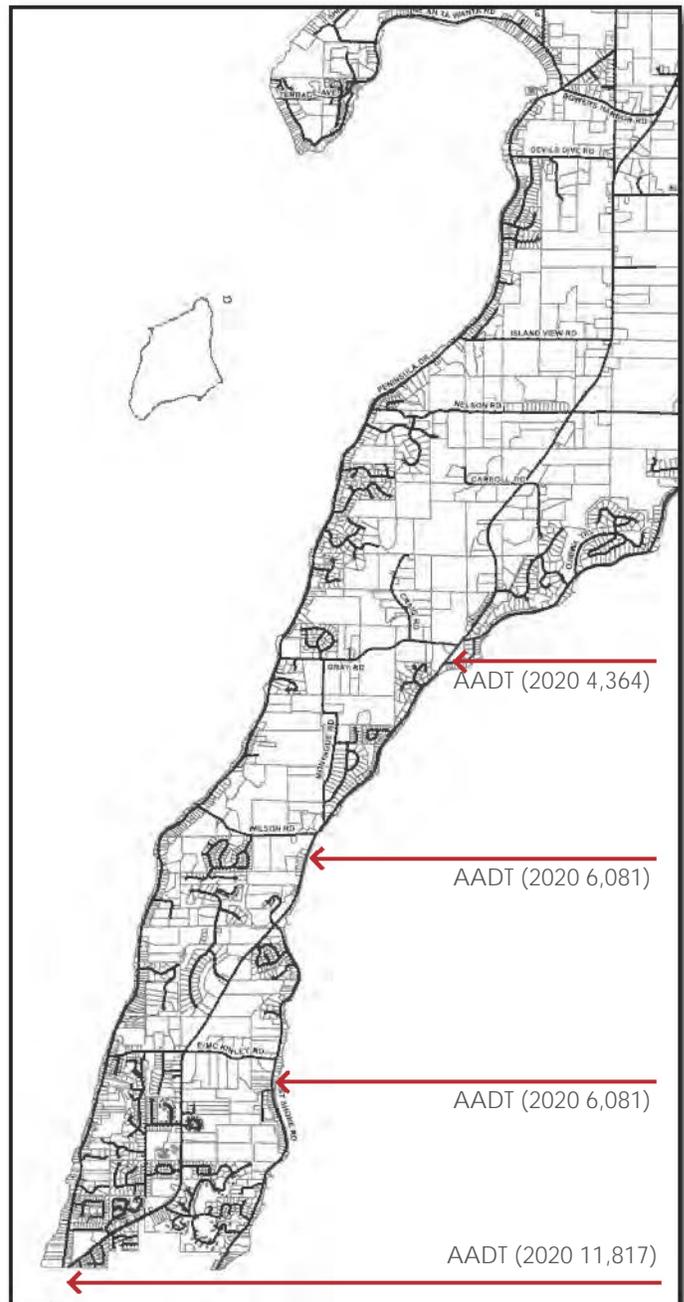
M-37 – CENTER ROAD

M-37 is Peninsula Township’s primary throughfare. It provides the most efficient route from north to south and sees by far the heaviest traffic volumes. To the south, just past the intersection with Peninsula Drive, the annual average daily traffic (AADT) is 11,817 (2020) according to MDOT. Toward the north a few miles, south of McKinley Road, AADT drops to 6,081 (2020). Further north (but south of Wilson Road), AADT is the same at 6,081 (2020). Just south of Gray Road, AADT drops to 4,364 (2020).*

Clearly, M-37 acts as a funnel, moving greater and greater numbers of vehicles closer to Traverse City and M-72/Front Street. The largest jump in traffic counts occurs south of McKinley Road as adjacent subdivisions add traffic generation. As described previously, the intersection of M-37 with the road network in Traverse City is a major chokepoint with busy intersections and a finite capacity to move traffic.

One attribute of M-37 is its slopes and curves, particularly toward the southern end the township. Horizontal and vertical curves add considerable visual interest, revealing spectacular views of both East and

*It is worth noting that the 2020 counts are substantially lower than 2019 counts, which might be attributed to COVID-19-related travel impacts.



Source: MDOT www.michigan.gov/mdot/



West bays and breathtaking agricultural landscapes. This same attribute, however, impacts vehicular travel, as it limits opportunities for passing zones and sight distances associated with driveways and intersecting streets.

As noted on page 28, M-37 was designated as a Pure Michigan Byway in 2008. A corresponding Old Mission Peninsula Scenic Heritage Route Management Plan was developed to provide an understanding of the designated route, what makes it special, and why it should be preserved. This plan includes:

- A map and photographic inventory displaying the location of intrinsic qualities;
- Maps displaying land use along the corridor;
- Maps of road use and crash data;
- Inventory of the natural, historical, cultural, and recreational resources;
- A list of potential threats or challenges affecting the character of the corridor;
- Goals and objectives that offer insight into the issues with recommendations for attaining the goals; and
- Recommendations and strategies for making future management decisions with a prioritized project list.

The current master plan calls for maintaining M-37 as a free-flowing major road unrestricted by stop signs or signals. This objective relates not only to the convenience of residents and visitors but also reflects the belief that the agricultural nature of the area depends on supporting the movement of agricultural trucks and equipment on and off the peninsula.

STRATEGY

Peninsula Township has identified the need for a corridor study of M-37 for several years. Most recently, this issue stalled during discussions about whether or not the Grand Traverse County Road Commission would take over control of this road. Now that we know MDOT will retain control of M-37, some of the answers/results sought from such a study include the following (some issues overlap with recommendations in the Old Mission Peninsula Scenic Heritage Route Management Plan):

1. What can be done to improve safety at the scenic turnout near Chateau Grand Traverse? Increasing numbers of vehicles park there, taking in the views and watching sunsets, particularly during peak tourist seasons.
2. What should be done to improve intersecting roads with M-37 that are not 90-degree intersections, a circumstance that inhibits safe sight distances and creates safety issues? Some examples include Seven Hills, Smoky Hollow, and Bluff roads.
3. What opportunities exist to construct turn lanes, passing lanes, or similar improvements to help support traffic flow that can be encompassed in future planning and development review activities?
4. How can we address issues related to the parking needs associated with the DNR boat launch near the East Shore Road intersection? Seasonal demand for boat launch access regularly results in spillover on-street parking on M-37, leading to safety issues as turning movements (often involving vehicles towing boats) are restricted





and congested roadway conditions inhibit sight distances.

5. How can we clearly identify where sight distances are optimum for future driveways and new private roads?
6. Can we consider the need for an overlay zoning district along M-37? An overlay zoning district can define uniform setbacks from the right-of-way. A-1 is a common zoning district along M-37, and it requires only a 35-foot front setback. An overlay zoning district could require a larger setback along the corridor regardless of the requirements of the various underlying zoning districts. Other augmented development standards might also make sense.

Additional Study of Local Roads

The general discussion about mobility in Peninsula Township has highlighted the need for a township-wide traffic study. This study could occur with, or apart from, the M-37 corridor plan mentioned above. There are unique issues with the shoreline roads and the east/west connectors that relate to both vehicular and non-motorized mobility. This work should be aimed at determining how best to handle vehicular traffic while identifying which right-of-ways could support non-motorized traffic with designated travel areas. Identified right-of-way widths throughout the township would make it possible to determine which roads might support non-motorized transportation outside the motorized lane (i.e., separate walks and/or cycle tracks).

Another aspect of this study should consider the desirability of one-way vehicular traffic on roads such as East Shore. A single one-way travel lane would allow space for non-motorized travel within the existing paved surface, eliminating the need to widen the road and take down trees along the shoreline to accommodate non-motorized travel. Such an evaluation should also take into account any potential impacts on emergency vehicle response times.

STRATEGY

As part of the corridor planning related to M-37, additional attention should be placed on local roads as described above. If local roads are studied as part of a M-37 corridor plan, overall costs will likely be reduced. For this reason, local roads should be included in any M-37 corridor plan.

Initiatives and Action Steps

Pursue development of a corridor plan and a study of local roads focused on the identified strategy elements.

Non-motorized Mobility

In the 2019 community survey, residents spoke convincingly about the need to plan for more non-motorized transportation opportunities in Peninsula Township. In fact, the 2019 survey results suggest that nearly eight in 10 respondents support the concept of more planning for bike and pedestrian travel. Related to this level of support is the fact that the larger Traverse City region continues to offer an expanding non-motorized transportation system in response to an increasing interest in biking, walking, fitness, and generally healthy living. Simultaneously, we see complaints surfacing from visitors to the peninsula who experience dangerous circumstances they attribute to a lack of accommodation for non-motorized travel. Recently, an experience was so significant that a visitor took the time to write a letter stating he'd been run off the road several times while biking; he made it clear he will not return to the peninsula unless improvements are made to protect cyclists.



Bicyclists on Blue Water Road heading toward Center Road

Non-motorized travel is not just about casual recreational cyclists or walkers. The base of the township serves as training grounds for local sports teams (football, basketball, hockey, and of course track and cross country). The Bayshore Marathon has been identified as one of the nation's most scenic races and is considered an ideal qualifying race for the Boston Marathon. Other races are similarly popular, and the local road system draws visitors from all over the nation, especially the Midwest. People visit with the intention of enjoying the roads and scenery but find conditions that raise important safety issues.

These long-standing circumstances present an opportunity to update the master plan and provide a compelling and exciting opportunity to begin a significant dialogue about the future of non-motorized mobility. Recent conversations during the planning process about non-motorized travel include a wide range of projects from minor pavement markings to dedicated trails extending throughout the peninsula with connections to parks and community facilities such as the library and school.

These early conversations have been supported with input from local organizations such as TART, Cherry Capital Cycling Club, and Norte. In April 2021, Peninsula Township specifically reached out to these three organizations for assistance and input. All three attended a master plan steering committee meeting in early May, 2021. Conversations were fruitful but led to the acknowledgement that there are significant questions to be addressed if we are to move forward. These include the subjects of:

- Creating an overall vision for non-motorized travel on the Old Mission Peninsula.
- Identifying additional information to support informed conversations about viable options and alternatives, some of which is engineering related.
- Determining if non-motorized trails are permitted on agricultural land included in an existing PDR easement.
- Identifying issues that are related and ancillary to non-motorized travel. These include existing speed limits, existing passing zones, general roadway safety, and related matters.
- Identifying potential construction and non-construction projects that support the vision of non-motorized travel (non-construction projects might include printed materials, information campaigns, signage, websites, organizational partnerships, etc.). Potential projects include those related to the Safe Routes to School program.
- Prioritizing projects and possible timetables and comparing short-term/low-cost projects with longer-term/high-cost projects.
- Funding (federal, state, local, and private).

STRATEGY

The complexity of the above issues suggests it is not possible to instantly develop a complete plan and aggressive timetable for constructing projects that immediately result in better bike and pedestrian mobility for Peninsula Township. Rather, what lies ahead is the need for a working group of planning commission members, master plan committee members, and park committee members



to collaborate with TART, Cherry Capital Cycling Club, and Norte with the goal of responding to the seven issues identified above. Ultimately, this work should include more community engagement so that the vision, projects, and implementation steps enjoy as much support as possible as well as the insights residents have about how to make Peninsula Township more healthy, livable, and sustainable.

Once complete, a non-motorized transportation plan should appear as an amendment to the master plan for two primary reasons:

- If private development is proposed adjacent to a planned non-motorized improvement, potential connections should be considered; and
- If funding is sought for a major project, the fact that the project is part of the master plan helps to identify its validity and importance.

As starting points for further study and planning for non-motorized travel in Peninsula Township, the following ideas should be explored:

- Paving roadway shoulders in the high-use Bowers Harbor area that connect the boat launch, Bowers Harbor Park, the Mapleton Area, and the Seven Hills and Devils Dive areas;
- Adding segments of paved shoulders in areas where there are steep hills and/or poor sight distances or low visibility;
- Utilizing one-way roads where low vehicular speeds and low traffic volumes exist. This change would potentially allow for one vehicular travel lane and one lane for non-motorized travel;
- Implementing better bike/pedestrian crossings at Gray Road and Center, Seven Hills and Center, and Smokey Hollow and Center roads;
- Collaborating with Old Mission Peninsula School and Norte to explore options for Safe Routes to School projects and associated funding. Similarly, there is a need to collaborate with Eastern Elementary School and Traverse City Central High School located near the base of the peninsula. Peninsula Township students attend these schools as well, although the exact number of students is unknown. Norte administers Safe Routes to School programs in the Traverse City area as well as in Northport and Elk Rapids; and

- Developing a specific recommendation for 1) updating the township zoning ordinance to require bicycle parking improvements (racks and/or bike parking areas) in much the same way that off-street automobile parking spaces are required now for non-residential developments and 2) requiring pavement markings to designate pedestrian/bike areas in new parking lots.

Initiatives and Action Steps

Formation of a working group to begin development of a non-motorized transportation plan to represent an amendment to this master plan. This plan includes exploring options for Safe Routes to School funding and zoning amendments to require bike parking improvements related to new construction.

Chapter 8 – Places, Facilities, Governance





Places, Facilities, and Governance

Apart from land use and mobility, various places, public facilities, and aspects of governance in Peninsula Township collectively help support the attachment people feel to this special place. Historic landmarks and old farm buildings that dot the landscape remind people of what came before. Architectural themes related to coastal homes, beach houses, and farmsteads are common. Finally, public facilities such as the school, library, town hall, and fire stations help anchor residents to a sense of community. In addition, our local form of government has much to do with how people relate to their community and the sense of empowerment they feel about shaping the future.

HISTORY AND CULTURE

There are four primary historical sites on the Old Mission Peninsula. These include the replica Log Church and Peter Dougherty House in Old Mission and the Hessler Log Cabin and Mission Point Lighthouse at the tip of the peninsula. In addition, historic businesses include the Old Mission Inn and the General Store. Moreover, three remaining historic private resort associations exist on the peninsula, Illini, Leffingwell, and Neahtawanta. Much of the story of nineteenth- and twentieth-century America arcs through and across these places.

To present the peninsula's diverse history at easily accessible sites that best consolidate private and public funds, strategic planning should be aimed toward centralizing the history of the Old Mission Peninsula at the Dougherty House/Log Church site and Mission Point Lighthouse.

Dougherty House

The Dougherty property is the appropriate place with the necessary acreage to eventually house the longitudinal story of the Old Mission Peninsula. This story ought to include the lives of the Native Americans, the story of the advent and progress of agriculture, and the story of tourism. It should also highlight the conservation movement on the peninsula via a facility on the Dougherty grounds that shares the innovative PDR and land conservancy efforts undertaken by our leaders and that tells the story of the resilience of Lake Michigan, including the changes in water levels, changes in the ecosystem, the effect of invasive species, and the ongoing efforts to protect the lake from manmade crises.

The Dougherty site could tell the story of the first inhabitants as well the story of white emigration. Visitors could take a walking tour past the relocated settler cabin and a mini orchard, tour an example of an early cottage, gain an appreciation for the work of Mexican Americans in gathering the harvest abundance, travel through the various stages of agricultural mechanization, learn about innovative conservation programs, and develop a deeper appreciation for the immense majesty of the Great Lakes, all at one site.

Mission Point Lighthouse

The lighthouse restoration is complete and provides an example of the light service, lifesaving, and maritime history. Regular cultural events, a popular keeper program, successful fundraisers, and a planned Michigan lighthouse program should continue. The lighthouse grounds is adjacent to the Hessler Log Cabin. However, some feel this cabin should be moved to the Dougherty property and the lighthouse should focus mainly on maritime history. A tour of the lighthouse grounds presents the opportunity to showcase our unique maritime history.



Strategies

Although there has been historically strong grassroots support and funding for separate local historic pursuits, the idea of merging the Peter Dougherty Society and the Old Mission Peninsula Historical Society has been suggested. Potential benefits include a means to improve strategic planning, branding, and pursuit of project funding. However, at this time, this idea has not been accepted or pursued and there is no consensus about whether this step would be wholly beneficial. Continued study and evaluation by both organizations is encouraged, however, with the backing of a township that is willing to support either the status quo or organizational restructuring. The overriding objective given any organizational framework is the need to maintain and further develop easy access to the story of local history and the pursuit of better ways to maintain, operate, and improve historical sites and parks. In the meantime, the township should work to develop a mechanism that allows historical groups to be notified whenever an existing historical property such as an old barn is being considered for demolition so that all other options can be explored.

Initiatives and Action Steps

- Centralize the history of the Old Mission Peninsula at the Dougherty House/Log Church and the lighthouse.
- Create a single website to act as a portal to all things historical and cultural on Old Mission Peninsula.
- Create and maintain seasonal displays at the library to encourage an interest in the preservation movement among younger residents.
- Identify and implement sustainable ways to maintain, operate, and improve the township's most valuable historic sites and parks.
- Review the zoning ordinance and consider new ways to support historic preservation. Examples include potentially adding requirements to inform a historic group before demolition permits are issued so that opportunities to salvage, move, or even photograph structures are not forever lost.

PUBLIC FACILITIES

Public facilities support the needs of residents and visitors in various ways and generally include the public library, town hall/office building, and fire stations. The public library is new and will serve community needs for many years to come. However, looking forward into the coming decades, decisions are likely to be needed with respect to the town hall/office building and fire stations. Specifically, the town hall/office building may need to be expanded to accommodate new government functions and to reach higher levels of accessibility for those with mobility impairments. In terms of the fire stations, three facilities now serve the township. The recent addition of the third station in the spring of 2021 dramatically improved emergency response times for residents at the northern end of the peninsula. However, the two fire stations located to the south are older facilities that will soon need to be upgraded. Additionally, apart from the town hall (which has ADA compliance issues), the township lacks a public space that can be used for training purposes and larger events/meetings.

Strategy

Upgrades/changes to the two southernmost fire stations will be needed in the future. **Similarly, it is not unrealistic to expect that more township office space will be needed.** Both issues would be tremendously impacted by any future steps taken toward pursuing another form of government to better meet the needs of residents. Although it would always be possible to contract out services, local space and facility needs would still likely increase.

Along with providing procedural and content-related requirements for master plans, the Michigan Planning



Enabling Act (MEPA) defines requirements for capital improvement plans (CIPs). Capital improvements typically refer to major expenditures on things such as land, buildings, public infrastructure, and equipment. CIPs provide a description of proposed capital improvement projects that are prioritized and scheduled with a cost estimate and identified funding source. CIPs consist of a working document that looks forward six years and is updated annually to reflect changing priorities and funding opportunities. The CIP should also reference water and sewer infrastructure needs (as described previously in Chapter 2) and potential capital projects at the parks as described below.

Peninsula Township (like many townships) does not now have a CIP. However, steps in this direction should be taken. The MPEA indicates that the planning commission is responsible for creating a CIP, but such an undertaking requires close coordination with the township board and staff. The process to develop a CIP generally includes project identification, ranking/prioritization, public input, plan development, and adoption. Note: CIPs do not include maintenance items.

Initiatives and Action Steps

- Launch an effort to formally develop and adopt a CIP for Peninsula Township.

PARKS

Peninsula Township has a well-established park system that has developed and expanded over many years. In Michigan, park and recreation planning is typically done within the context of the five-year Community Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenway plans required by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR). MDNR offers grant programs that represent major funding sources for both parkland

acquisition and parkland development. Projects proposed by a local government must be consistent with the planning and priorities established in these plans. Peninsula Township's park and recreation plan was adopted in 2018 and is now undergoing an update to refresh and realign goals and priorities with proposed projects.

Also in 2018, Peninsula Township residents voted to change the organizational responsibilities for park management from an independently elected parks commission to a township board-appointed committee. This committee has seven members and works closely with the township board; members of the committee are also assigned to specific parks.

Recently, Peninsula Township entered into a contract with LIAA (Land Information Access Association) to assist with updating the township's five-year park and recreation plan and to develop a list of capital improvements and a sustainable operating budget. So as not to duplicate efforts, specific park development projects will be defined in this updated park and recreation plan rather than here.

However, as parks are such an important factor in terms of the quality of life, it is important to draw attention to overarching planning considerations and strategies aimed at the four major hubs of park and recreation activity in Peninsula Township.

Specific Park Strategies

- Pelizzari Natural Area (PNA): located in the most heavily populated areas of Peninsula Township, PNA offers a place to walk and hike in a natural and peaceful setting. With expected residential growth in the general area, future opportunities that may present themselves to expand Pelizzari should be pursued and encouraged.
- Bowers Harbor Park: Bowers Harbor Park is centrally located, and a new master plan for the recent park addition sets the stage for many improvements to



increase functionality for both active and passive recreational activities.

- **Haserot Beach and Kelley Park:** Haserot Beach is the only public beach on the Old Mission Peninsula, and a new boat launch is being planned at nearby Kelley Park and should be in place in the next few years. This area is appropriately focused on water-related recreational activities that should continue.
- **Mission Point Lighthouse Park and environs:** Mission Point Lighthouse, Mission Point Lighthouse Park, and the adjoining Mission Point State Park are a major tourist destination. The parks' 145 acres include trails, picnic facilities, and beach access. The lighthouse itself attracts visitors from all 50 states and abroad. When residents were asked how the township should continue to manage the lighthouse, most were in favor of maintaining the current practice of coupling maintenance and tourist promotion.

Initiatives and Action Steps

- Continue steps toward developing an updated park and recreation plan.
- In conjunction with non-motorized transportation planning, identify opportunities to connect the four major park hubs in Peninsula Township – PNA, Bowers Harbor Park, Haserot Beach, and Mission Point Lighthouse Park – to other township facilities such as Archie Park, also owned by the township, and Pyatt Lake Natural Area, owned by the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy.

GOVERNANCE

As described earlier, Peninsula Township is quite geographically unique among Michigan townships, yet it governs and operates like most other townships in Michigan and nearby states. Township government has been in place for hundreds of years and is rooted in New England traditions of local self-governance. According to the Michigan Townships Association, township governments were actually in place in most Midwestern states before they achieved statehood, which is why they reflect the six-mile-square land divisions established in the original federal land surveys.

Today, the issues that local officials confront on a daily basis could not have been imagined hundreds of years ago. The logical question going forward is whether or not to consider other options for how to deliver services to residents in the most responsive and cost-effective way possible.

Michigan law provides for two types of townships, general law (which Peninsula Township is) and charter townships. Charter townships have additional powers, streamlined administration, and greater protection against annexation by a city. In the immediate area, charter townships include Garfield, East Bay, and Elmwood.

Alternatively, Peninsula Township could consider incorporating as a village. There are substantial complexities to the status of municipalities in Michigan, but essentially they include both villages and cities. One important difference relates to the relationship to the existing township. In the case of a village, the township is not replaced, and it retains some governmental functions. Cities, on the other hand, fully replace township government.

The appeal of creating a village relates to the ability to exercise more regulatory authority, an ability to provide more local services, and the ability to take responsibility for public works and utilities. To be a village, an area must have a population of at least 150 and a density of 100 or more people per square mile. Cities have much higher population thresholds.

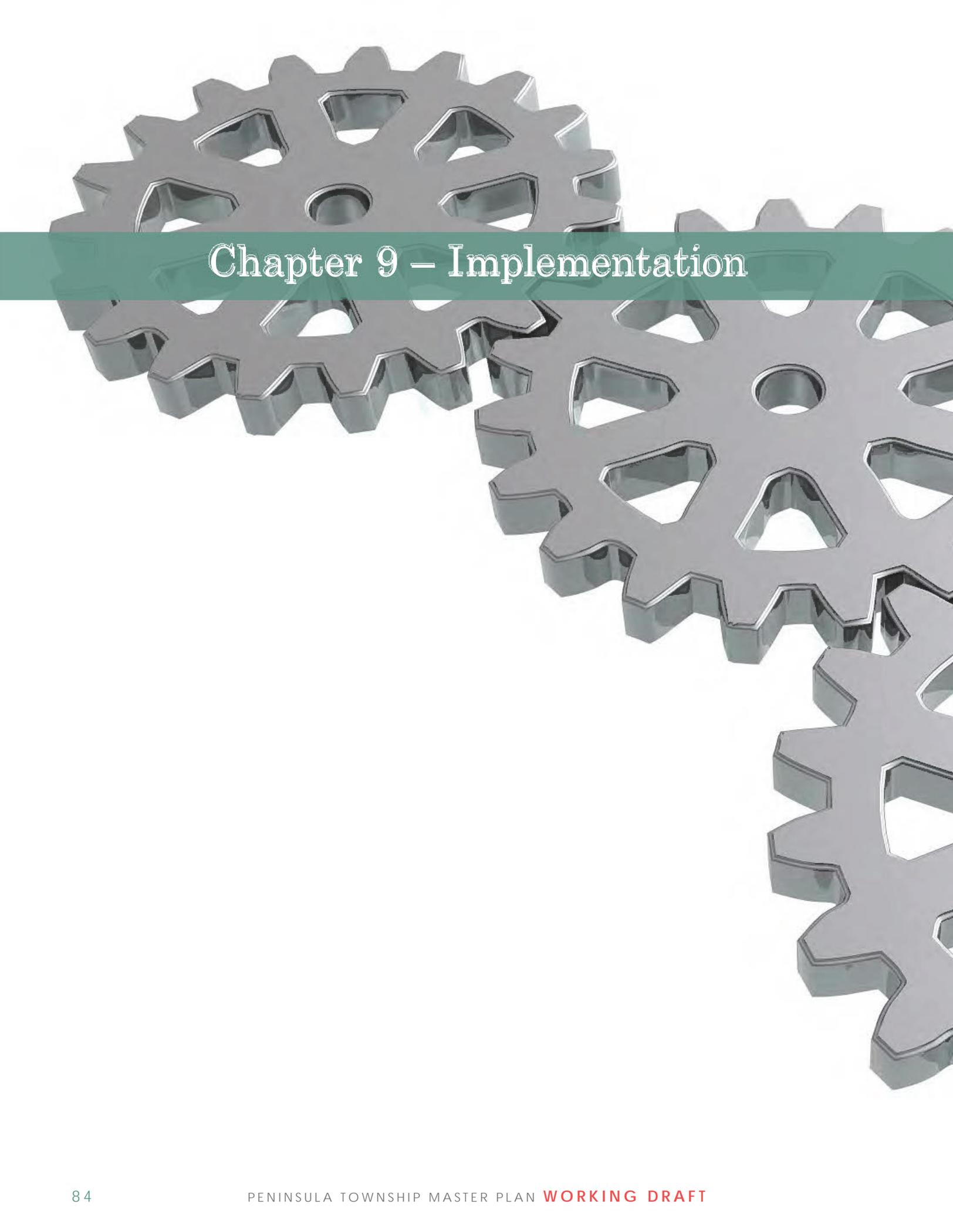
The issue of municipal incorporation should be carefully considered after weighing the advantages and disadvantages. Peninsula Township might have the tax base necessary to support the full range of services provided by a Michigan village. Most importantly, incorporation might provide the means needed to effectively respond to current and emerging problems associated with road



maintenance, repair of collapsing roads, and speed limits. An incorporated Peninsula Township might also have greater access to grants to fund infrastructure projects.

Initiatives and Action Steps

Convene a study group to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages to incorporation, then recommend action accordingly to the township board.



Chapter 9 – Implementation



TOPIC	VISION AND ORGANIZING PRINCIPLES	ACTION STEPS	REFERENCE
LAND USE	Recognize and make the most of an “island-like geography” and continue to implement any and all steps that reduce build-out potential.	PDR renewal.	Page 56
	Ensure that future development is constructed in ways that thoughtfully balance all land use needs.	<p>Continue to Study and Investigate the Concept of TDR and a Commerical Center</p> <p>General review of uses and development standards in all zoning districts.</p> <p>Review and update procedures for SUP approvals and amendments.</p>	<p>Page 63-64</p> <p>Page 68-69</p> <p>Page 66-68</p>
	Constructively and collaboratively work toward the goal of adding commercial value to local agricultural products without creating large commercial centers that add noise and traffic congestion.	Pursue development of updated zoning to address wineries and add more flexibility to other agri-businesses.	Page 63-65
	Protect the shoreline and wetlands to the maximum extent possible through both regulation and education centered on vegetation protection and enhancement. Areas like Pyatt Lake and other beach and coastal wetlands are an important buffer against pollution and flooding.	Update shoreline regulations and encourage shoreline protection education.	Page 60-61
	Continue to view alternative energy (solar/wind) as having a potential role for Peninsula Township.	Update alternative energy provisions in zoning ordinance with more public input.	Page 61-62
	Balance demand for a local hospitality industry against the need to control growth and manage traffic.	Pursue development of updated regulations for B&Bs and/or create a new category of lodging called “country inns.”	Page 65-66
	Continue developing an outstanding park system throughout Peninsula Township with “hubs” at Mission Point Lighthouse Park, Bowers Harbor Park, and Pelizzari Natural Area.	<p>Continue steps toward developing an updated park and recreation plan.</p> <p>In conjunction with non-motorized transportation planning, identify opportunities to connect the four major park hubs in Peninsula Township.</p>	Page 81-82 and 75-77



MOBILITY

TOPIC	VISION AND ORGANIZING PRINCIPLES	ACTION STEPS	REFERENCE
	<p>Make vehicular travel safer and more convenient.</p>	<p>Continue taking deliberate steps toward managing traffic flow all along M-37. Immediate steps include developing an M-37 corridor study aimed at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improving safety at the scenic turnout near Chateau Grand Traverse; ▪ Improving certain intersection roads; ▪ Identifying potential turn lanes, passing lanes, etc.; ▪ Addressing parking issues near the MDNR boat ramp; ▪ Identifying optimum locations for future driveways; and ▪ Evaluating the potential for an overlay zoning district along M-37 to establish uniform setbacks and other development standards. <p><i>Additional Study of Local Roads</i></p>	<p>Page 73-75</p>
	<p>Make pedestrian and bike travel safer and more convenient.</p>	<p>Working in collaboration, the non-motorized committee and area cycling interests develop a specific and achievable non-motorized transportation plan for Peninsula Township and implement recommended projects with available funding and other resources. This non-motorized plan should ultimately become an amendment to this master plan and include work to evaluate issues such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Paving roadway shoulders in high-use areas; ▪ Considering one-way roads where feasible; ▪ Improving crossings at specific road intersections with M-37; ▪ Collaborating with Old Mission Peninsula School and NORTE to explore Safe Routes to School projects and potential funding; and ▪ Conducting additional studies of local roads (potentially along with the M-37 corridor plan) to specifically identify right-of-way widths and options for non-motorized travel. 	<p>Page 75-77</p>



Places, Character and Governance

TOPIC	VISION AND ORGANIZING PRINCIPLES	ACTION STEPS	REFERENCE
	<p>Continue preserving, enhancing, and celebrating local history and culture.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Centralize the history of the Old Mission Peninsula at the Dougherty House/Log Church and the lighthouse. ▪ Create a single website to act as a portal to all things historical and cultural on the Old Mission Peninsula. ▪ Create and maintain seasonal displays at the library to encourage an interest in the preservation movement among younger residents. ▪ Identify and implement sustainable ways to maintain, operate, and improve the township's most valuable historic sites and parks. ▪ Review the zoning ordinance and consider new ways to support historic preservation. Examples include potential requirements to inform a historic group before demolition permits are issued so that opportunities to salvage, move, or even photograph structures are not forever lost. 	<p>Page 79-81</p>
	<p>Continue developing an outstanding park system throughout Peninsula Township with "hubs" at Mission Point Lighthouse Park, Haserot Beach, Bowers Harbor Park, and Pelizzari Natural Area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue steps toward developing an updated park and recreation plan. ▪ In conjunction with non-motorized transportation planning, identify opportunities to connect the four major park hubs in Peninsula Township – PNA, Bowers Harbor Park, Haserot Beach, and Mission Point Lighthouse Park – with other township facilities such as Archie Park, also owned by the township, and Pyatt Lake Natural Area, owned by the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy. 	<p>Page 84-83</p>
	<p>Operate under the best possible form of government, with suitable and essential public facilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Launch an effort to formally develop and adopt a CIP for Peninsula Township. ▪ Convene a study group to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of incorporation as a municipality. 	<p>Page 82 Page 82-83</p>