

# Master Plan Update



# 2020

## BEAR CREEK TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN

Prepared by the Bear Creek Township Planning Commission and Board of Trustees

Approved by the Bear Creek Township Board of Trustees on July 1, 2020

Effective July 1, 2020

The following motion is from the July 1, 2020 Bear Creek Township's Board of Trustees regular meeting:

***"Motion** by Kendziorski that the 2020 Bear Creek Township Master Plan be approved and adopted as presented. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Hoffman.*

1. Yes: Golding, Nowland, Hoffman, Keiser, Kendziorski **Passed"**

**Bear Creek Township  
Planning Commission  
June 24, 2020**

*Upon motion made by Judy Mays, supported by Mitch Brown, the following resolution was adopted.*

*Motion Carries- Unanimous*

WHEREAS, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended, authorizes the Township to revise a master plan every 5 years for the use, development, and preservation of all lands in the Township, and,

WHEREAS, the Bear Creek Township Master Plan was last updated in 2015, and,

WHEREAS, Bear Creek Township voted to begin the 5-year review process for the Bear Creek Township Master Plan, and,

WHEREAS, Bear Creek Township gave notice of intent on December 27, 2017 to revise the Master Plan, and,

WHEREAS, the Bear Creek Township 2020 Master Plan Update was sent out for municipality comment on January 10, 2020, by Bear Creek Township, and,

WHEREAS, Bear Creek Township held a public hearing on the Bear Creek Township 2020 Master Plan Update on June 3rd, 2020,

WHEREAS, Bear Creek Township Planning Commission held a public hearing on the Bear Creek Township 2020 Master Plan Update on June 24th, 2020,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:

1. **Findings of Fact.** Bear Creek Township Planning Commission has made the determination based on a review of existing land uses in the township, a review of the existing Master Plan provisions and maps, input received from the surrounding municipalities and public hearing, and with assistance from Networks Northwest, finds that the new 2020 Master Plan will accurately reflect and implement the Townships goals and strategies for the use, preservation, and development of lands in Bear Creek Township.
2. **Adoption of 2020 Master Plan.** The Bear Creek Township Planning Commission hereby approves and adopts the 2020 Master Plan, including all of the chapters, figures, maps, and tables contained here within.
3. **Adoption Recommendation.** The Bear Creek Township Planning Commission recommends the Board of Trustees adopts the 2020 Bear Creek Township Master Plan.

*Emma Kendziorski*

June 24, 2020

Emma Kendziorski, Clerk

# Acknowledgements

## Bear Creek Township Planning Commission

Tom Urman, Chair Planning Commission  
David Coveyou, Vice Chair Planning Commission  
Jeff Haven, Secretary Planning Commission  
Mitch Brown, Planning Commission  
Judy Mays, Planning Commission  
Lawrence Olliffe, Planning Commission  
Emma Kendziorski, Planning Commission

## Bear Creek Township Board

Dennis Keiser, Supervisor  
Joseph Hoffman Jr, Trustee  
Don Nowland, Trustee  
Connie Golding, Treasurer  
Emma Kendziorski, Clerk

Bear Creek Township  
373 North Division Road  
Petoskey, MI 49770  
(231) 347-0592

Prepared with assistance from



Networks Northwest  
PO Box 506  
Traverse City, MI 49685-0506  
Telephone: 231.929.5000  
[www.networksnorthwest.org](http://www.networksnorthwest.org)

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# Introduction

Simply put, the following statement describes what makes Bear Creek Township unique and why people want to keep it this way. This statement was developed from public input sessions held in 2008 and still holds true today. More than 45 people described what they thought made Bear Creek Township special and their comments were combined into the following statement. This statement will be used in the development of the Master Plan, when reviewing and updating it, and when considering significant changes in the Township.

*Bear Creek Township is home. It is a place where you can raise your children without the fear of crime, it is a place where you know your neighbors, and it is a place where people are friendly. This is a place where people choose to live.*

This is also a place where people can play. There is a large number of publicly-owned properties providing numerous recreation opportunities in all four seasons. In addition, Little Traverse Bay, Round Lake, and Walloon Lake provide very scenic views and are well known recreation areas. The Bear River provides additional recreation amenities as well as picturesque beauty.

This is a destination area as well as a home. The central location of the Township and access to US 131 and US 31 allow easy traveling in Northern Michigan. The Victorian homes in Bay View enhance the historic character of the area. The college and hospital, located in the City of Petoskey, provide needed services, education and job opportunities for the community.

Bear Creek Township is a place of duality; it is both rural and urban. The farmlands, rolling topography, sizeable tracts of hardwoods and evergreens, and open space land create inspiring views and exemplify the rural characteristics. The convenience of shopping centers, mixture of housing types, and proximity to the City of

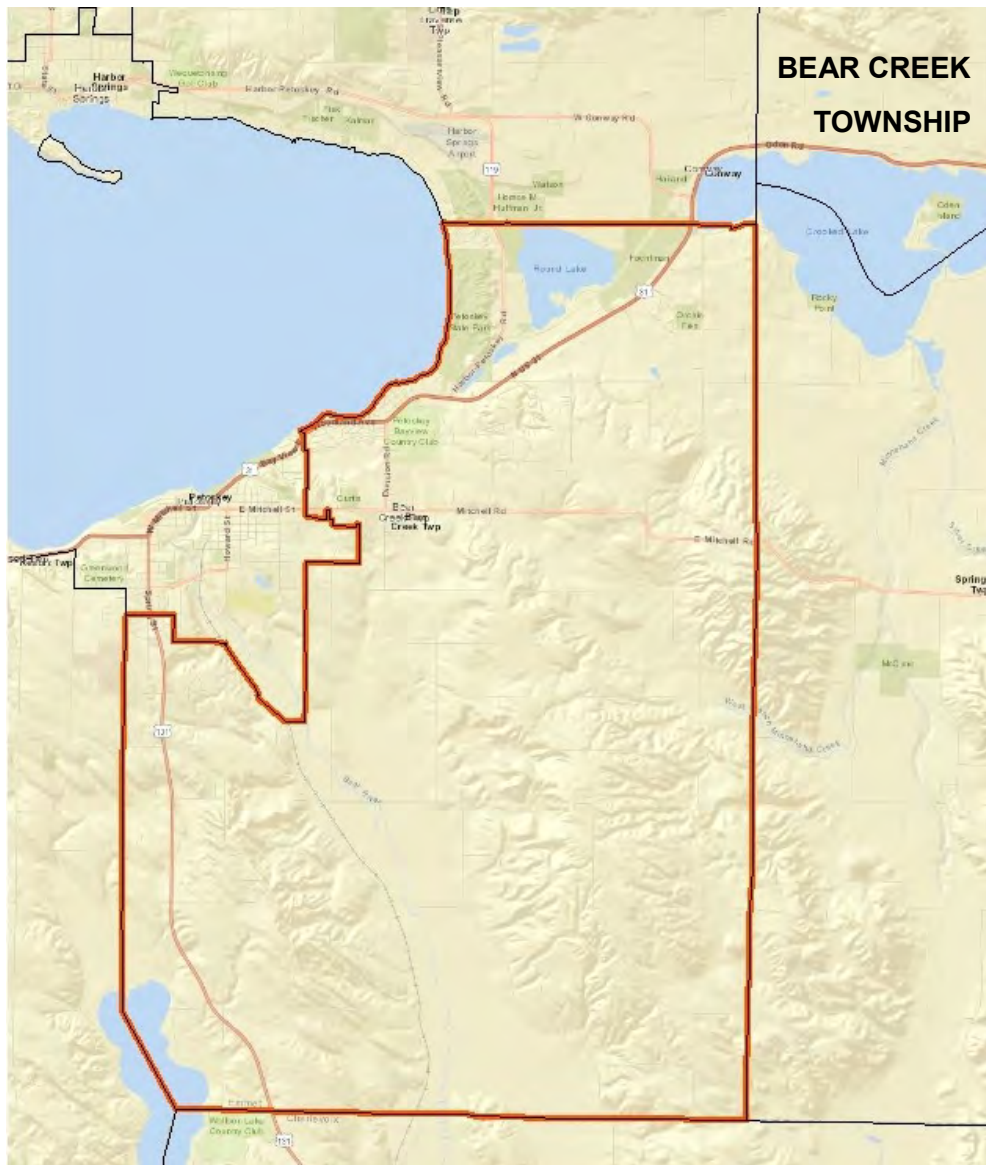
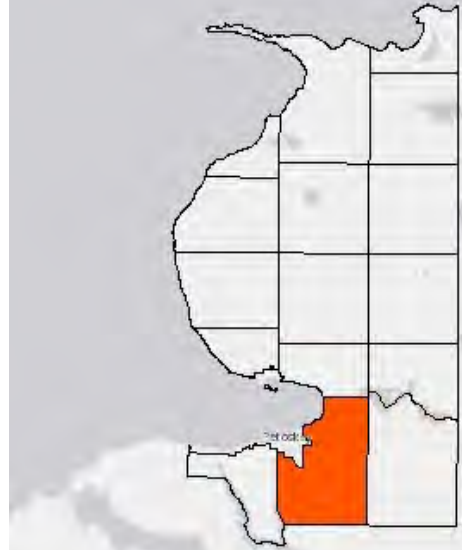
Petoskey offer urban amenities for residents to enjoy.

Because this place is so important to residents and business owners, people are very expressive in relating their views. This is a place that people care about. It is also changing. The challenge will be for residents to decide what is urban and focus commercial and high-density residential growth in these areas, while deciding what is rural and protecting those areas from the negative impact of growth.





## EMMET COUNTY



# Chapter 1:

## The Purpose of a Master Plan

### Goal of a Master Plan

Bear Creek Township is authorized to prepare a Master Plan by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act of 2008. A master plan is not a regulatory document: instead it is a statement of public policy that broadly describes how the community should grow. This document serves as a policy and decision-making guide for local officials considering zoning changes, funding for capital improvement, land preservation strategies, and other matters related to land use and development.

Although technical information such as the demographics, natural resource data, and community input is detailed, the description of future land use is not. The description of future land use provides a snapshot of how the Township should appear and function within the foreseeable future (mostly at five- year increments). This snapshot is based on the technical data and public input. The future land use description should be used by Township officials, residents, landowners, and developers when planning for future projects. This is a public document.

The goal of this master plan is to maintain or improve the quality of life in the Township by guiding and influencing where and how the community will grow, look, and function. It describes the valuable natural and historical resources that need to be protected and explains the role of private property relative to public interest.

To ensure that local land use policies reflect current conditions in the community, this master plan should be periodically evaluated and updated. The previous master plan was adopted in 2012. Since that time, there has been a decline in commercial and residential growth and development. The Township Planning

Commission, in cooperation with the Township Board, has prepared this updated Bear Creek Township Master Plan with assistance from Emmet County Planning and Zoning, and Networks Northwest.

### Relationship with Emmet County

Emmet County administers the zoning for Bear Creek Township, as well as for the Townships of Bliss, Carp Lake, Center, Cross Village, Friendship, Littlefield, Maple River, McKinley, Readmond, Springvale, and Wawatam.

In 2005, Emmet County commissioned a consulting firm to develop the Emmet County Sub-Area Master Plan, which focused on the City of Petoskey and portions of Bear Creek and Resort Township. The sub- area master plan was adopted in July of 2007. Subsequently, Emmet County prepared and adopted a County-wide Master Plan in 2015. They are currently in the process of working on an update.

### Relationship with Surrounding Townships

The adopted plans of the surrounding communities and Emmet County may directly impact the future development of Bear Creek Township. Therefore it is important to recognize their plans and evaluate their potential impact on Bear Creek Township.

Geographically, Bear Creek Township is bordered by Little Traverse Township to the north, Springvale Township to the east, Resort Township to the west, and the City of Petoskey to the northwest. Melrose Township, in Charlevoix County, borders Bear Creek Township to the south.



### *Little Traverse Township*

Little Traverse Township administers their own zoning and master plan. The Master Plan Update for Little Traverse Township was adopted on June 13, 2012 and review in February of 2018 occurred and deemed that a five year update was not necessary. The majority of the land area along Powell Road is classified as Rural Neighborhood Residential, which allows one residential unit for every 80,000 square feet. The area along Crooked Lake is classified as Recreation Residential, which focuses mostly on summer homes, and allows one unit for every 40,000 square feet. At the corner of M-119 and Powell Road, the parcel is classified as Neighborhood Commercial. The Conservancy owned land is classified as Natural Resource Conservation and is designated for open space.

### *Springvale Township*

Springvale Township follows the Emmet County zoning and master plan. The future land use plan designates properties within Springvale Township that are adjacent to the Bear Creek Township border as a mixture of low density residential and state forest. The land use category is intended to indicate lands planned for large lot (one acre or more in size) residential developments, small farms and other compatible uses. The County Plan acknowledges the state forests within Springvale Township, many of which are along the Township line, as assets to the County and plans for them to remain with as little disruption as possible.

### *Resort Township*

A portion of the Rural Residential area is adjacent to the Tribe-owned property. While the Resort Township Planning Commission recognizes there is a significant impact and ongoing development pressures in the vicinity of the Casino Resort, the

Township does not encourage growth in this area. Based on the findings from the 2010 Property Owner Survey, over 73 percent of the survey respondents want the Township to work to maintain an Open Space buffer on the west (Eppler Road) side of the Casino property.

Resort Township, adjacent to Bear Creek Township's west border, adopted a new master plan in 2018. The land use recommendations include single-family residential units along Cemetery Road south to Intertown Road. The residential density designates one unit per acre. Property south of Intertown Road is planned for Rural Residential, which is one unit for every one-to-two acres of land. The township has acquired an 80 acre property located near the south end of the township north of Walloon Lake and 20.5 acres on Cemetery Road.

The Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians own and operate a multiple story resort/casino in Resort Township, near the Bear Creek Township border.

### *City of Petoskey*

In 2015 the City of Petoskey updated their Master Plan titled "Blueprint Petoskey." They follow their own zoning ordinance. This plan shows the southern border of Petoskey as primarily Public and Quasi-Public, with a small portion of Neighborhood Mixed Use, Industrial and Parks and Open Space along River Road. Neighborhood Mixed-Use areas are described in Blueprint Petoskey as "...older commercial districts or industrial areas...that abut residential neighborhoods and could face redevelopment in a near to medium range time period."

The eastern border of Petoskey is planned primarily for Single-Family Residential, Multiple Family Residential, Mixed Residential, and Quasi-Public development. The multi-family residential category

## What is a Master Plan?

*State law allows townships, cities, villages, counties, and regions to create "master plans" that make recommendations about community issues like public services, housing, natural resources, and transportation needs. A master plan does not have the rule of law; instead, it acts as a guide for governments and other community partners to use when making decisions. To be effective, Bear Creek Township must put recommendations into practice through partnerships with communities, organizations, and local government units.*

are those sites developed for large-scale, multi-unit residential buildings such as apartment and condominium complexes without a mix of other residential structures.” The Mixed residential areas are “neighborhoods that have a mix of single-family detached structures, homes converted into multiple units and smaller scale multiple-unit residential buildings.” They are located in close proximity to larger employment centers.

Much of the south and eastern borders of the City of Petoskey are planned for public/quasi public development because the Petoskey Public Schools, City of Petoskey, and North Central Michigan College own most of the land. The Bear River Valley recreational project was completed in 2011 and offers public access to recreational opportunities from the City of Petoskey along the Bear River to Curtis Field near the Bear Creek Township boundary.

Strategies and actions identified in the plan include:

1. Develop and adopt a zoning ordinance that incorporates community-wide form standards and architectural standards where needed;
2. Work with existing businesses to identify needs and expansion possibilities;
3. Continue to implement the Downtown Strategic Plan;
4. Continue to upgrade community infrastructure such as utilities and streetscapes; and
5. Investigate the creation of a local historic district for all or parts of the East Mitchell National Register Historic District and other neighborhoods to ensure historic integrity of neighborhoods is maintained.

### *Melrose Township*

Melrose Township is located in Charlevoix County. The Township administers their own zoning and planning. The area along the Bear Creek Township border is zoned Forest Conservation, which has a minimum lot size of 40 acres, and Farm and Forest District, which has a minimum lot size of 5 acres. Their zoning is consistent with their future land use plan.

### *Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians (LTBBOI)*

The tribe is going to begin strategic and master land use planning at the end of 2019. As of recent years, casino and accompanying commercial development such as new hotels and retail have been a main focus, with a new hotel and retail on US-131 on the western side of Bear Creek Township. New roadway alignments are cooperatively being planned like the Howard Extension. This will take the last college drive off Howard and connect it back to Atkins near the Little League fields. This will complete a loop that should be a big help to first responders and the fire department.

### *Summary*

The intention is to use consistent, although not identical, land use descriptions on neighboring properties. The surrounding land uses and densities were considered in the development of the Bear Creek Township future land use plan. After the draft of this master plan has been approved by the Bear Creek Township Board for distribution, it will be sent to these communities for their input. The goal of this review is to ensure greater coordination between adjacent municipalities when developing master plans, zoning ordinances, recreation plans, and capital improvement plans.

# Chapter 2:

## Community Character & Existing Land Use

### Community Character Analysis

Many different qualities shape the character of Bear Creek Township. It is known for undeveloped expanses of woodlands, scenic views of Little Traverse Bay, rolling topography, and the Bear River. With these features the Township is in a prime position to attract both year-round and seasonal populations. Bear Creek Township is located in a highly developed tourist area, both within the Township and surrounding communities, evidenced by the large number of resorts in the area.

While the Township has faced substantial new subdivision development and strip commercial development, some farming is still done within the Township. In addition to farming, considerable land in the Township is in public ownership, leaving it in an undisturbed, natural state. The community is also characterized by generally good roads that allow access to the region's amenities.

### Physical Setting

Bear Creek Township is located in an outstanding physical setting. The northwestern border of the Township is the shoreline of Lake Michigan's Little Traverse Bay. The Township's rolling terrain provides for commanding views over the bay and across to Harbor Springs from many near-shore and inland locations. Crooked and Round Lakes in the northeast portion of the Township provide an attractive inland lake environment, as does Walloon Lake in the southwest. The Bear River, which runs through the Township and gives its name to the entire community, is also an important local scenic feature. Map 2-1, 2008 Aerial Imagery shows these significant features.

The agricultural heritage of Bear Creek Township still provides a significant scenic setting. Rolling rural farmlands, interspersed with farm houses, barns and

woodlots, form a visual identity for much of the Township's outlying areas. Closer to Petoskey, the landscape becomes more suburban in character, with home sites located along major roadways and larger residential subdivisions developing. The Township is also home to a private golf course. Highway M-119, between Petoskey and Harbor Springs, has developed intensively for commercial purposes in recent years. The US 31/ M-119 intersection is the busiest commercial and traffic node in the Township.

### History

Prior to European and American exploration and settlement, the Ottawa Native Americans occupied Bear Creek Township. Little Traverse Bay was an important territory for the Ottawa, due to the area's abundant and diverse fish stocks. At the end of the French exploration period (c. 1765), approximately 1,000 Ottawa Indians are estimated to have lived around Little Traverse Bay. Ottawa population varied over the next 100 years from a low of 550 to as many as 1,500. A cluster of Ottawa family groups had their homes on the south side of Little Traverse Bay, at Bear Creek (later to become the City of Petoskey). In response to pressures for forced removal of Native American tribes to the western states, the Treaty of 1836 was negotiated. Under this treaty, Native American lands in northern and western lower Michigan were ceded to the U.S. government in exchange for the establishment of reservation lands. Bear Creek Township was included within the Little Traverse Bay reservation. A later treaty in 1855 dissolved formal tribal organization for Ottawa remaining in Michigan, and allotted part of former reservation lands to individual Native Americans. In 1874 and 1875, former reservation lands were opened to all corners under the Homestead Act, bringing a flood of settlers to Bear Creek Township. Although new residents came from other parts of Michigan and from the eastern United States, the majority of settlers were Germans

who took up farming. It is significant to note that the Township's four designated Centennial Farms date from this earliest homestead period: the Dontas J. Coveyou (1874), John Hoffman (1877), Mr. Fettig (1878), and Joseph P. Winter (1890) farms.

While farms occupied much of Bear Creek Township, not all areas were suited to this use. Timber cutover lands with poor soils or wetland tracts that could not be successfully tilled were abandoned, and returned to State ownership for back taxes. Tax reverted lands form the core of Michigan's state forestland holdings. In the south central portion of Bear Creek Township, more than 1,300 acres of tax reverted wetlands along Bear River are now included within the Mackinaw State Forest.

Tourism had an early start in Bear Creek Township. Beginning in the 1870s, sightseers came to and from the area via the inland water route. This route led from Lake Huron, up the Cheboygan River, through Mullett and Burt Lakes and connecting rivers, finally to Crooked Lake at the extreme northeast corner of Bear Creek Township. Debarking at Conway, passengers traveled overland by wagon and team across Bear Creek Township into Petoskey. Petoskey, an early tourist destination, was formally separated from the Township and incorporated as a Village in

1879.

With the advent of railroads, tourist trains from Detroit and Chicago brought additional visitors to Petoskey and Little Traverse Bay. The Pennsylvania Railroad brought passengers from Indiana and Ohio on what was called "The Hay Fever Special." In 1882, the Western Hay Fever Association established headquarters in Petoskey, which it identified as the most favorable resort area for hay fever sufferers, due to lack of air-borne pollens. Members stayed throughout the Little Traverse Bay region, especially during the hay fever months of July and August.

At the same time that homesteading and farming had begun, a unique resort development was established in Bear Creek Township. In 1875, a group of Methodist ministers began discussions about locating a religious encampment just east of Petoskey, in what is now Bay View. Purchase costs for the 320-acre site were advanced by the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad Company, repaid by subscriptions from Petoskey residents who realized the benefits of a nearby retreat. The rail line was extended from Petoskey to Bay View in 1876, and the first encampment of 600 persons, housed in tents, occurred in August of that year. Beginning in 1886, Bay View adopted the "Chautauqua" program of educational lectures and discussions, in addition to its religious revival





beginnings. By 1900, over 400 permanent cottages had been built at Bay View, along with numerous campus buildings and several hotels. Today, Bay View continues an extensive program of cultural, educational, religious and recreational activities for both members and the public throughout the summer months.

## Historic Sites

Several sites in Bear Creek Township are included on either the National or State Registers of Historic Places. These sites are identified on the Historic Sites and Centennial Farms Map (Map 2-2).

The entire community of Bay View is a National Register site, and was the seventeenth site in Michigan to be elevated to National Landmark status. Bay View is significant because it includes the nation's largest concentration of Victorian era cottages; well maintained and with much of the historic fabric intact. The site is also unique and influential in its layout. Cottages are located along winding roads that are terraced at several levels, affording spectacular views out over Little Traverse Bay. The core of Bay View is devoted to a common area where numerous significant community structures are located, including a library, performance halls, meeting rooms and recreational spaces.

The old Bear Creek Township Hall, located on Atkins Road just west of Division, is also a locally significant historic site.

An unusual, locally significant historic site in Bear Creek Township is Four Mile Clearing, a 1,200 acre rural district which is eligible for the National Registry of Historic Districts. Four Mile Clearing is located east of Petoskey, between Pickerel Lake Road and Atkins Road. This rural district is composed of several intact farmsteads. Winter Farm, Hoffman Farm, and Fetting Farm are Registered Michigan Centennial Farms. The farms are similar in their German-American ethnic history and architecture, and are relatively untouched by modern incursions. It is important to note that a rural historic district is defined not only by intact and significant structures like farm houses and barns, but also is defined by historic land use patterns including crop types, field layout, forest lots and landscape elements such as fencing or windmills.

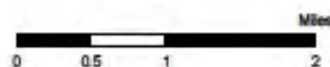


**Map 2-1**  
**Aerial Imagery**  
 BEAR CREEK TOWNSHIP,  
 EMMET COUNTY

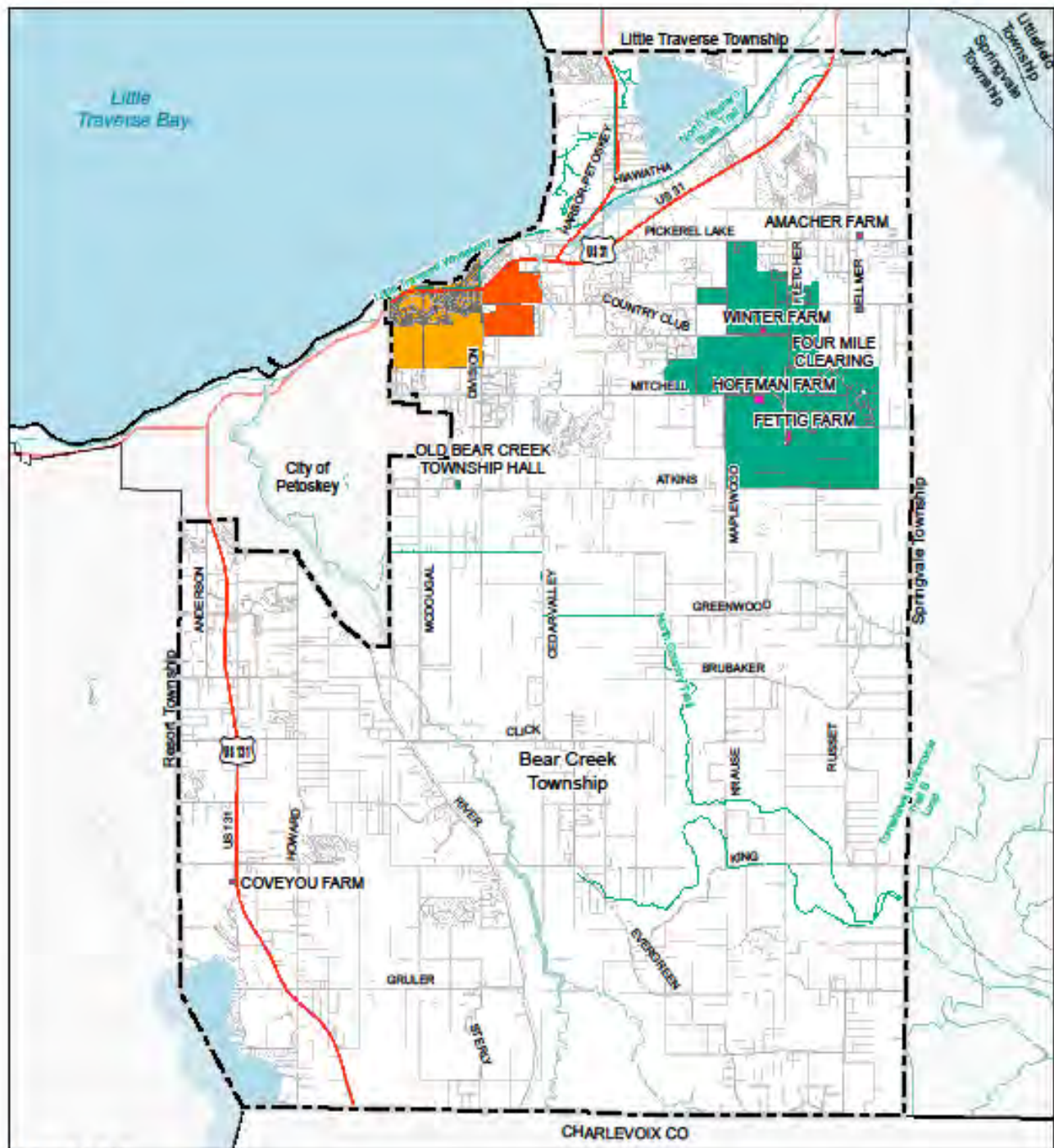
-  Township Boundary
-  Emmet County
-  Regional Trail
-  State Highway

Date | December 2019

Source | State of Michigan GIS Open Data







## Map 2-2 Historic Sites & Centennial Farms

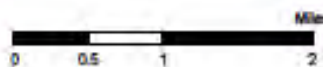
*BEAR CREEK TOWNSHIP,  
EMMET COUNTY*

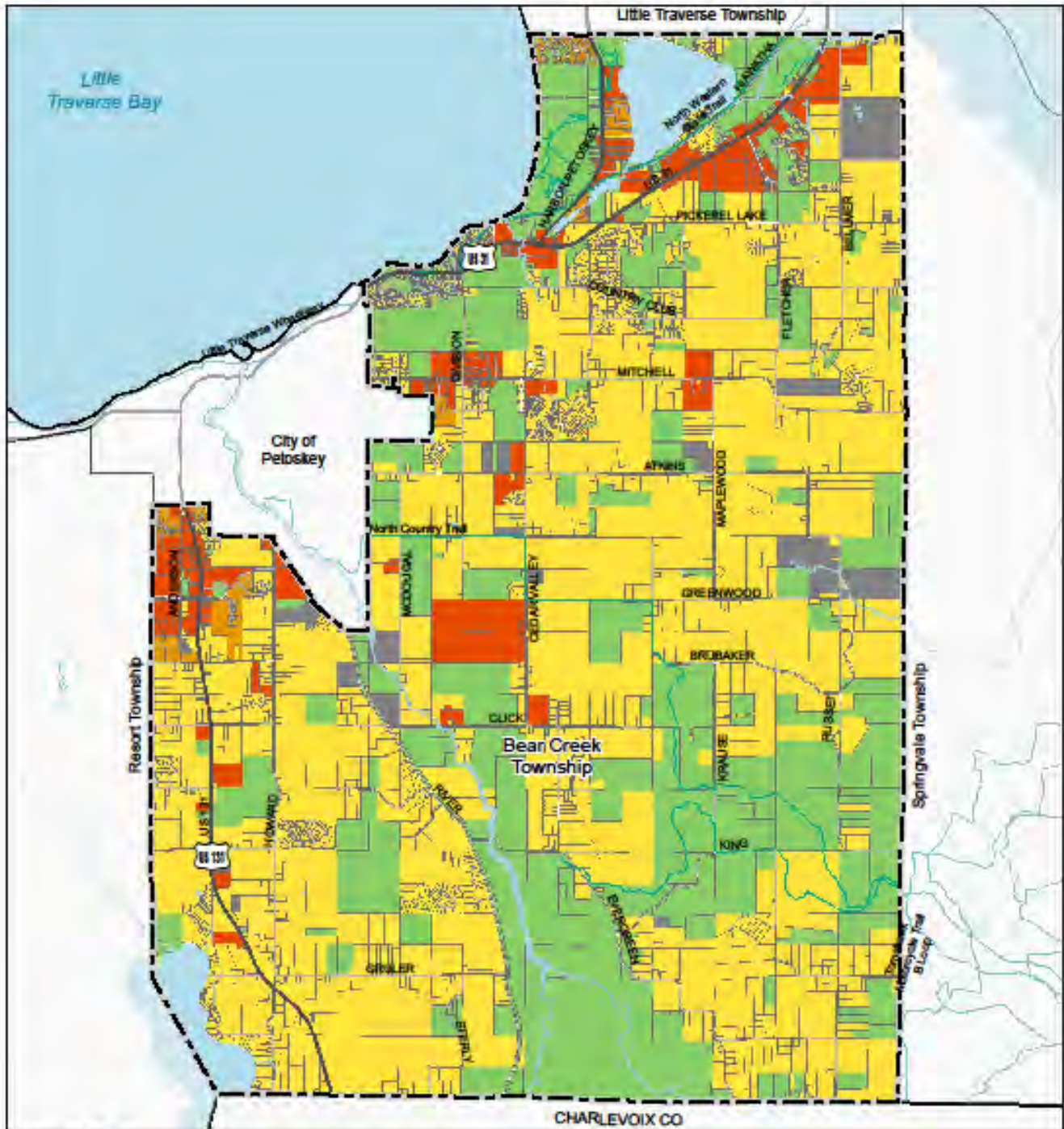
Date | December 2019

Source | State of Michigan GIS Open Data

- Township Boundary
- Emmet County
- Regional Trail
- Local Street
- State Highway

- Centennial Farm
- Bay View Parcels
- Petoskey Bay View Country Club
- Historic Sites





## Map 2-3 Existing Land Use

*BEAR CREEK TOWNSHIP,  
EMMET COUNTY*

Date | December 2019

Source | Emmet County, Michigan GIS Data

- Township Boundary
- Emmet County
- Regional Trail
- Local Street
- State Highway

- BUILDING**
- OPEN SPACE
  - SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
  - MULTIPLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
  - COMMERCIAL
  - INDUSTRIAL



Networks Northwest  
Sustainable Communities



# Existing Land Use Analysis

An important element in planning is understanding current trends and development patterns and how they impact existing and future land uses.

The City of Petoskey serves as the central commercial and social hub of the Township. It is the most densely populated area in Emmet County with buildings close together and a mixture of businesses in the downtown area. The City encompasses 4,000 acres with an average density of one person for every 0.71 acres (the 2018 estimate population for the City was 5,738). As a comparison, Bear Creek Township has 25,491 acres and an average density of one person for every 4.11 acres (the 2018 estimate population was 6,325).

When a person travels south from Petoskey on US 131 from the City, they begin to see chain restaurants and national retailers. These businesses are spaced farther apart than the businesses within the downtown of the City; however, they are still in close proximity with each other due to the smaller parcel sizes. The majority of these businesses have parking lots in front of the buildings with building setbacks farther from the right of way line compared to downtown Petoskey. Farther south are shopping strip malls and larger retailers on the east side and multifamily homes on the west side. The road then transitions into predominantly commercial areas. At the intersection of Anderson and Lears Road, there is a “big box” shopping center containing Wal-Mart, Office Max, Home Depot, and other large sized retailers. Because this area is so predominantly commercial, the existing residential and institutional uses appear out of character.

The NE corner of Lears Road and US 131 is where the former Victories Casino owned by the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians once stood. The tribe is currently developing a new project called Victories Square which will house a Marriott hotel, Starbucks, Great Clips, and Bostons Restaurant with more retail opportunities still available.

Farther southwest from this area is the Strathmore Development, which includes big box stores, and multifamily homes. There are some single-family homes across from the commercial portion. Although development has slowed significantly over the past ten years, commercial development



*Victories Square Master Plan*

continues within the Strathmore Development and is expected to continue at a reduced rate over the next five to ten years. There is significant terrain change beginning at the intersection of US 131 and Intertown Road.

The SE corner of Lears and US 131 is a Meijer with a Meijer gas station and outparcels along US 131.

Traveling south, the environment is more rural. Trees and varying topography hide many of the existing low-density residential units. There is a MDOT scenic turnaround at the intersection of US 131 and Greg Road.

Traveling down Timberlake Road and around Walloon Lake a person sees comparatively higher density residential homes, with minimal infrastructure. These homes have a resort- like setting.

Jones Landing Park was opened in 2011 and is a very popular recreation area. The park offers day use for picnics, swimming, and enjoyment for citizens and visitors, all at no charge. An improved boat ramp and parking is now available within the park allowing access to Walloon Lake.

On US 131, there are trees and varying topography to the Township line. The areas around Sterly and Gruler Road are predominantly undeveloped. There are, however, some newer single-family developments that appear to “pop up” when viewing the landscape.

Going north on Howard Road to River Road, there is a mixture of low-density single-family homes and hobby farms. Many of these homes enjoy significant views from the ridgeline. The views, along with the

proximity to the City of Petoskey and US 131, make this location a desirable place to live. Some of the homes are built on steep slopes and ridge tops.

There is a mixture of residential and commercial uses at the intersection of River Road and Howard Road.

Traveling south on River Road, the majority of the area contains wetland characteristics. The road parallels the Bear River. Much of this land is undevelopable and in public ownership. However, there are some homes interspersed within the trees. The athletic fields are very visible.

It is treed going east on Ecker Road from River Road. Traveling south on Evergreen Trail there are small, older single family subdivisions. This area is known for the Snowmobile Club location.

There are homes interspersed within the trees along Evergreen Trail. Some of the residential developments have steep slopes and difficult roads and driveways to access the homes.

Going east on Lintlong Road, a person is able to see Boyne Mountain Resort.

A significant amount of land in the southeast corner is publicly owned and undeveloped. There are pockets of single family developments or individual homes spaced far apart. This area appears very "rural."

This character is also along Click Road, although it is more densely developed than the southern area. Click Road also provides a connection from the recreational features along River Road to the publicly owned lands in the southeast portion of the Township.

McDougal Road currently appears rural, yet it is also facing single family housing development pressures. This is also true of Cedar Valley Road. There are portions along Cedar Valley Road that contain wetland characteristics.

There is a gravel pit at the intersection of Greenwood and Cedar Valley Roads.

Land along Atkins Road contains significant views, has varying topography, and is close to the more urban area of the Township. Although it has not been developed yet, it is likely that this area of the

Township will face significant changes during the next 5-10 year period.

There is a considerable amount of active farmland south of Atkins and east of Fletcher Road.

The Mitchell Road area could be described as a suburbia type of development. There are many developments that access this area. Division Road is a mixture of single-family homes, businesses, open areas, and institutional uses.

On US 31 North there is intense commercial development along the highway. This intensity decreases in some areas where the terrain is steep. But farther north, the intensity increases with several smaller type businesses mixed with larger sized commercial operations. This is an area targeted for future commercial growth due to the existing infrastructure. This area would benefit from access management and planning. This area has seen increased commercial development with a redevelopment of residential to a grocery store and strip development on the south and a national retail establishment.

There is an industrial park off of Fochtman Industrial Park Drive. Within the industrial park a motor-coach resort community has been one of the few expanding residential-type developments in Bear Creek Township.

Going north on Harbor-Petoskey Road there is a mixture of commercial operation and parkland. The Spring Lake Park and the State Park are in this vicinity.

One well-known area of the Township is the Bay View Association. The Bay View Association is an incorporated summer resort that was established in 1875. Bay View is a National Historic Landmark that includes 447 single-family homes; the majority were built in the late 1800s. These homes are occupied from May to November.

## **Potential Land Use Concerns and Opportunities**

In the process of developing and evaluating land use policies for Bear Creek Township, potential land use concerns and opportunities should be examined. A number of them are discussed hereafter.

## Land Use Concerns

One problem confronting communities is incompatible land use relationships. Incompatible land uses occur when neighboring land uses, either by the nature of the activity or the scale of the development, negatively affect the normal enjoyment or operation of adjacent properties. An obvious example is a residence located next to an industrial operation. A preponderance of nonconforming uses (a use not permitted in the zoning district in which it is located) may also result in incompatible land use associations and may have deteriorating physical and economic impacts on the surrounding area. Many rural communities also experience conflicting land uses between rural residential development and existing agricultural lands and vice versa.

As the Township continues to grow, the potential for land use conflicts between existing and/or planned large-sized commercial operations, industrial uses and developed or proposed residential areas will need to be considered more often. To prevent conflicts, the Township may want to endorse the establishment of transitional zoning districts. Office and mixed-use residential zoning districts are often used as a transitional zoning district between commercial and residential areas. Where it is not

possible or desirable to provide a transitional zoning district, zoning regulations which require buffering and screening between incompatible uses may help mitigate land use conflicts.

## Strip Commercial and Sprawl Development

Sprawl is the unguided growth of urban development into previously rural areas. Sprawl development tends to follow the path of least resistance, with development decisions favoring short-term, individual economic benefits over long-term, community benefits. Sprawl development has resulted in strip commercial development along state and county highways and strip residential development along county primary roads. The costs of this type of development, which include the loss of road capacity, open space, and natural resources, have been well-documented.

Bear Creek Township has experienced significant strip commercial development along US 31 and US 131.

As the Township continues to grow, counteracting sprawl development will remain a significant challenge and concern. Proper land use planning and zoning regulations that encourage coordinated development will help the Township guide future



growth and counteract sprawl development pressure by encouraging compact growth in areas supported by adequate infrastructure.

## **Poor Parceling and Land Fragmentation**

There are many parcels in Bear Creek Township that front section line roads which are long and narrow. These parcels lack adequate road frontage and/or width to be further divided. These parcels may eventually require private roads and/or long drives to service developments placed off the roadway. In some cases, the portion of the parcel which has been developed prevents access to the remaining area. Without adequate land assembly, such vacant acreage will remain inaccessible and undevelopable. Efficient parcel division, even in very low density areas, is an important consideration in the creation of a coordinated development pattern and the conservation of usable open space and natural features.

The subdivision of large parcels of agricultural or forest land may negatively impact natural features (woodlands, slopes, water resources, and wildlife habitat) and the community's unique environmental character. As parcel size decreases, agricultural and forest lands become less productive or fall out of use as productive lands. In addition, subdivision of forest areas tends to result in the interruption of wildlife habitats and may reduce the diversity of wildlife found in the Township.

## **Committed Lands**

Committed lands are those owned by a public or quasi-public agency and are likely to remain in public ownership and use in the future. Cemeteries, schools, and park lands are common examples of committed lands. Bear Creek Township has a significant amount of acreage that may be considered committed lands. This includes the Mackinaw State Forest, Little Traverse Conservancy properties, and Petoskey State Park.

Committed lands have an impact on the Township's future land use plan. They provide a permanent open space and a unique amenity for

Township residents and may also allow activities such as recreation vehicle use, timber harvests, and wildlife management, which are important for recreation opportunities and employment.

There is the potential that lands which are deemed committed for the foreseeable future, particularly those owned by quasi-public agencies such as the non-profit youth groups or the Bay View Golf Course may unexpectedly be made available for other uses or redevelopment. The Township should be prepared to consider contingency plans for these properties. Contingency plans may include public acquisition to conserve environmental features or the application of creative development strategies.

## **Visual Setting**

One of Bear Creek's greatest assets is its visual beauty. People live and visit the Township for this scenic beauty, such as the view of the bay, the rolling hills, and open fields. When development occurs in these sensitive visual areas, it can detract from the quality of the Township. It is important that the Township balance the rights of these property owners with the rights of other property owners who live in the Township. There should be specific descriptions on how development should appear in these areas.

## **Opportunities**

One of the primary opportunities in Bear Creek Township is its natural beauty. The Township has the opportunity to use the land in a manner that benefits residents, tourists, and the natural environment. The availability of US 31, US 131, and M-119 make the Township businesses easy to access from surrounding areas. The Township has a great location near the Petoskey State Park, the Mackinaw State Forest, the City of Petoskey, and Little Traverse Bay.

Bear Creek Township's agriculture practices typically have included dairy, livestock, and grain (hay, corn, and oats) production. More recent agricultural practices include growing flowers, tree farms, nurseries, greenhouse crops, vegetables, farm markets, wineries, maple syrup and establishment of livestock housing



These newer agricultural practices are often called value-added and sustainable agriculture. They are proving to be economically viable to meet human needs for food, to be environmentally friendly, and can provide individuals with an overall improved quality of life. This is the sort of activity and land use that is important to our community.

There have been multiple, long standing family farms with commercial aspect to them: Bills Farm Market, Coveyou Scenic Farm Market, and Gabriel Farms. Within the last five years we have seen new organic farms such as Bear Creek Organic Farms which give tours and invite the public for educational opportunities. There are currently three wineries operating in Bear Creek Township: Mackinaw Trail Winery & Brewery (on the west side of the Township at US-131 and Williams Road), Petoskey Farms Vineyard & Winery, and Maple Moon Sugarbush & Winery (both on Atkins Road in northeast Bear Creek Township).

This agricultural evolution is not only happening in Bear Creek Township but across the United States. This trend presents an opportunity for agriculture to stay viable in the Township. Furthermore, it is important to recognize that agriculture not only provides economic benefits but it also enhances the rural character and scenic beauty of the Township. Consideration should be given to identifying certain areas within the township for this type of business and providing for it's own future land use category.

# Chapter 3:

## Natural Features Inventory

Natural features, such as wetlands, woodlands, lakes, and streams help shape community identity. New land developments can significantly impact natural features and consequently impact community character.

Evidence of the importance Americans place on the environment and environmental issues is shown in a poll commissioned for the National Wildlife Federation. The survey found that 62 percent of respondents favor strong or stronger environmental protection, while only 18 percent were opposed to such measures.<sup>1</sup>

The Michigan Relative Risk Analysis Project undertook a study to identify and rank the state's most pressing environmental issues. The final report, Michigan's Environment and Relative Risk, concluded that the absence of land use planning that considers resources and integrity of ecosystems posed one of the highest risks to the future quality of our environment.

For these and other reasons, special attention should be given to the preservation of natural and environmentally sensitive areas in long-range planning. The purpose of this chapter is to identify the important natural features that exist in Bear Creek Township. Knowing the location of significant natural features and understanding the function of natural systems will enable the Township to accomplish two important objectives. One, the Township will be able to channel, or encourage, development into areas which are the least environmentally sensitive. And two, the Township can work to minimize adverse impacts to these areas. The Natural Features Map (Map 3-1) shows where significant natural features are located in the Township.

Environmentally sensitive areas are lands where destruction or disturbance will immediately affect the life of a community by either:

- Creating hazards such as flooding or slope erosion;

- Contaminating important public resources such as groundwater supplies or surface water bodies; or,

- Wasting important productive lands and renewable resources.

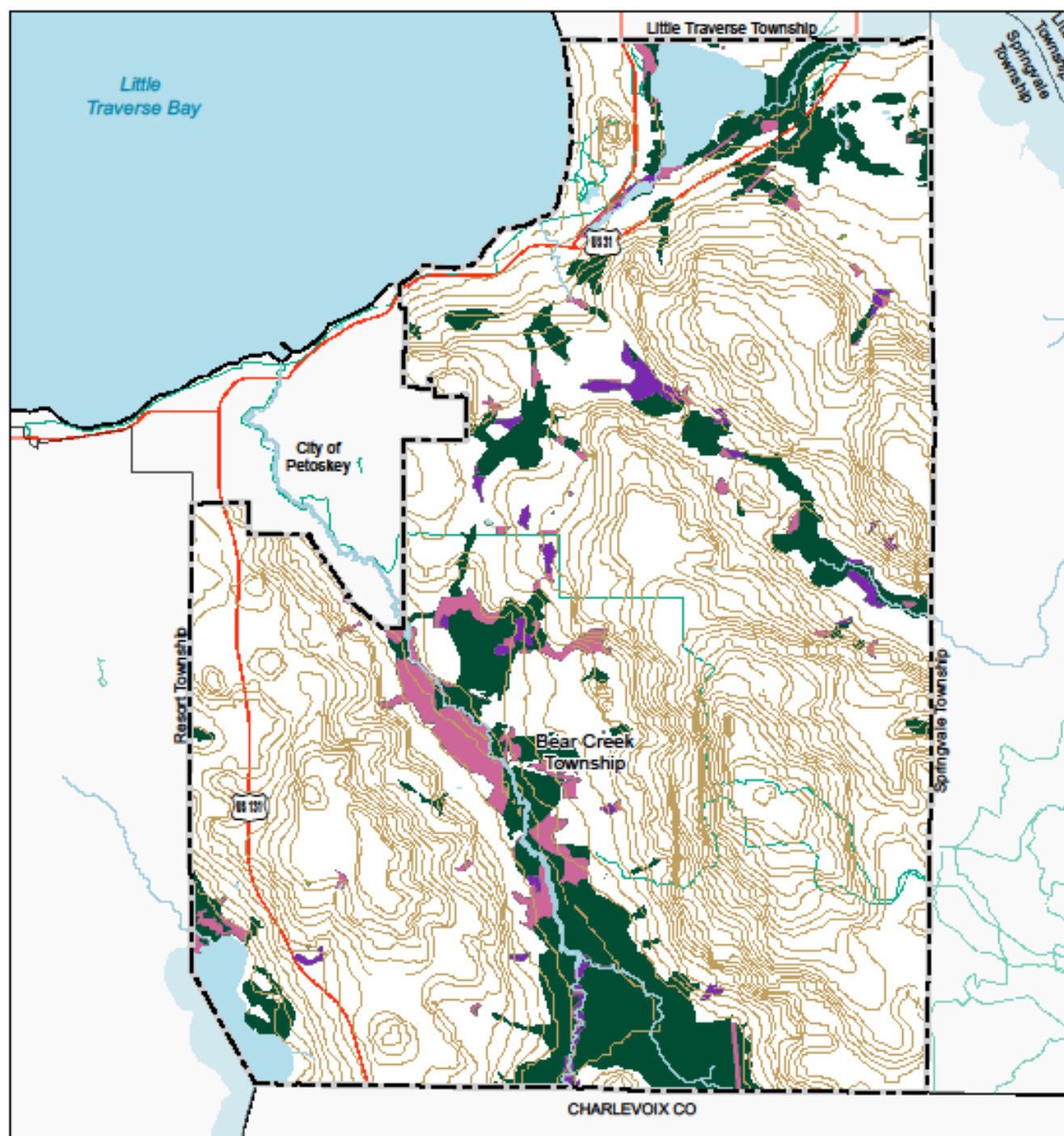
Each of these effects is detrimental to the general welfare of a community and may result in economic loss.<sup>2</sup> The natural features inventoried in this chapter are climate, geology, topography, soils, hydrological features, and woodlands. The analysis of natural features identifies which areas of the Township are most suitable for development and which lands should remain undeveloped to conserve their natural function.

### Climate

Climatic information is helpful for determining depth of utilities, building code requirements, and potential effects of climatic change, such as erosion control and energy usage. According to the Soil Survey of Emmet County, the climate in the Bear Creek Township vicinity is greatly influenced by Lake Michigan. Bear Creek experiences long winters with snow falling, on average, every other day, during the season. Spring is delayed because of the cool lake water while the fall season is extended because of the warm water temperature.

<sup>1</sup> Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Office of Great Lakes Activity Report, February 1995. (Poll conducted by Peter D. Hart Research Associates for the National Wildlife Federation.)

<sup>2</sup> Charles Thurow, William Toner, and Duncan Erley' Performance Controls for Sensitive Lands, American Planning Association, Planning Advisory Service Reports 20 307/ 308, June 1975.



**Map 3-1**  
**Natural Features**  
 BEAR CREEK TOWNSHIP,  
 EMMET COUNTY

Township Boundary  
 Emmet County  
 Regional Trail

State Highway  
 20 ft Contour

**Type of Vegetation**

- Aquatic Bed
- Emergent
- Forested
- Open Water/Pond
- Shrub/Scrub

Date | December 2019

Source | State of Michigan GIS Open Data



Miles

Networks Northwest  
 Shaping the Future of the Region

## Physical Features

Physical features are those surface characteristics that give shape to a community, in some instances discouraging development, and in others attracting particular land uses.

## Geology

The surface geology of Bear Creek Township mirrors Emmet County, being characterized by upland areas or moraines, coastal areas and lakebeds, dunes along Lake Michigan, and outwash and glacial channels. As is with much of the area, the bedrock underlying Bear Creek Township was laid down during the Middle and Upper Devonian ages of the Paleozoic Era. Numerous advances and retreats by the glaciers resulted in a complex pattern of erosion and deposition. Little Traverse Bay was formed by a glacial lobe that widened and deepened the pre-glacial river basin. Walloon Lake is located in what was originally a tributary valley to the main Lake Michigan Valley, which was also deepened by glacial activity. Many of the creeks and wetlands found in the Township are direct results of glacial activity. The ice blocks embedded within the soils eventually melted and left behind lakes, wetlands and interconnecting creeks.

## Groundwater

People in Bear Creek Township depend on

groundwater for their residential, agricultural, and commercial uses. This water is underground and fills the open areas between particles of sand, gravel, clay, silt, and rock fractures. This is the main source of water for people and the natural environment in the Township. Map 3-2, Groundwater Contours and Water Wells shows the different depths of this resource.

## Topography

The topography of Bear Creek Township is varied and includes nearly level lands, gently rolling areas, and areas with steep slopes. Land elevations range from a low of about 594.7 feet above sea level near the Michigan Northern Rail Road near the Lake Michigan shore in the northwest part of the Township, to a high of 1,279.2 feet along Krause Road north of King Road in the southeast portion of the Township.

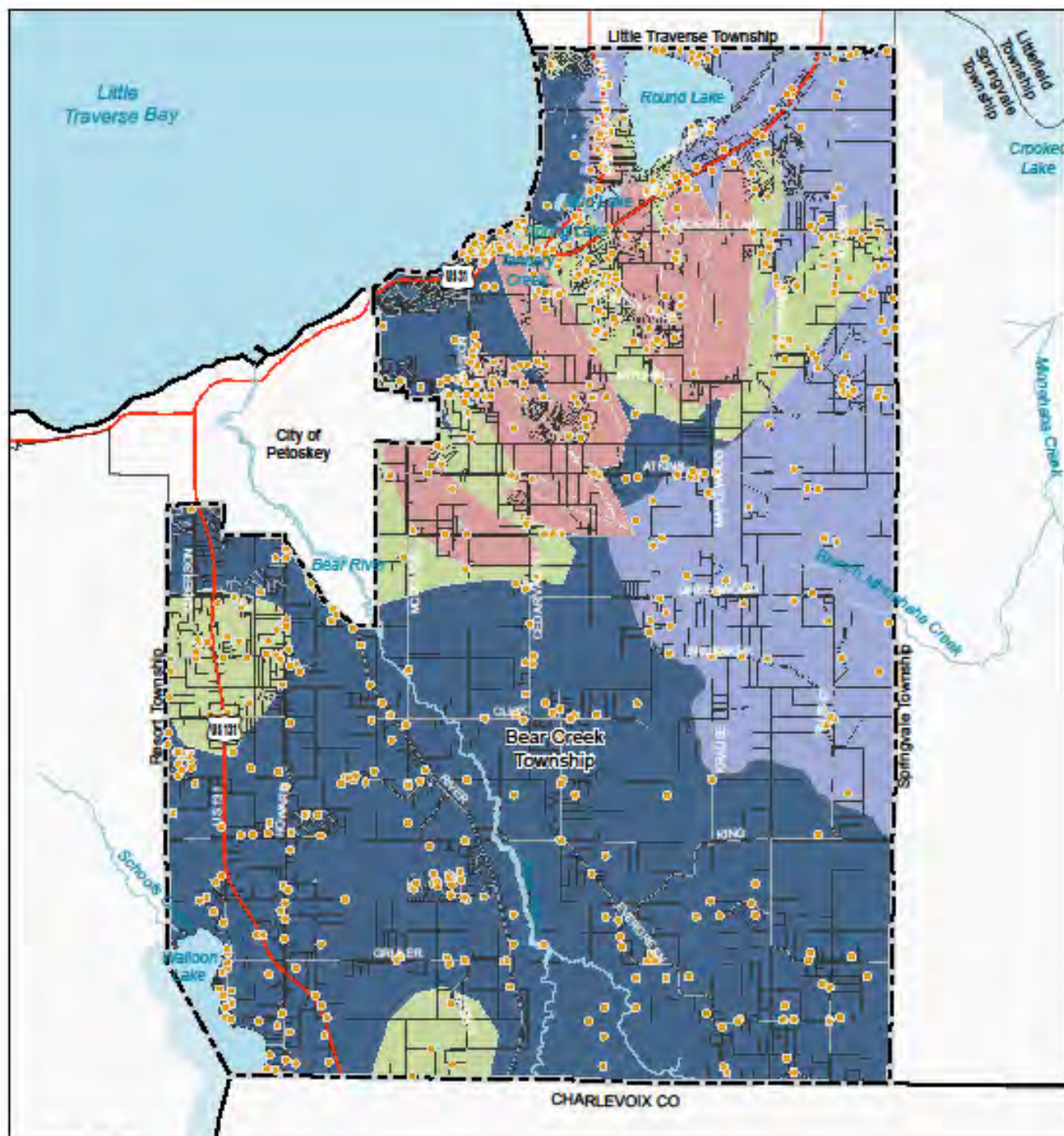
As information on the Natural Features Map indicate, major grade changes (slopes in excess of 10 percent incline) are most prevalent in the southeastern portion of the Township, including Sections 13, 14, 22, 26, 23, 24, and 35. Areas of steep topography present many challenges for land development and for recreation-conservation purposes. Development in such areas should be undertaken with caution to prevent erosion and drainage hazards that might affect adjacent properties.

**Table 3-1 Bear Creek Township Soil Types**

1980	
Emmet	Deep, well-drained, gently sloping to very steep, loamy soils on moraines. Used mostly for crops or pasture. Suitable for recreation and urban development, having few limitations for these uses.
East Lake-Blue Lake—Kalkaska	Deep, well-drained, nearly level, sandy soils on lake beaches and outwash plains
Blue Lake—Leelanau	Deep, well-drained, nearly level to very steep, sandy soils on moraines. These soils erode easily in areas where vegetation is sparse. Well-suited for recreation areas, pastures, and have a high potential for sustained-yield forests.
Carbondale—Tawas—Roscommon	Deep, poorly drained and very poorly drained, organic and sandy soils in broad glacial drainage ways and on outwash plains and lake plains. Susceptible to frost and drainage. Most areas are covered with swamp conifers and hardwoods. Well-suited to wetland wildlife.
Deep Park—Dune	Deep, well-drained, nearly level to very steep, sandy soils on lake beaches and dunes. Subject to severe soil blowing if vegetation is removed. Suited mainly for recreation and woodland.
Thomas—Brevort—Iosco	Deep, somewhat poorly drained and very poorly drained, organic and sandy soils in broad glacial drainage ways and on outwash plains and lake plains

Source: Soil Survey of Emmet County, Dec 1973





## Map 3-2 Groundwater

*BEAR CREEK TOWNSHIP,  
EMMET COUNTY*

Date | December 2019

Source | State of Michigan GIS Open Data

- Township Parcels
- Township Boundary
- Emmet County
- Local Street
- State Highway
- Water Wells

### Wellhead Protection Area

- Type 1 Provisional Wellhead Protection Area
- Type 2 Provisional Wellhead Protection Area

### Watershed

- Boardman-Charlevoix
- Cheboygan
- Lake Michigan



# Carrying Capacity

Soil conditions may present significant limitations to development and assist in determining what land is most suitable for urban development and what land is most suitable for recreation or conservation purposes. Identification and analysis of soils aids in determining which areas offer maximum amenities without adversely impacting natural systems.

There are six major soil associations in Bear Creek Township: Emmet, Blue Lake- Leelanau, East Lake-Blue Lake-Kalkaska, Carbondale-Tawas-Roscommon Deer Park- Dune, and Thomas-Brevort-Iosco. Table 3-1 Soil Associations, briefly describes the general characteristics of each soil association as reported in the Soil Survey of Emmet County, prepared by the US Soil Conservation Service (SCS). These soil interpretations are general in nature and do not eliminate the need for on-site study and testing prior to site design and construction.

Prime farmland is defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as “land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, forage, fiber, and oil seed crops. It could be cropland, pasture, range, forest, or other land but it does not include urban or built-up land or water areas. The soil qualities, growing season, and moisture supply are those needed for well managed soil to produce sustained yields.”

Emmet Series soils are formed in sandy loam till and mainly occupy gently undulating to hilly moraines. They are the most important farming soils in the county. Emmet soils have moderate available water capacity, permeability is moderate, and surface runoff is slow to rapid depending on the slope. Those Emmet soils with less than a 12 percent slope are used for small grains, corn, hay, and pasture. Emmet soils with a slope greater than 12 percent have severe building or septic constraints and are best used as pastures and wooded areas. Carbondale, Linwood, and Tawas soils have the most severe development constraints, with very high water tables throughout the year, and are used primarily for pastures and woodlands.

## Wetlands

Wetlands can be described as marshes, bogs,

swamps, potholes, sloughs, shallow lakes, and ponds. Wetlands may be temporary, permanent, static, or flowing. They are areas of natural vegetation growing in shallow water, hydric (saturated) soil, or seasonally flooded environments. They can also include areas of mature tree cover commonly associated with, but not restricted to, floodplain environments. More than any other natural landform, wetlands are working landscapes whose ecosystem meets a variety of needs. They support a rich variety of wildlife, purify water, help contain flooding, and provide scenic and natural vistas.

Public Act 451 of 1994, Natural Resources and Environment Protection Act (NREPA) was signed to protect the environment and natural resources through laws and regulations of use of certain lands, waters and other natural resources. Other activities may be approved through the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE). Permits are approved upon a review of an environmental assessment filed by the petitioner and a finding that the activity is in the public interest.

Under the Act, the following wetlands are protected:

- Wetlands contiguous to the Great Lakes, an inland lake or pond, or a river or stream.
- Wetlands not contiguous to the Great Lakes, an inland lake or pond, or river or stream and which are more than five acres in size in counties having a population of more than 100,000.
- Wetlands not contiguous to the Great Lakes, an inland lake or pond, or river or stream and five acres or less in size if EGLE determines that protection of the area is essential to the preservation of the natural resources of the state from pollution, impairment, or destruction, and the Department has so notified the owner.

Wetlands identified by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Geological Survey, and the Emmet County GIS Mapping Department, are depicted on the Natural Features Map. The majority of those shown are along the Bear River that traverses the Township from Petoskey south through the Mackinaw State Forest. There are also a significant number of wetlands in the northern section of the Township near Round Lake and Crooked Lake. In terms of size, the largest wetlands are found in

Section 16 between McDougal and Cedar Valley Roads, and in Section 11 and 12 between Maplewood and Atkins Roads. Please note, these wetland locations are general in nature. On-site investigation should be conducted for a more accurate delineation.

## **Bodies of Water**

Besides their obvious aesthetic and recreational benefits, lakes and ponds serve as natural retention areas for storm water runoff, as a groundwater recharge area, provide habitat for a number of species of animals and plants, and tend to moderate the microclimate in proximity to the shoreline. Protection of these natural assets should be given high priority in future land use planning decisions.

Bear Creek Township has nearly three miles of Lake Michigan frontage, as well as numerous rivers, streams, and inland lakes. The Bear River is the most significant river in the Township traversing from Melrose Township into Little Traverse Bay. The significant bodies of water are shown on the Natural Features Map (Map 3-1). Table 3-2 documents other significant water resources within the Township.

There are no maintained county drains in the Township; depicted drains on the natural features map are local drains, intermittent streams, or culverts.

## **Woodlands**

United States Geological Survey (USGS) data for Bear Creek Township reveal numerous woodlands throughout the community. While nearly every section of the Township contains wooded areas, Sections 14, 15, 20, 22-24, 26-29, 34-36 contain significant woodlands. A portion of the Mackinaw State Forest is located in the south-central area of the Township.

According to the Emmet County Master Plan, the primary woodland vegetation species in Emmet County consist of deciduous forestland, made of northern hardwood, central hardwood, aspen, white birch, and lowland hardwoods. There are also significant coniferous forests within the County that include pine, upland conifers, and lowland conifers. The most significant coniferous forest in Bear Creek Township is the Mackinaw State Forest located in the south-central portion of the Township. These

woodlands are valuable as wildlife habitats, watershed and soil protection, climate moderators, and for recreation and aesthetic enjoyment.

Woodlands moderate certain climate conditions, such as flooding and high winds, by protecting watersheds from siltation and soil erosion caused by storm water run-off or wind. Woodlands also improve air quality by absorbing certain air pollutants, as well as buffering excessive noise generators. To the extent possible, woodlands should be conserved during future land development.

## **Special Natural Features**

The Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI) database is part of the Natural Heritage Program of the MDNR-Wildlife Division. The MNFI inventories the location of special natural features such as Michigan's endangered or threatened plant and animal species or special natural plant communities. The MNFI identified the following special natural feature areas in Bear Creek Township.

Round-leaved Orchids are found only in bogs with cedar, tamarack, spruce and/or fir, often with underlying marl. Red-shouldered hawks generally inhabit bottomland woods or upland woods with contiguous wetlands. They require large tracts of woodland. Northern fens are communities much like bogs, but are more alkaline.

The presence of listed species does not necessarily preclude development but may require a development plan that is sensitive to the conservation of the feature. However, if an endangered species is to be taken or harmed, a permit is required from the state.

Finally, it is expected that the MNFI database information will need to be revised and updated as plant and animal communities evolve and change. Periodic reviews of local database information are recommended.

**Table 3-2 Water Resources  
in Bear Creek Township**

	FRONTAGE		WATER AREA IN BEAR CREEK TOWNSHIP	
	Feet	Miles	Acres	Square Miles
Lake Michigan	15,600	2.95	N/A	N/A
Walloon Lake	9,750	1.85	260	.40
Crooked Lake	3,500	.66	10	.02
Round Lake	16,000	3.03	420	.70
Spring Lake	3,000	.55	7	.01
Mud Lake	2,600	.49	70	.02
Tannery Creek	9,000	1.70	N/A	N/A
Bear River	29,000	5.63	N/A	N/A
<b>TOTAL</b>	79,450	15.16	707	1.15

*Source: Comprehensive Recreation Plan, Bear Creek Township, 2004*



## RESOURCES IN BEAR CREEK TOWNSHIP

The lists include all elements (species and natural communities) for which locations have been recorded in Michigan Natural Features Inventory's database for Emmet County.

Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Alasmidonta viridis</i>	Slippershell
<i>Amerorchis rotundifolia</i>	Small round-leaved orchis
<i>Ammodramus savannarum</i>	Grasshopper sparrow
<i>Barbarea orthoceras</i>	Northern Winter Cress
<i>Beckmannia syzigachne</i>	Slough grass
<i>Bombus terricola</i>	Yellow banded bumble bee
<i>Bromus pumpellianus</i>	Pumpelly's brome grass
<i>Brychius hungerfordi</i>	Hungerford's crawling water beetle
<i>Buteo lineatus</i>	Red-shouldered hawk
<i>Callitriche heterophylla</i>	Large water starwort
<i>Calypso bulbosa</i>	Calypso or fairy-slipper
<i>Charadrius melodus</i>	Piping plover
<i>Chlidonias niger</i>	Black tern
<i>Cirsium pitcheri</i>	Pitcher's thistle
<i>Coregonus artedii</i>	Lake herring or Cisco
<i>Coregonus zenithicus</i>	Shortjaw cisco
<i>Cottus ricei</i>	Spoonhead sculpin
<i>Cypripedium arietinum</i>	Ram's head lady's-slipper
<i>Dalibarda repens</i>	False violet
<i>Drosera anglica</i>	English sundew
<i>Emydoidea blandingii</i>	Blanding's turtle
<i>Erora laeta</i>	Early hairstreak
<i>Fontigens nickliniana</i>	Watercress snail
<i>Fossaria galbana</i>	Boreal fossaria
<i>Gavia immer</i>	Common loon
<i>Graphephorum melicoides</i>	Purple false oats
<i>Gymnocarpium robertianum</i>	Limestone oak fern
<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Bald eagle
<i>Iris lacustris</i>	Dwarf lake iris

Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Lanius ludovicianus migrans</i>	Migrant loggerhead shrike
<i>Lasmigona compressa</i>	Creek heelsplitter
<i>Ligumia nasuta</i>	Eastern pondmussel
<i>Microtus pinetorum</i>	Woodland vole
<i>Mimulus michiganensis</i>	Michigan monkey flower
<i>Myotis lucifugus</i>	Little brown bat
<i>Necturus maculosus</i>	Mudpuppy
<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	Osprey
<i>Physella magnalacustris</i>	Great Lakes physa
<i>Pinguicula vulgaris</i>	Butterwort
<i>Pisidium idahoense</i>	Giant northern pea clam
<i>Potamogeton hillii</i>	Hill's pondweed
<i>Potamogeton pulcher</i>	Spotted pondweed
<i>Pterospora andromedea</i>	Pine-drops
<i>Pygarcia spraguei</i>	Sprague's pygarcia
<i>Rallus elegans</i>	King rail
<i>Schoenoplectus torreyi</i>	Torrey's bulrush
<i>Sistrurus catenatus</i>	Eastern massasauga
<i>Solidago houghtonii</i>	Houghton's goldenrod
<i>Stachys pilosa</i>	Hairy hedge-nettle
<i>Stagnicola petoskeyensis</i>	Petoskey pondsnail
<i>Stenelmis douglasensis</i>	Douglas stenelmis riffle beetle
<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	Common tern
<i>Tanacetum huronense</i>	Lake Huron tansy
<i>Tephrosia palustris</i>	Marsh fleabane
<i>Trimerotropis huroniana</i>	Lake Huron locust
<i>Vertigo elatior</i>	Tapered vertigo
<i>Vertigo nylanderi</i>	Deep-throat vertigo
<i>Vertigo paradoxa</i>	Mystery vertigo
<i>Woodsia obtusa</i>	Blunt-lobed woodsia

# Chapter 4:

## Coastal Zone Management

### Introduction

Coastal areas are economic powerhouses, supporting tourism, commerce, fisheries, and more for communities everywhere along the Great Lakes. In Northwest Michigan, Lake Michigan coastal resources are some of the region's most valued and cherished resources, beloved for their beauty and the recreation opportunities they provide.

Dunes, which cover 37,000 acres in Northwest Michigan, are especially important coastal resources. The region's dunes represent some of the most important—and diverse—coastal dune systems in the Great Lakes region, with nine different types of dunes, some of which are among the most high quality dunes in the Great Lakes.

Coastal areas contain many dynamic, ever-changing physical environments like steep slopes and bluffs, dunes, and sandy beaches that must retain their dynamic features in order to function properly within the ecosystem. From the perspective of the built environment, the dynamic nature of dunes and coastal areas make them vulnerable to hazards like erosion that can cause damage to human life and property.

What's more, their vulnerability to natural disasters is increasing because of factors like new development, extreme weather events, and geological processes. Dunes are prone to natural movement and erosion more than other areas, and sand is easily impacted by development or construction. Inappropriate development of coastal and shoreline areas disrupts the natural process of beach creation and replenishment, and may exacerbate erosion and other hazards.

The potential hazards in these high-value areas makes the protection of coastal areas a top priority for many Northwest Michigan communities. These communities are exploring opportunities for improving coastal resilience, a term that refers to a community's ability to "bounce back" after hazardous events like coastal storms and flooding. Improving resilience—through anticipating, preparing for, responding to, and adapting to changing conditions, and recovering rapidly from hazardous events with minimal damage—is a key objective for communities that want to reduce the vulnerability and risks associated with coastal areas.

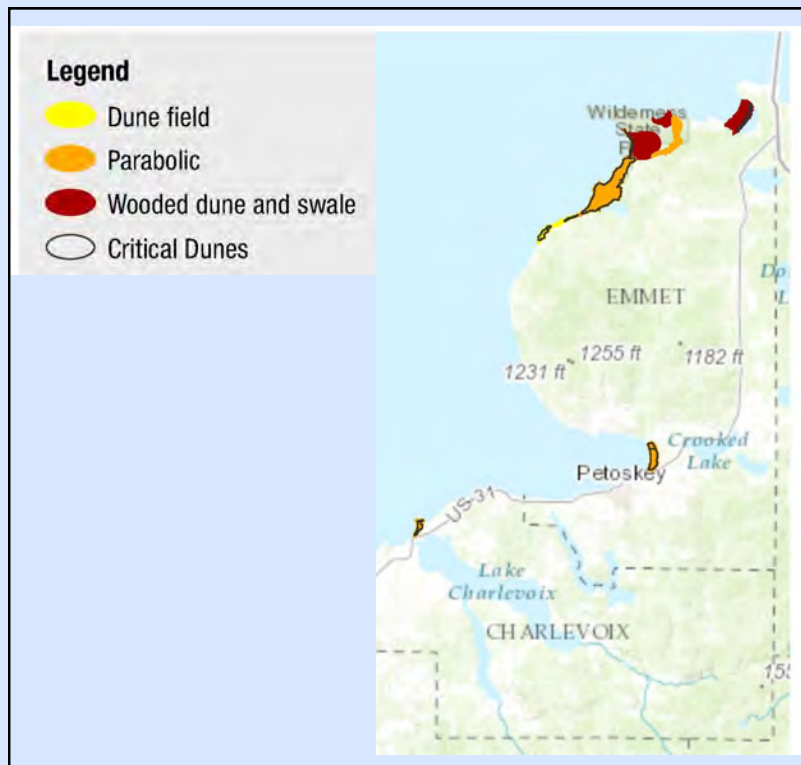
### Critical Dunes and High-Risk



# Erosion Areas

Because of their sensitive features, and because it found that “critical dune areas” are a unique, irreplaceable, and fragile resource with significant recreational, economic, scientific, scenic, and ecological benefits, the State of Michigan regulates development within designated “critical sand dune areas” of the state. 20 townships within Northwest Michigan, located in Manistee, Benzie, Leelanau, Antrim, Charlevoix, and Emmet counties include areas designated as critical dunes. In these areas, the alteration or use of critical dunes is permitted only when the protection of the environment and ecology is assured. However, state law does not regulate dune systems in their entirety, but only on a parcel-by-parcel basis. As such, protection of these important, fragile resources is often inconsistent or piecemeal, offering only limited protections.

In addition to critical dune areas, the State of Michigan also regulates high-risk erosion areas in coastal communities. The DNR defines high-risk erosion areas as the shore lands of the Great Lakes and connecting waters where erosion has been occurring at a long-term average rate of one foot or more per year. The erosion can be caused from one or several factors, including high water levels, storms, wind, ground water seepage, surface water runoff, and frost. State high risk erosion area regulations establish required setback distances for various construction activities.





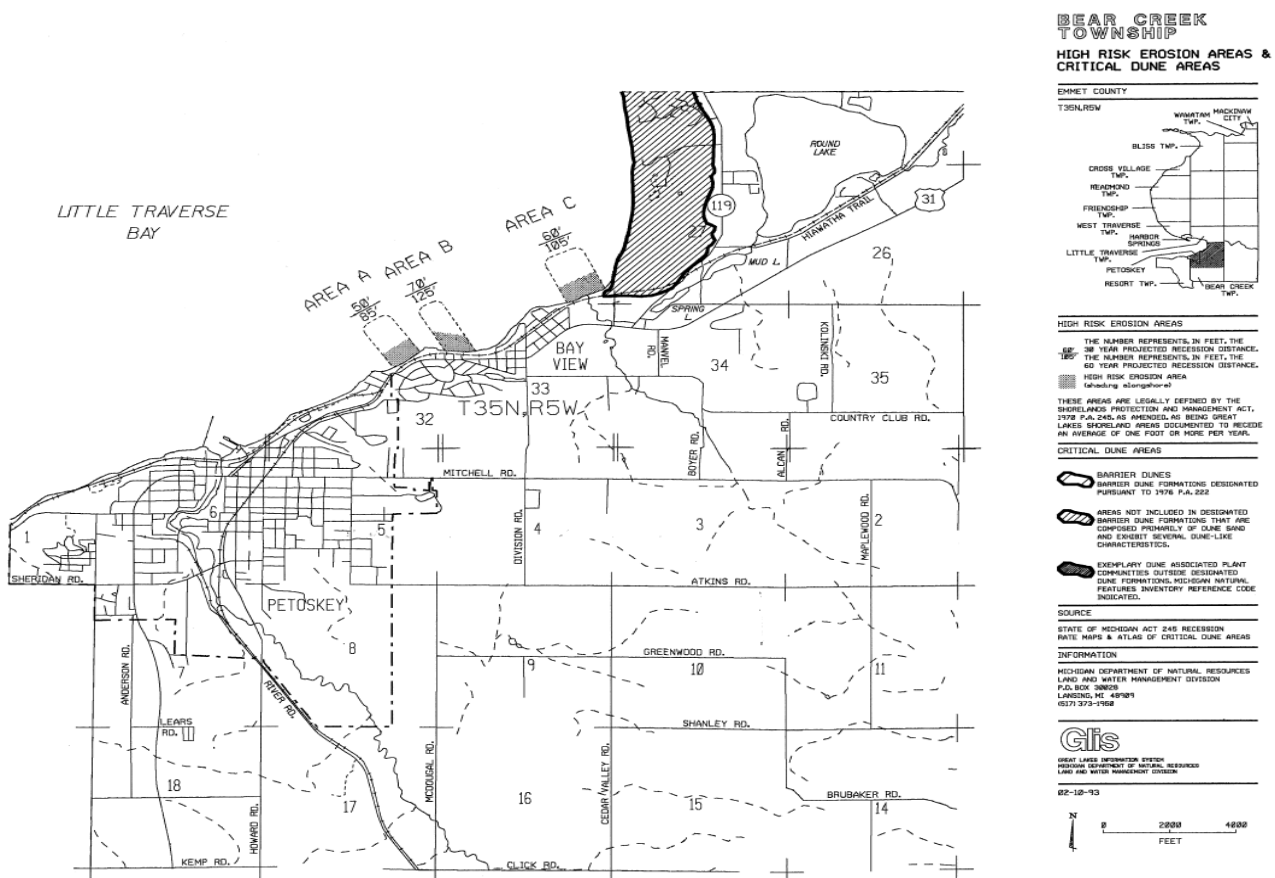
EGLE (formerly Michigan Department of Environmental Quality) implements the High Risk Erosion Area Program, to prevent structural property loss in an area of the shore land that is determined by the department, on the basis of studies and surveys, to be subject to erosion as required by Part 323 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451 as amended (NREPA) and the corresponding Administrative Rules.

High risk erosion areas are those shore lands of the Great Lakes where recession of the landward edge of active erosion has been occurring at a long-term average rate of one foot or more per year, over a minimum period of 15 years. Currently approximately 250 miles of shoreline are designated as high risk erosion areas along the shorelines of Lakes Michigan, Superior and Huron. In 1993, EGLE identified four parcels in Bear Creek Township as High Risk Erosion Areas.

The table and map below provides more detail:

HREA	Parcel ID	Rate (ft./yr.)	30 YR PRD*	60 Year PRD*
C1	24-01-16-28-400-005	1.5	60	105
C1	24-01-16-28-400-004	1.5	60	105
B1	24-01-16-33-151-001	1.8	70	125
A1	24-01-16-32-200-003	1.2	50	85

30 year PRD\* is the Projected Recession Distance (feet) landward from the Erosion Hazard Line for readily moveable structures including those structures 3,500 square feet or less and built on a basement, crawlspace or pilings. Additional restrictions may apply per Administrative Rules 281.21-22. 60 yr. PRD\* is the Projected Recession Distance (feet) landward from the Erosion Hazard Line for non-readily moveable structures such as large structures and septic systems.



# Chapter 5: Agriculture

About 2% of Emmet County jobs are classified within the Agriculture industry. While it may seem a small percentage of the County's total jobs, agriculture is a defining characteristic of the County, its quality of life, and scenic character. What's more, the US Department of Agriculture estimated that the market value of agricultural products in 2017 that each dollar in agricultural exports stimulated another \$1.27 in business activity, resulting in an additional economic impact of \$8.5 million.

## Agricultural Land & Production

Many factors affect the stability of a viable agriculture economy. A few of the factors found in Bear Creek Township include changes in the township's population; development pressure for non ag-related uses, rising land costs, decreasing farm sizes, diversification of farms, farmland fragmentation, and planning for succession of farms from one generation to the next.

Most Bear Creek Township farms are small business that face significant economic challenges. The model for years of growing commodity crops, such as corn, soybeans, and cereal grains, is no longer economically sustainable due to smaller field sizes, shorter growing seasons, and higher shipping costs. Similarly, dairy and livestock operations struggle to be economically sustainable as larger operations closer to processing plants hold a competitive advantage. There are now only a couple of dairy operations in the County, compared to dozens a few decades ago.

However, there is a resurgence of old and new farms retooling themselves to focus on production of local products to the local market. These farms are growing vegetables and small fruits to sell to local consumers directly from the farm, at Farmer's Markets, restaurants, resale stores, schools, and senior centers.

Livestock operations are refocusing as well, with

emphasis on grass fed beef, natural pork, and natural chicken sold directly to the consumer making them economically sustainable. Grape growing and wine production has exploded in the region over the past decade. The region is now nationally recognized with the formation of the Tip of the Mitt American Viticulture Area (known as the Petoskey Wine Trail). 12 local vineyards and wineries (3 of which are in Bear Creek Township) are a part of this trail with operations and tasting rooms inviting consumers to purchase their products and view operations.

The 2017 US Agricultural Census reports that Emmet County's agricultural land includes 324 farms comprising 39,256 acres of cropland, pastureland, and woodlands and makes up a little over 13% of the County's land area. Of Michigan's 83 counties, it ranks 63rd in the total value of all agricultural products sold in Michigan, with \$8.7 million in product sales in 2017. It is 58th in the value of all crops sold and 66th in the value of all livestock, poultry and related products sold. While Emmet County doesn't rank high in agricultural production and value compared to other counties in Michigan, the diversity and innovation of its farms mean that it is growing in importance as a regional agritourism destination and jobs provider.

## Development Pressure

Emmet County's population has increased dramatically since 1970. Much of this population increase has been focused in rural areas, driven by a desire for rural lifestyles and large development lots; and it has increased development pressure on agricultural land, which is often attractive for residential development due to scenic views. Residential development pressure leads to increased land values, resulting in financial pressures for working farms as taxable values increase, while also creating added incentives for selling farmland. As farms struggle to remain financially viable, the financial payoff associated with

## Emmet County Agricultural Products, Value, & Rank

Number of farms	324	
Land in farms	39,256	
Average size of farm	121 acres	
Market value of products sold	8,714,000	
	VALUE	STATE RANK
<b>MARKET VALUE OF AG PRODUCTS SOLD (\$1,000)</b>		
Total value of all ag products sold	8,714	63
Value of crops	6,124	58
Value of livestock/poultry & products	2,590	66
<b>VALUE OF SALES BY COMMODITY GROUP (\$1,000)</b>		
Grains, oilseeds, dry beans and peas	528	66
Vegetables, melons, potatoes, and sweet potatoes	2,175	37
Fruits, tree nuts, and berries	129	46
Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture, and sod	2,554	31
Other crops and hay	653	66
Cut Christmas trees/short rotation woody crops	84	30
Poultry and eggs	53	46
Cattle and calves	802	66
Milk from cows	**	66
Hogs and pigs	49	45
Sheep, goats, wool, mohair, and milk	83	39
Horses, ponies, mules, burros, donkeys	15	62
<b>TOP CROP ITEMS (ACRES)</b>		
Forage land used for all hay, silage	9,821	
Oats for Grain	739	
Corn for silage or greenchop	581	
Corn for grain	474	
Vegetables harvested, all	287	
<b>TOP LIVESTOCK INVENTORY</b>		
Layers	2,878	
Cattle and calves	2,555	
Broilers and other meat-type chickens	1,785	
Pullets	1,542	
Goats	423	

Data from 2017 Agricultural Census

\*\*Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual operations

the sale of farmland for development can lead to the fragmentation of many productive farms, as large parcels are sold to be subdivided and developed.

According to the 2017 US Census of Agriculture, from 2012 to 2017, Emmet County has seen a 13% increase in the number of farms, while total acreage of all farms fell by 1%. The average size of farm also fell by 13%. While farms seem to be operating on smaller plots of land, the total market value of products sold increased by 30% to \$8.7 million during that time.

In addition to fragmenting farmland, residential development pressure also acts to increase the value of land. Affordable access to farmland is critical for new and expanding farmers; yet, as the cost of farmland increases, so too does the cost associated with farming, particularly for those that are looking to begin or expand a farming operation by purchasing productive farmland.

Preserving and protecting farmland was identified as an important priority in public input conducted as part of the 2008 Bear Creek Township Master Plan process, and is included as a goal in the Emmet County Master Plan. Furthermore, 2008 input indicated that residents would like to work with land owners to allow for creative layouts of subdivisions to preserve some farmland while allowing for development. They also favor purchase of development rights programs and encouraging agricultural related businesses.

## Agritourism

Agriculture also has profound impacts on tourism. Visitors, and new residents, are attracted to Bear Creek Township by the area's rural character, rolling hills and fields, and agriculturally-based attractions like farm markets and roadside stands. Known as "agri-tourism," this trend is defined by the places

where agriculture and tourism connect—such as farm markets, corn mazes, tasting rooms at wineries, and u-pick berry operations. Anytime a farming operation opens its doors to the public and invites visitors to enjoy their products and services—that's agritourism. It typically includes activities like:

- On-farm sales of agricultural products
- Educational tourism
- Entertainment
- Accommodations
- Outdoor Recreation

According to the Michigan Agritourism Association, agriculture and tourism are Michigan's top two economic drivers. Agritourism provides a way for farmers to diversify their offerings, helping to protect against challenging weather conditions and market fluctuations. By offering value-added products and activities at their business, farmers are better able to sustain their family farms—thus supporting open space and land conservation goals.

Agritourism also offers the opportunity for the public to connect with local agriculture and experience a taste of farm life and fresh, local foods. What better way to learn about local agriculture than to meet the farmers that grow your food and enjoy a beautiful day outdoors.

As agritourism grows in popularity, Emmet County is seeing substantial growth in agritourism establishments and activities, particularly around wineries. As with other industries, a "critical mass" of related businesses can contribute to the creation of a "business cluster," where related businesses and activities are more likely to locate due to the potential to coordinate and build on visitor traffic, supply chain, and promotion. This concept is coming to bear in the creation of a popular Wine Trail in the region.





There are currently three wineries operating in Bear Creek Township:

Mackinaw Trail Winery & Brewery  
Petoskey Farms Vineyard & Winery  
Maple Moon Sugarbush & Winery

At the same time, agritourism comes with some concerns for neighboring farms and residents. As agritourism venues rise in popularity for events like weddings, impacts on neighboring properties include issues like parking, traffic, noise, and hours of operation. Additional concerns include safety for the large numbers of people using often-aging barns and agricultural buildings.

Many of these impacts can be minimized through effective regulatory controls, including both zoning and nuisance laws. Emmet County, which adopts and administers zoning in Bear Creek Township, has recently completed significant research, recommendations, and zoning changes around agritourism.

## Recommendations

Agritourism provides important benefits and opportunities for farmers that are working to be

sustainable by enhancing revenues and diversifying their activities. At the same time, some community concerns related to agritourism have been identified. Primary concerns related to agritourism focus on the impacts of events and activities on surrounding farms, residents, and other properties.

- Continue to work with Emmet County to identify, understand, and minimize agritourism impacts.
- Ensure that farms have opportunities to diversify activities and revenues.

Seek innovative ways to promote and protect agriculture as a viable economic driver for the township by remaining open to new ideas and models that are working in other communities such as a Purchase of Development Rights program, expansion of agritourism opportunities, and mitigating the impacts between agriculture and other nearby land uses. Additionally, creating an Agritourism Overlay Zone to assist with identifying areas for new Agritourism development.



# Chapter 6: Socioeconomic Profile

This chapter explores current and historical population changes, age distribution, household make-up, housing characteristics, income, education and employment statistics for Bear Creek Township. Where significant, Township data is compared to Emmet County, the State of Michigan and to the City of Petoskey. The purpose of this information is to identify factors that could influence future land use decisions and to assist policy makers with these decisions.

## Demographic Characteristics Population

According to the 2017 American Community Survey 5-year estimate, the population of Bear Creek Township is 6,259 permanent residents (3,150 female [50.3%]; 3,109 male [49.7%]). For the purpose of this plan, the 2017 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimate information will be used when making comparisons to other governmental units unless otherwise indicated.

It is important to note that the ACS figures do not reflect the actual number of persons residing in or visiting the Township during the summer months. Several examples are presented to justify this statement. ACS data presented for housing characteristics shows that nearly 22.5 percent of the total housing units are listed as seasonal, recreational, or occasional use homes. Many of these homes are located in the summer resort community of Bay View. Also located in the Township is Petoskey State Park, Hearthsides Grove, and Petoskey KOA, whose campsites add to the seasonal population. With these examples in mind, it can be assumed that the Township's residential population increases significantly during the summer months. According to the Petoskey Regional Chamber of Commerce the estimated number of visitors per year in the Petoskey area is 1.1 million. This number was derived working with the Visitor's Bureau. The summer months are the high peak



season and the number of visitors is expected to increase. A study conducted by Michigan State University for Emmet County in 2008 supported the estimated population fluctuations based on tourism.

Population trends for permanent residents of Bear Creek Township and Emmet County from 2000 to 2017 are shown in Table 6-1. The most significant increase occurred during the 1990 to 2000 decade when the population increased by 52 percent in the Township and 26 percent in the county overall. From 2000 to 2010, moderate increases occurred in population, and there was relatively no change in population between 2010 and 2017.

The populations in four of the five neighboring communities have increased during the past decade. This population fluctuation has impacted Bear Creek Township's traffic, schools, services, and jobs. Of the five surrounding communities, Bear Creek Township has the largest number of residents. Comparing the population density between 2010 and 2017, Bear Creek Township had a population density of 133 persons per square mile for the Township's 39.6 square miles of land area in 2000. In 2010, the population density had increased to 156.6 persons per square mile, an increase of 23 more people per square mile. This statistic shows an increase in density. The City of Petoskey is



substantially denser with 1,842 persons per square mile in 2000 and 1,718 in 2010. For comparison, Emmet County increased from 67 to 69.7 persons per square mile; while the State of Michigan decreased from 175.8 to 174.8 persons per square mile.

## Age-Life Cycle

As humans progress through life, they pass through stages of life that generally correspond to their age levels. Life-cycle analysis is used by demographers and policy makers to anticipate future changes in things such as consumption, housing, medical care, education and recreation. In this analysis, six life-cycles are defined:

1. Preschool (less than five years of age)
2. School (5 to 19 years)
3. Family Formation (20 to 44 years)
4. Empty Nest (45 to 64 years)
5. Senior (65 to 74 years)
6. Elderly (75 years or more)

Nationwide, the single largest population group, the “baby boomers” born between 1946 and 1964, fall between the Empty Nest and Senior stage of life. This exemplifies a transition occurring in society, from a population highly focused on family lifestyle to one of more retirement and luxury oriented. This population typically will have a household size of one or two adults, as their offspring have moved to other locations. The change in orientation means there will be a focus on providing medical services, low impact recreational opportunities, retirement communities, and high quality smaller homes on smaller lots.

It should be noted that in Bear Creek Township,

from 2000 to 2010 that the age segment of 45 to 64 years old grew by 41.2% representing the largest age group growth in two consecutive decades, 65 to 74 grew by 21.7% and the age segment 75 years and older grew by 36.3%. According to the U.S. 2010 Census, the total of these age groups represent 44.5% of the Township’s population, as compared to 38.3% in 2000. Due to advances in medicine enabling people to live longer, the desirability of Bear Creek for retirees, and the remainder of the Baby Boomer generation increasing in age, it is expected that this age group will continue to represent a principal amount of the Township’s population.

For a community to sustain itself, it needs to have a good mix of age groups. The Family Formation group represents the primary work force. They represent 27.8% of the population, which is a 1.5% increase from the earlier decade. This population demands attainable housing and a mix of job opportunities for it to succeed.

There was a slight decrease in the preschool aged children; however, the school aged population (5 to 19) increased by 15%.

The median age for Township residents increased during the decade by 2.5 years, from 38.3 to 40.8 years old.

## Population Composition

Racial make-up of Bear Creek Township’s population is relatively homogeneous. Of the 6,259 persons in the community in 2017; 90% of the population were classified as white alone, 124 were American Indian or Alaska Native (2%), 59 were Asian, 33 were Black or African American alone,



## Table 6-1 Population Trends

Age	2000	% of Pop.	2010	% of Pop.	% Δ	2017 (ACS)	% of Pop.	% Δ
< 5	369	7.0%	356	5.7%	-3.5%	414	6.6%	16.3%
5 to 19	1182	22.4%	1359	21.9%	15.0%	1058	669.6%	-22.1%
20 to 44	1697	32.2%	1722	27.8%	1.5%	2042	32.6%	18.6%
45 to 64	1270	24.1%	1793	28.9%	41.2%	1526	24.4%	-14.9%
65 to 74	360	6.8%	438	7.1%	21.7%	561	9.0%	28.1%
75 +	391	7.4%	533	8.6%	36.3%	658	10.5%	23.5%
Total	5269	100%	6201	100%	17.7%	6259	753%	0.9%
45 +	2021	38.4%	2764	44.6%	36.8%	2745	43.9%	-0.7%
Median Age	38.3		40.8			38.2		

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2017

## Income & Poverty, 2017

LOCATION	BEAR CREEK TOWNSHIP	EMMET COUNTY	STATE OF MICHIGAN
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME	\$52,500	\$51,475	\$52,688
PER CAPITA INCOME	\$28,938	\$31,356	\$28,938
% OF ALL RESIDENTS LIVING BELOW POVERTY THRESHOLD	12%	10.7%	15.6%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2017



and 40 were Black, and 394 were two or more races (6%). 125 residents were of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.

## Seasonal Population

Bear Creek Township and surrounding communities experience an influx of visitors and seasonal residents, and accompanying economic activity, in the summer months.

Seasonal population fluctuations aren't measured by the Census or American Community Survey (ACS), but the ACS does count vacant housing units that are for "seasonal" use. 26% (5,660 housing units) of Emmet County's total housing stock, and 17% (592 units) of Bear Creek Township's, is classified as seasonal—compared to 6% of the State's total housing stock (2017 American Community Survey).

Additional data is available from the *Northwest Michigan Seasonal Population Study* (2014), which shows changes in population by month in each county in Northwest Michigan. Emmet County's population is estimated to increase by 38% in the summer months to nearly 53,000 residents. This includes seasonal residents, overnight visitors, and other transient residents that are staying in second homes, campgrounds, RV parks, hotels, motels, bed and breakfasts, cottages, and marinas (Northwest Michigan Seasonal Population Analysis, 2014, MSU Land Policy Institute). However, it does not include day-trip visitors, which account for a significant amount of the region's traffic and visitation.

The seasonal population influx comes with accompanying vehicle traffic. Many overnight or day trip visitors to Emmet County and surrounding areas

pass through Bear Creek Township, accounting for an enormous spike in vehicle traffic in the summer months.

## Disability

In 2017, the American Community Survey estimated that about 14% of Bear Creek Township residents live with a disability. About 34% of residents age 75 and over are reported to live with a disability, which may include hearing, vision, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care, or independent living difficulties. These disabilities can have important impacts on community services, housing needs and demand, and transportation options and demand.

## Households

A relatively recent phenomenon, characteristic of today's population, is one of the declining household sizes as measured by the number of persons per household. As a result, it has not been uncommon for communities to register a net increase in the housing supply while simultaneously recording a population loss. This trend has evolved to a large extent, due to the declining size of families. People are marrying at a later age than a generation ago, postponing having children, and having fewer children when they do start a family. Married couple families still comprise the largest group of households, but the number of single parent (male or female) households is increasing and expected to grow, contributing to the decline in average household size. Finally, as the baby boom generation ages, they will increase the number of single-person, non-family households.



# Emmet County Jobs, Earnings, and Sales, 2017

Industry	Jobs	Earnings	Sales	Average Earnings
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	353	\$7,730,809	\$30,470,780	\$21,900
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	40	\$2,559,531	\$9,453,742	\$63,988
Utilities	56	\$6,027,351	\$25,778,854	\$107,631
Construction	2,160	\$84,891,282	\$209,162,365	\$39,302
Manufacturing	1,431	\$132,598,890	\$793,418,618	\$92,662
Wholesale Trade	386	\$20,169,990	\$63,837,321	\$52,254
Retail Trade	3,160	\$110,427,976	\$280,562,940	\$34,946
Transportation and Warehousing	292	\$12,304,394	\$31,546,334	\$42,138
Information	255	\$13,499,003	\$58,688,652	\$52,937
Finance and Insurance	825	\$45,700,947	\$120,397,286	\$55,395
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,604	\$47,084,096	\$302,416,273	\$29,354
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	994	\$46,783,144	\$90,874,734	\$47,066
Management of Companies and Enterprises	13	\$695,191	\$1,111,354	\$53,476
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	2,121	\$66,524,708	\$129,162,799	\$31,365
Educational Services	201	\$3,214,051	\$4,758,421	\$15,990
Health Care and Social Assistance	3,284	\$201,346,982	\$387,652,100	\$61,312
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	880	\$22,457,481	\$50,795,896	\$25,520
Accommodation and Food Services	3,173	\$73,333,957	\$221,711,192	\$23,112
Other Services (except Public Administration)	1,441	\$39,204,707	\$78,484,340	\$27,207
Government	2,371	\$152,295,715	\$508,681,830	\$64,233
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25,041</b>	<b>\$1,088,850,205</b>	<b>\$3,398,965,830</b>	<b>\$43,483</b>

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2017

2017 American Community Survey (ACS) data show that Bear Creek Township has an average of 2.29 people per household (PPH), down from the 2010 average household size of 2.41 persons per household. Bear Creek Township households are smaller on average than those statewide (2.49 PPH) but consistent with Emmet County's average of 2.24 PPH.

Declining household size is a demographic trend related to changes in family composition. Specifically, families are having fewer children and an increasing number of families are headed by a single parent. Looking into the future, these changes in family composition are likely to continue. As the baby boom generation ages, the number of single-person households is likely to increase due to the death of spouses, further depressing household size and causing related impacts in demand for different housing types suited to smaller household sizes.

According to the 2017 American Community Survey, there were 15 people living in group quarters in Bear Creek Township. Examples of group quarters as defined by the U.S. Census are correctional institutions, nursing homes, mental hospitals, juvenile institutions, college dormitories, military quarters, and emergency shelters. Based on the facilities located in Bear Creek Township, Independence Village and American House Retirement Community, it is believed that the people living in group quarters should be higher than reported by the 2017 American Community Survey.

## **Household Characteristics**

### **Educational Attainment**

Education is an important factor in analyzing the capabilities of the local work force and in the economic vitality of a community. Educational attainment is tracked by the U.S. Census Bureau. 2017 ACS data indicate that 94% percent of Bear Creek Township residents (25 years of age or older) are high school graduates or higher, as compared to 94% in Emmet County and 90% for the state as a whole. Township residents with a bachelor's degree or higher amount to 35% of the population, while county and state have 33% and

28% college graduates, respectively.

## **Income**

A determinant of a community's viability and ability to support future commercial, residential and industrial growth is the income of its residents. Households are the basic consumer unit and supplier of labor to potential businesses. Median household income (that level of income at which half of all households earn more and half of all households earn less) is a broad measure of relative economic health of a community's populace. Households are considered the standard "consumption" unit for long-range planning. A household represents all the persons who occupy a housing unit. A household may also include one person living alone. The household differs from a family which is defined as a householder and one or more persons who are related to the householder and living in the same household.

With a median household income of \$62,000, the income of Township residents is generally consistent with the County and the State of Michigan.

## **Poverty & ALICE Households**

In 2017, the American Community Survey estimated that 12% percent of all Bear Creek Township residents lived below the poverty level, compared to 11% of County residents and 16% of residents statewide.

Another way of measuring financial hardship is found in a 2017 United Way report that identifies the cost of basic needs for each county in Michigan, and the number of households that are what United Way calls ALICE – an acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. ALICE households have incomes above the federal poverty level, but still struggle to afford basic household necessities. In Emmet County, about 8% of households are estimated to live in poverty, and another 26% of households are considered to be ALICE. With a median household income of about \$51,000 and household "survival" budgets ranging from about \$19,000 per year to

\$54,000 per year, many households in Emmet County are clearly struggling to make ends meet.

## State Equalized Value

Other characteristics of Township property value can be obtained by analysis of State Equalized Value (SEV) figures. By law the SEV, which constitutes a community's tax base, is equal to approximately one-half of the true market value of real property and certain taxable personal properties.

Data in the following table (Table 6-3) shows the distribution of value among the different SEV categories for 2019, comparing Bear Creek Township to Emmet County as a whole. As the data demonstrate, the majority (73 percent) of the township's taxable property is residential; while 86 percent of the county's taxable property is residential. Property classified as agricultural makes up 2 percent of the Township SEV, or just under one-fifth of the county's total agricultural base. Commercial property comprises 21 percent of the Township SEV, making up nearly one-third of the county's commercial properties. This is due in large part to commercial development in the Township adjacent to the City of Petoskey. Analysis of the values of the different SEV categories can help identify community characteristics. As the numbers show, Bear Creek Township is a complementary blend of rural residential/ agricultural with an important commercial component. Only 1 percent of the Township's SEV is classified as industrial.

It is interesting to compare the information in Table 6-3 with Table 6-4, which summarizes the SEV information from 2005. The SEV for Agriculture property decreased in both Bear Creek Township and Emmet County. Another change was the increase in the total SEV for the Township.

## Employment

The unemployment rate for Bear Creek Township was 6.2% in 2009 and 3.6% in the 2000 Census. In Emmet County it was 9.6% in 2009 and 4.9% in 2000. The State of Michigan had an unemployment rate of 12.5% in 2010 and 3.7% in

2000. The US Census reported that the unemployment rate for the United States in 2009 was 3.7%.

The Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth reported that the unemployment rate for Emmet County was 5.9% in 2018. During the same time period, the unemployment rate was 4.5% for the State of Michigan.

This low unemployment rate represents a significant change since the years of the recession, when many people left the County and the State to look for work elsewhere. In 2017, with low unemployment rates and increasing costs of living, business and other stakeholder input from throughout the County and the region emphasize that the County is now experiencing the opposite problem: it's become increasingly difficult for business to find and retain workers, and as a result—may close.

The industry that employs the highest number of workers is the Education, Health, and Social Services; this is due to the college and hospital. Arts, entertainment, recreation, and accommodation displaced the Retail Trade industry from the second to the fourth ranked industry, while Construction was replaced by professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services as the third ranked category. (See Table XXX)

## Industries

### Agriculture

There were about 353 jobs in Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting in 2017, accounting for about \$7.7 million in earnings and over \$30 million in sales. While agricultural jobs make up a small percentage of employment, the economic impact of agriculture is significant, contributing to increased tourism and innovation through value-added processing and related activities.

### Manufacturing

The Manufacturing industry makes up about 6% of Emmet County's jobs, but 23% of total sales. Typically, the manufacturing sector pays relatively



high wages: average earnings in the manufacturing industry in Emmet County were about \$64,000 annually, the fourth-highest annual average earnings of all industries in the county. However, the industry has encountered challenges related to plant closings and the region's labor shortage, as a smaller labor force and difficulties in attracting new workers has impacted their ability to hire adequate staff.

## Health Care

With McLaren Northern Michigan Hospital located nearby in Petoskey, health care is an important economic engine in Bear Creek Township and Emmet County-wide, making up 13% of jobs County-wide. As the population ages and demand for health care increases, this sector will become increasingly important. Currently, the Township contains several medical professional services. As demand for health care grows, the Township will be well-positioned to capitalize economically on the growth in health care services and demand.

## Tourism

Tourism is a foundation of the County's economy, and acts as its most visible economic driver. Tourism-related jobs (including those in Retail; Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation; and Accommodation and Food Services) account for

29% of the County's total jobs, employing over 7,200 employees. These jobs are typically lower-paying and seasonal in nature, with average annual earnings of about \$28,000, compared to annual average earnings of about \$44,000 for all jobs in the County.

Tourism and tourism-related employment are significantly impacted by booming tourism in the region, as it becomes more well-known as an agri-tourism and outdoor destination. As business and investment related to these activities has grown, there will be significant impacts on job opportunities and business revenues.



Table 6-3 2019 SEV Distribution				
Category	Bear Creek Township		Emmet County	
	Amount	% of SEV	Amount	% of SEV
Real Property:				
Agricultural	10,391,900	2%	46,360,155	1%
Commercial	126,009,600	21%	389,459,200	10%
Industrial	3,552,800	1%	14,629,500	0%
Residential	437,172,700	73%	3,393,404,725	86%
Timber Cutover	-	0%	-	0%
Developmental	-	0%	-	0%
<b>TOTAL REAL</b>	<b>577,127,000</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>3,843,853,580</b>	<b>97%</b>
Personal Property	23,581,000	4%	108,184,000	3%
<b>TOTAL SEV</b>	<b>600,708,000</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,952,037,580</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Emmet County Equalization 2019 Report

Table 6-4 2005 SEV Distribution				
Category	Bear Creek Township		Emmet County	
	Amount	% of SEV	Amount	% of SEV
Real Property:				
Agricultural	45,889,600	10%	119,610,150	3%
Commercial	94,664,700	20%	353,252,250	10%
Industrial	5,113,100	1%	26,859,400	1%
Residential	305,807,000	64%	2,896,486,768	83%
Timber Cutover	-	0%	830,000	0%
Developmental	4,474,500	1%	7,734,900	0%
<b>TOTAL REAL</b>	<b>455,948,900</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>3,404,773,468</b>	<b>97%</b>
Personal Property	21,153,550	4%	106,113,700	3%
<b>TOTAL SEV</b>	<b>477,102,450</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,510,887,168</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Emmet County Equalization Department

# ALICE Households: Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed

Many households are living below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), but an even greater number of households are what United Way calls ALICE – an acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. ALICE households have incomes above the FPL, but still struggle to afford basic household necessities. A 2017 United Way report identifies the cost of basic needs for each county in Michigan, and the number of households earning below this amount – the ALICE Threshold.

## Annual Household Survival Budget

	Median Household Income	Unemployment Rate	% of households that are ALICE Households	% of Households in Poverty	Single Adult	2 Adults, 1 infant, 1 preschooler
Antrim	\$46,485	9.7%	28%	13%	\$16,632	\$59,508
Benzie	\$47,388	8.4%	27%	10%	\$19,188	\$55,244
Charlevoix	\$46,544	7.8%	27%	12%	\$18,924	\$55,908
Emmet	\$51,018	8.4%	26%	11%	\$19,260	\$53,760
Grand Traverse	\$55,013	4.4%	25%	10%	\$19,872	\$58,740
Kalkaska	\$40,534	10.4%	27%	16%	\$18,048	\$53,508
Leelanau	\$56,189	7.1%	20%	8%	\$18,852	\$57,708
Manistee	\$41,395	11.5%	25%	14%	\$17,556	\$52,452
Missaukee	\$41,098	11%	29%	15%	\$17,556	\$55,608
Wexford	\$41,354	9.5%	28%	16%	\$17,016	\$51,936
Michigan	\$51,804	7.2%	25%	15%	\$18,192	\$56,064

Source: United Way, 2017

# Chapter 7: Housing

Like other Northwest Michigan communities, Bear Creek Township is experiencing changes in housing demand and shortages in a range of housing choices which impact businesses, schools, and community vitality. While housing shortages—particularly rentals—are impacting households from across the income spectrum, there is an especially short supply of housing that's affordable or available year-round to a large portion of the workforce. Employers increasingly report difficulties in recruiting new employees due to housing shortages.

A number of recent housing studies, including the *2014 Emmet County Housing Inventory*, document this shortage, showing significant affordability gaps for households throughout Emmet County. The 2017 American Community Survey reports the median home value of owner-occupied homes in Bear Creek Township is about \$189,000. For a household earning the median owner-occupied household income of \$63,250, an affordable home value would be approximately \$158,000. For a renter earning the median renter-occupied income of \$34,101, an affordable rent would be about \$852 per month. The median rent in Bear Creek Township in 2017 was \$908 per month.

A 2014 “target market analysis” assessed the potential annual demand for new housing units in Emmet County. It showed that there may be a market for 46 new owner-occupied housing units, and 88 rental units, in Emmet County each year through 2019, for households earning between \$19,000 and \$92,000 per year.

## Housing Units

Data from the 2017 American Community Survey shows a total of 3,457 housing units in Bear Creek Township, of which 79% are considered occupied (this includes the 445 units of Bay View or 13% of occupied housing units). 2,367 units are considered single-family units (attached and detached), 25 two-unit homes or duplexes, 896 multiple-family units,



Photo provided by Jenni Neal

and 151 mobile homes. Single-family attached and detached dwelling units make up the majority (68%) of the housing stock.

## Age of Structures

Generally, the economically useful age of residential structures is approximately 50-55 years. Beyond that age, repairs become expensive and the ability to modernize the structure to include amenities considered standard for today's life-styles is diminished. When a community's housing stock approaches that age, the need for housing rehabilitation, demolition and new construction will begin to increase.

Table 7-1 compares residential structural age for Bear Creek Township, Emmet County, and the State of Michigan. The 2017 American Community Survey shows that 68% of occupied structures are built within the last 40 years, while Emmet County sits at 51% and Michigan at 34%. It should be noted that the historic development of the Bay View Community is a factor in the number of older housing units. This development accounts for 445 homes. Overall the age of the housing stock should not be a current concern for Bear Creek Township.



Table 7-1 Age of Occupied Structures

Age of Occupied Structure	Bear Creek Township		Emmet County		State of Michigan	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
2014 or later	38	1%	75	0%	20,089	0%
2010-2013	138	5%	266	1%	47,438	1%
2000-2009	575	21%	3,281	15%	457,143	10%
1980-1999	1,115	41%	7,570	35%	1,053,042	23%
1960-1979	568	21%	4,964	23%	1,253,760	27%
1940-1959	100	4%	1,841	9%	1,047,398	23%
1939 or earlier	194	7%	3,491	16%	689,330	15%
TOTAL	2,728	100%	21,488	100%	4,568,200	100%

Source: 2017 American Community Survey

## Tenure

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the national rate of home ownership has grown from 55% in 1950 to 65.4% in 2010. In 2017, 62% of Bear Creek Township's homes were owner-occupied, lower than the County's rate of owner-occupied homes (73%).

Housing characteristics for Bear Creek Township are indicative of an increased summer population. The Bay View Resort Community, Lake Michigan shoreline, abundant inland lakes, woodlands and wildlife attract people to the area, many of whom reside in the Township only during the summer months. This is also true for the City of Petoskey and Emmet County. Further, rentals are more common in areas with sewer and water, which can accommodate apartment buildings and other higher-density housing better than rural areas.

## Recent Building Activity

Another way to analyze the economic health of a community is to evaluate building activities. The following table is a general summary of building permits issued from 2014 to 2018. Throughout that time, there have been no multi-family homes constructed but there have been a few modular homes constructed. From 2000 to 2010, the average number of new single family homes built was 37.8. From 2014 to 2018, the average once again went down to 23.8 new homes constructed per year. This number has been steady over the past few years as seen on table 7-2.

## Housing Purchase and Rental Values

A comparative measure of the local housing stock is housing value. In 2017, the median value for homes in Bear Creek Township was estimated at

Table 7-2

Bear Creek Township Building Permits 2014-2018

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
Single Family	16	21	21	22	27	107
Modular	5	4	2	0	1	12
Total	21	25	23	22	28	119

\$189,500—higher than the median housing value for Emmet County (\$171,100) and \$53,000 more than the State as a whole (median home value of \$136,400).

In 2017, median rent for the Township was \$908, as compared to \$779 for the County and \$824 for the State. The largest percentage of home values (62%) in Bear Creek Township fall between \$150,000 to \$299,999, while 61% of renter-occupied units gross rent is between \$500 to \$1000 per month (2017 American Community Survey).

# **Bear Creek Housing Affordability**

Analysis of the Township's median value of housing (owner and renter occupied) and the distribution of each is helpful in characterizing the diversity of housing choices within the community. Due to the impact of federal programs geared toward increasing the rates of home ownership, more communities are undertaking analyses of the affordability of housing within the community.

The U.S. Census gathers data for housing costs and cross tabulates it with household income. For owner-occupied homes, the housing costs include mortgage payments, insurance, utilities and property taxes. For renters, the housing costs include rent, insurance and utilities (and property taxes if applicable). The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has adopted a threshold of 30 percent or more of household income as the level at which housing begins to become unaffordable, with 35 percent or more being excessive. Households spending more than 30% of their income on housing costs are considered "cost overburdened," and are considered to be at greater risk of homelessness, foreclosure, or eviction.

In Bear Creek Township, the 2017 American Community Survey estimated that about 26% of homeowners with a mortgage, and 10% of homeowners without a mortgage, were spending 35% or more of their monthly income on housing. Affordability is even rarer for renters. Out of 840 renter-occupied housing units, 46% are considered cost overburdened. Of these, 380 households use 35% or more of their income for housing.

From this data it appears that in Bear Creek Township, homeownership may be a more difficult goal to attain than for the average homeowner in the County or State. Efforts should be made to increase the number of housing units that would be available for purchase for more attainable prices. This could be done by working with developers and landowners. The high cost rental market also places a limitation of living affordability. As demand increases for rentals and small housing units, due to population and economic trends resulting in smaller households, increased desire for mobility, tighter restrictions on lending, and reduced ability to

maintain large homes, the Township may need to consider opportunities to increase its supply of small homes, multifamily housing, and/or rentals.

# What Is Affordable Housing?

Because there's no "one size fits all" definition for affordable housing, and because it can include market-rate and subsidized housing, it's important to define the different types and prices of affordable housing, as well as the various income levels and populations served.

## Low-income, permanent, or long-term affordable housing

Rental or for-sale housing that is made affordable, through public or other subsidies, to low and moderate-income households. Deed restrictions or other controls limit the resale price or rent for a specified number of years. Affordability may be guaranteed for periods ranging from 10 years to perpetuity. Housing is typically available to households earning 80% or less of the area median income (AMI).

## Workforce housing

Rental or for-sale housing, located near employment centers, that is affordable to households with earned income. Workforce housing may be either subsidized or unsubsidized, and is often marketed to those with moderate and entry-level incomes like teachers, police officers, medical technicians, office workers, construction workers, and retail and restaurant staff. Generally these occupations earn up to 100% of the area median income (AMI).

## Supportive housing

Housing that is made affordable to residents with subsidy that is linked to support services such as mental health care, employment or job training assistance, addiction treatment, or other services that support independent living.

Even within each of these categories, the types and prices of affordable housing vary considerably. Various income levels are used by funders and housing providers to determine the level of affordability and the type or level of subsidy. For 2017 income levels by county in Michigan, visit [www.michigan.gov/mshda](http://www.michigan.gov/mshda).

## Housing Affordability in Emmet County

- A household earning the County's median homeowner income of about \$49,235 might be able to afford a home valued at about \$143,288 ; however, the median home value in the County is over \$182,900.
- The average renter in Emmet County can afford a monthly rent of about \$718, with the median rent in the County at \$713 per month.
- 48% of renters pay more than 30% of their income on housing costs. 18% are considered "severely cost overburdened," paying 50% or more of their income for rent, which puts them at a higher risk of eviction and homelessness.
- In order to afford the median monthly rent in Emmet County, workers need to earn at least \$13.71 per hour, or \$26,520 per year.
- Minimum wage workers (\$9.25 per hour) need to work about 74 hours per week to afford the County's median rent.

## Potential Annual Market Demand by Target Market, 2014-2019: Emmet County

	Annual Market Demand - Owners	Annual Market Demand - Renters	Median Household Income	% that are single-person households	Median rent	Median Home value
Young singles	27	48	\$37,000	64%	\$550	\$89,000
Young families	0	0	\$30,500	15%	\$450	\$46,000
Lower-income families/ households	0	91	\$29,000	17%	\$525	\$92,000
Low Income Gen X	0	72	\$19,000	80%	\$475	\$75,000
Low-income Boomer singles/empty-nesters	0	0	\$22,500	71%	\$400	\$39,500
Lower-income Boomers	4	139	\$34,500	80%	\$525	\$92,000
Low/moderate-income blue collar boomers	12	5	\$33,000	42%	\$455	\$75,000
Moderate-income Boomers	11	9	\$48,500	51%	\$700	\$147,000
Moderate/Higher-income boomers	2	0	\$44,500	48%	\$600	\$99,000
Lower-income seniors	1	34	\$20,000	69%	\$500	\$95,000
Moderate-income seniors	3	2	\$38,500	48%	\$875	\$187,500
Higher-income seniors	2	1	\$92,000	30%	\$1,100	\$275,000
	62	401				

*Data from the 2015 Northwest Michigan Target Market Analysis, prepared by LandUseUSA. Underlying data provided by the Internal Revenue Services; US Decennial Census; American Community Survey; and Experian Decision Analytics*



# Chapter 8:

## Transportation

The ease of access and availability of transportation has a significant impact on future growth and development in a community. Even very attractive locations can become unappealing when potential owners are faced with the perceptions of unsafe traffic conditions or roads in poor condition. As a basis for future planning efforts, an inventory and analysis of existing transportation was prepared.

This information is to assist Bear Creek Officials in planning appropriate densities and use intensities in the Township. Areas that have more services such as road improvements, municipal water and sewer should have higher densities than the unserved or unimproved areas.

### Transportation

Regional and local land use types directly influence the planning and construction of the local roadway system. Roadways that carry heavy traffic volumes at high rates of speed need to be specifically engineered to handle this type of traffic. Although roads constructed with concrete curb and gutters may be desirable, the cost may outweigh the benefits in some areas.

To understand the impact transportation conditions have on future land use decisions, it is necessary to examine the characteristics of the existing roadway system. This chapter will review road designs, road conditions, safety issues, access management, and context sensitive designs. The existing road system is shown on Map 8-1.

### Safety Issues

Safety issues may be either existing or potential problems in the current road system. In Bear Creek Township, there are four main safety concerns: poor road geometrics, vision obstruction, poor railroad crossing warnings, and excessive curb cuts.

#### *Poor Road Geometrics*

Poor road geometrics occur when intersecting roads



do not have proper alignment at their intersection. Several intersections with poor alignment include:

Evergreen Trail, Click Road and Cedar Valley Road; Pickerel Lake Road and US 31; Boyer and Country Club Road; Autumn Lane; US 131 and Howard Road; US 131 and Intertown Road; Lears Road and Howard Road.

#### *Railroad Crossing Warning Deficiencies*

Three railroad warning locations were identified in the Township. These are locations with little or no advance warning of railroad crossing. Since the train makes an average of three trips per week, the potential for accidents exists, especially for those unfamiliar with the trip pattern. Identified locations are all along River Road at or near the following intersections: Bear River Road, Evergreen Trail (officially mapped as Ecker Road ), and Click Road.

#### *Vision Obstruction*

Obstructed views occur where there is not enough clear vision area to provide an adequate view of the roadway or of other roadway users at an intersection, along a curve, or in a sloped area. Obstructed views identified in Bear Creek Township are at the intersections of Country Club and Surrey Lane, Cemetery and Kemp; Howard at both Greg



**Map 8-1**  
**Transportation**  
 BEAR CREEK TOWNSHIP,  
 EMMET COUNTY

Township Boundary  
 Emmet County  
 Regional Trail

**Road Type**  
 Local  
 County  
 State

Date | December 2019

Source | State of Michigan GIS Open Data



and Intertown, US 131 and Greg; US-131 and Intertown; Bear River and Sterly; Country Club and N. Fletcher; Mitchell west of the Township line; Kolinski south of Pickerel Lake Road, Shaw and US 31, and Maplewood and Mitchell.

### *Excessive Curb Cuts*

Excessive curb cuts result when driveways created by residential, commercial, or industrial uses are allowed access to a local, collector, or minor arterial road in an uncontrolled fashion. This type of access is dangerous. It allows vehicles to pull out or stop in too many locations, leaving drivers guessing what other drivers are doing.

Excessive curb cuts exist most frequently along US 31, north of the City of Petoskey. Potential solutions to this problem are service drives in commercial areas and restrictions on residential development along section line roads. The Township has developed and adopted an access management plan.

## **Access Management**

Access management is a set of proven techniques that can help reduce traffic congestion, preserve the flow of traffic, improve traffic safety, prevent crashes, preserve existing capacity, and preserve investment in roads by managing the location, design, and type of access to property. Access management focuses on the number, location, and design of driveways as they relate to the following elements within the road right-of-way: travel lanes, medians, by-pass lanes, dedicated turn lanes, and signal operations. Access management should be applied to all roads in the Township. The following points should be addressed in the zoning ordinance and during development reviews and rezoning:

- Limit the number of driveways to each lot.
- Restrict the number of lots fronting on highways and on busy roads.
- Regulate the location, spacing, and design of driveways.
- Encourage shared access to parcels and consolidate driveways where possible.
- Locate driveways away from other driveways.
- Restrict turning movements into and out of

driveways.

- Encourage passing lanes over road widening.
- Restrict turns onto the roadway.
- Encourage front or rear access drives (frontage roads).
- Connect streets, roads, and access easements.
- Promote internal connections and alternative accesses.

An Access Management Plan was created in cooperation with the City of Petoskey, Emmet County Road Commission, Michigan Department of Transportation, and Emmet County Planning and Zoning. The plan has been adopted by Bear Creek Township, Emmet County, and the City of Petoskey. The plan specifically targets highways US-31, M-119, and main County roads.

## **Context Sensitive Design**

Roads should be designed to reflect “context sensitive design” objectives whenever possible. Context sensitive design is a movement towards flexible road design instead of conforming to the “one size fits all” philosophy that currently exists when roads are designed. Not all roads should be thought of as the same, as they serve different uses.

Design standards for roads serving the urban areas differ from roads serving more rural areas. Generally roads should be designed to meet their locale and usage needs, and not their potential full capacity needs. Road designers should give priority to environment, historic preservation, and neighborhood protection concerns, instead of opting for standard road designs that give priority to vehicle capacity. An example of this is private roads, which have greater flexibility with respect to width and paving requirements.

## **Non-Motorized Transportation**

Non-motorized transportation options offer important lifestyle benefits for residents. In addition to providing opportunities for physical activity and improved health outcomes, they can be critical in



terms of providing independence and mobility for those who can't or don't drive. Increased use of non-motorized transportation can also help to reduce traffic congestion.

For those that don't drive, a lack of adequate non-motorized transportation infrastructure - including sidewalks, trails, and crosswalks - can present significant safety concerns, particularly in primary destinations that attract high volumes of traffic, like shopping centers. Non-motorized connections between residential areas and shopping areas are an important safety and health consideration. A "Complete Streets" approach to new road connections or improvements may provide opportunities to enhance non-motorized transportation (see sidebar).

There are limited sidewalks within Bear Creek Township. A designated bike (non-motorized) path traverses through portions of Bear Creek Township. An existing Rail-to-Trail, non-motorized pathway exists in the City of Petoskey along Little Traverse Bay. The path continues into Bear Creek Township, through Bay View, and on the north side of US 31 to Division Road, where the trail turns north and continues on adjacent to M-119 into Little Traverse Township. The North Western State Trail was developed from the rail corridor from M-119 along Hiawatha Trail and Round Lake to be a non-motorized trail, which allows snowmobile access in the winter.

## Public Transit

Transit is an important community service for residents that can't or don't drive due to age, disability, financial, or other reasons, and can play an important role in reducing traffic congestion, particularly when used or promoted in tourism-related transportation. After years of study and public input, in 2018 Emmet County committed funding for a public transit "pilot." The program was designed to expand services currently offered by Straits Regional Ride, a multi-county transit program that provided some services to Emmet County residents. Under the pilot program, additional routes were added, and the new service began operation in 2019. The County will continue to evaluate ridership, costs, and other factors, along with potential funding sources, in decisions about extending the pilot program, establishing other services, or discontinuing the program.

## Traffic and Road Connections

Traffic patterns in the greater Petoskey area are a primary transportation concern in Bear Creek Township and surrounding areas. With large volumes of vehicle traffic moving north-south on US-31 through Petoskey and Bear Creek Township, the road can become severely congested, particularly in the summer months,





# What Are Complete Streets?

One of the most significant trends in providing transportation choice is the Complete Streets movement. Complete Streets are streets for everyone: they are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Complete Streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, bicycle to work and allow buses to run on time. Benefits of Complete Streets include:

## Improved Safety

Streets designed with sidewalks, raised medians, better bus stop placement, traffic-calming measures, and treatments for disabled travelers improve pedestrian safety.

## Health

Complete streets encouraging walking and bicycling: a CDC study found that 43% of people with safe places to walk within 10 minutes of home met recommended physical activity levels.

## Lower Transportation Costs

When residents have the opportunity to walk, bike, or take transit, they're able to replace car trips with these inexpensive options.

## Fostering Strong Communities

A recent study found that people who live in walkable communities are more likely to be socially engaged and in better health than residents of less walkable neighborhoods.

## Placemaking

Complete Streets create more walkable and livable communities.

## Economic Development

Baby boomers, Millennials, and others are increasingly looking to live and do business in neighborhoods and districts that are highly walkable.

## Environment

Increased opportunities for walking and biking help to reduce air pollution from cars and trucks, as well as the size and amount of paved areas, resulting in a potential reduction in storm water quantity and quality.

## Safety

Improved non-motorized connections reduce conflicts between various modes of travel, improving safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and other transportation network users.

There is no singular design prescription for Complete Streets; each one is unique, designed around and responding to its community context. A complete street may include sidewalks, bike lanes or wide paved shoulders; special bus lanes; comfortable and accessible public transportation stops; and/or frequent and safe crossing opportunities which involve median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, narrower travel lanes, and more.

*Michigan's Public Act 135 of 2010 requires the development of a complete streets policy to promote safe and efficient travel for all legal users of the transportation network under the jurisdiction of the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). Public Act 135 defines complete streets as "...roadways planned, designed, and constructed to provide appropriate access to all legal users in a manner that promotes safe and efficient movement of people and goods whether by car, truck, transit, assistive device, foot, or bicycle." Complete streets require integrated design that occurs within the context of land use developments: the form and design of buildings can impact a community's walkability, vehicular access, and connectivity of the road network. Regulations affecting these features*

leading to safety concerns for both motorists and pedestrians. Local officials and stakeholders in Bear Creek Township, the City of Petoskey, Emmet County, Resort Township, the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians, and the Michigan Department of Transportation have discussed various solutions to the issue. A bypass around the City of Petoskey was explored in the Petoskey Area -Wide Transportation study, which was approved in 2007, identified some solutions and prioritized projects for transportation enhancement. Additionally, Bear Creek Township worked with the City, Emmet County Road Commission, and the Little Traverse Bay Band to extend Atkins Road to North Central Michigan College at Howard Street in Petoskey in 2012.

These efforts notwithstanding, traffic and a route around the City continues to be a high priority for local stakeholders. During the 2018-2019 Master Plan update process, discussion was held with these and other stakeholders, including Northern Central Michigan College, regarding transportation concerns and options. Rather than construction of a new road or bypass around the City, stakeholders identified and discussed potential road extensions and connections that could provide alternative routes through and around the City, along with limitations to implementation. To move forward, the Township may wish to explore feasibility studies, to identify implementation scenarios and needs, in partnership with neighboring communities

## Recommendations

Land uses that generate relatively high amounts of traffic should be located in areas of the Township offering appropriate roads in terms of carrying capacity and distribution. The analysis provided suggests such uses should be located in the northern areas of the Township. However, this area does receive considerable traffic congestion, therefore the following should occur:

- Access management provisions should be implemented on all major roads, including, but not limited to US 31, US 131, M-119, Mitchell

Road, Anderson Road, River Road, Division Road, McDougal Road, and Click Road. Although not all of these roads receive a comparatively large amount of traffic, there will be increases in the development and the number of vehicles traveled during the next two decades. It is easier to implement access management prior to and during development than it is to retrofit.

- Update zoning ordinances to reflect access management principles.
- The Township should work with developers and large business establishments to interconnect roads to reduce congestion from nearby properties.
- The Township should require non-motorized trails between neighboring developments.

Another major concern is the lack of connectivity within and around the Township, especially in the southern area, in which most of the commercial and other high-intensity uses are located. As the Township grows, there will be an increased need for greater connectivity between primary destinations in the Township. Improved road connections will enable residents to travel from one area to the other without contributing to or creating further congestion on high-volume roads. In addition, from a safety standpoint, these improvements will decrease the emergency response time for vehicles.

- Work with the City of Petoskey, Emmet County Road Commission, Resort Township, Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians, and other stakeholders to collaboratively fund and prepare a feasibility study that explores implementation needs and impacts of road connections.

Recommended road connections to study include:

- Lears to McDougal
- Manvel to Mitchell Road
- Improvements to existing connection of US 131 to River Road, along Bear River Road

# Complete Streets

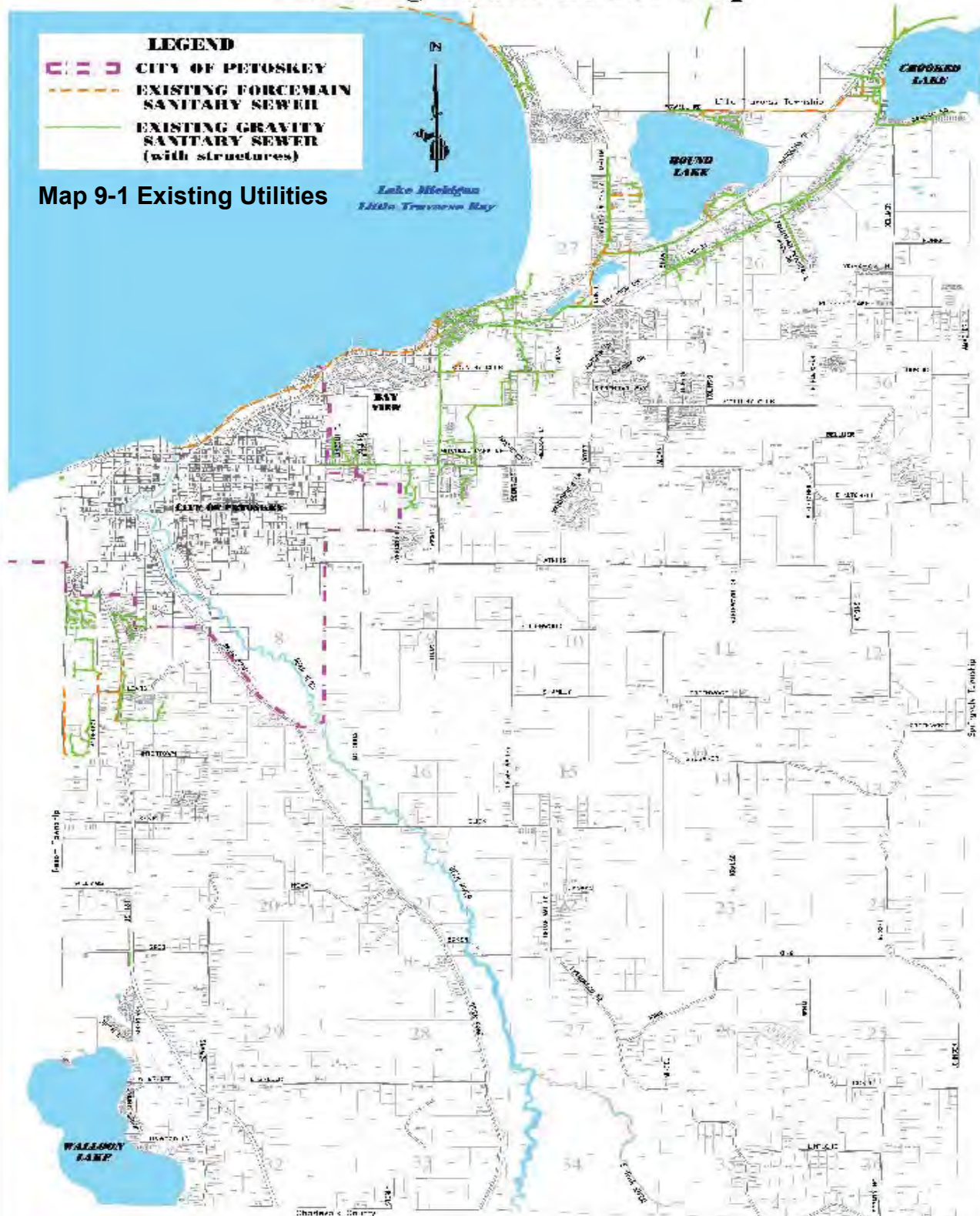
A Complete Streets approach to transportation improvements offers safety, health, and financial benefits for all users of the transportation network.

- Explore opportunities to integrate Complete Streets into transportation decisions, discussions, and improvements

# Existing Public Sewer Map

- LEGEND**
- CITY OF PETOSKEY
  - EXISTING FORCEMAIN SANITARY SEWER
  - EXISTING GRAVITY SANITARY SEWER (with structures)

Map 9-1 Existing Utilities



Scale: 1" = 100'

<b>Exhibit</b> 9-3	<b>Existing Public Sewer Map</b> Bear Creek Township	Prepared by: 2011-2012 2011-2012 2011-2012	Date: 11-1-2011	Drawn by: 11-1-2011	Checked by: 11-1-2011	Approved by: 11-1-2011		Prepared by: 11-1-2011 11-1-2011 11-1-2011
	11-1-2011 11-1-2011 11-1-2011	11-1-2011 11-1-2011 11-1-2011	11-1-2011 11-1-2011 11-1-2011	11-1-2011 11-1-2011 11-1-2011	11-1-2011 11-1-2011 11-1-2011	11-1-2011 11-1-2011 11-1-2011	11-1-2011 11-1-2011 11-1-2011	11-1-2011 11-1-2011 11-1-2011



# Chapter 9:

## Infrastructure

### Public Water And Sewer Utilities

The future need and availability of public water and sewer utilities is dependent on a number of variables, including development demand, land resources, funding and the condition of the present systems. Like many northern communities, Bear Creek Township has limited public water and sewer facilities. The sewer system serves northern areas of the Township and stretches along US 31 (see Existing Utilities Map – Map 9-1). Water is available in the immediate area of Bay View Association and along limited segments on US 131, south of Petoskey.

Bear Creek contracts with the Harbor Springs Area Sewer Authority (HSASA) to maintain its sewer facilities. This system serves the Bay View Golf Course and continues north to the residents on the south side of Round Lake and along US 31, from Shaw to the Hoffman Nursery. Largely comprised of 8-inch line, this system flows primarily toward Petoskey with the remainder going to Harbor Springs. Locations not served by the public sewer system rely on private on-site systems.

In 2004, Bear Creek Township prepared a Sewer System Master Plan and projected its wastewater capacity needs for the next 20 years at nearly 1.0 million gallons per day (MGD). The treatment capacity available to the Township at the City of Petoskey treatment plant was limited to 0.57 MDG and the city indicated no additional capacity was available. The Township looked at several alternatives to meet the future treatment needs, including constructing a new wastewater treatment facility.

The selected alternative was a solution that continued to use the treatment capacity available at the City of Petoskey and redirected the remaining wastewater from the north part of the Township to the existing treatment facility operated



by the Harbor Springs Area Sewage Disposal Authority (HSASDA). In 2012 a new four mile force -main was activated to divert the wastewater flow to the HSASDA.

The Bay View Association owns its sewer lines, which are serviced by the City of Petoskey for both sewer and water.

Public water in Bear Creek Township is available as part of the City of Petoskey system. Areas not served by this system obtain water from private wells.

The Township should encourage construction of public water along the commercial corridor along US 31N and M-119

### Broadband

Access to broadband could be considered a modern day necessity. Access to broadband assists with growth and development, increased education and job opportunities, and maintaining rural communities. A private utility company is currently working on increasing broadband availability throughout the majority of the township .

# Chapter 10:

## Population Projection & Needs Assessment

An important component of future land use planning is determining how much land is going to be needed for the various uses, such as residential, commercial, and industrial. This is becoming more difficult to determine as uses have become increasingly blended, such as people working at home, agricultural and manufacturing operations selling their products, and commercial retail operations building their own products.

In addition, technology has changed so that manufacturing operations are becoming more computerized, which may require less space than in previous decades. Conversely, many commercial operations have become larger, even requiring more than 100,000 square feet of retail space. Homes were being built larger, however the trend seems to be leaning towards smaller homes.

All of these factors influence the amount of land area needed for these uses. The following population projection and needs assessment should be used as a guide when planning for these uses. Population projections and needs assessments are not an exact science, so the conclusions made in this section should be used more for making and enforcing the policy statements in the Guiding Principle Section and not used solely for land use allocation.

### Population Projection

Bear Creek's population was 6,259 according to the 2017 American Community Survey estimates.

There are different methods and strategies for computing the future population of an area. Projections from Emmet County's Master Plan and building permit information from Bear Creek Township are compared in this section. The populations projection (table 10-1), derived utilizing US Census Data, American Community Survey estimates, and the rate of change from 2010-2017. In that span (2010-2017), the population of Bear Creek Township increased by 58, or .0013 percent per year. Applying the same rate per year gives us



conservative projections, which should be revisited when the 2020 Census data is made available.

Table 10-1  
Bear Creek Township Population Projections

Year	1990	2000	2010	2020 Pro- jected	2030 Pro- jected
Bear Creek Township	3,469	5,269	6,201	6,284	6,369

Bear Creek Township has a significant seasonal population. According to the 2010 Census, about 22.3% of the Township's housing is seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. While seasonal housing is not reflected in the Township's population, there is a need to build and maintain infrastructure to serve these seasonal homes. Furthermore, during some portions of the year the Township's effective population will increase when the seasonal homes and transient facilities are occupied.

To help the Township plan for infrastructure needs, the "peak season" population was estimated. The peak season population estimates include occupancy of seasonal homes but not transient population that may use resorts, hotels and motels.

The estimation of peak season population is based on the number of homes and the average household size in the Township from the 2010 Census data.

Table 10-2

### Peak Season Population Projections

	2010	2020	2025
Total Housing Units	3,695	3,935	4,055
Occupied Housing Units (69%)	2,569	2,715	2,798
Seasonal Housing Units (22%)	823	865	892
Average Household Size	2.37	2.29	2.25
Estimated "Peak Season" Population	8,757	9,011	9,124

*Straight line projection of 24 new homes per year based on building permits issued from 2014-2018*

*Projection - Average household size utilizes Emmet County average household size data. 2025 is difference between 2010 and 2020 divided by 2. Household size is expected to decline.*

*Estimates have been rounded*

Projection of peak season population was based on the building permit information for new homes from 2014 to 2018 (119 building permits). Table 10-2 shows Bear Creek Township's estimated Peak Season Population Projection. This projection shows the possibility of 360 housing units to be built in the Township by 2025, a near 10% increase from 2010.

## Commercial Needs Analysis

Commercial development is an important part of a community's economy. Commercial establishments provide goods and services to consumers, promote economic stability, and generally enhance the quality of life for area residents. However, if commercial districts are not suitably located and carefully planned, they can be a disruptive element and ultimately detract from the community.

There are four primary types of planned shopping environments: neighborhood centers, community centers, hyper-centers and regional centers.

## Neighborhood Centers

Neighborhood centers generally require a site between three and five acres in area. Such centers often have a supermarket, such as Oleson's

Grocery Market, as the principal tenant with other stores providing convenience goods or personal services. The typical gross leasable area is 30,000 to 100,000 square feet. The required trade area population ranges between 2,500 and 4,000 people living within a 1 to 1 1/2 mile radius or six-minute drive of the center.

## Community Centers

Community centers generally require a site that is ten acres in area. Such centers often have a department store (Hobby Lobby, Office Max, etc.) or variety store as the major tenant in addition to a supermarket and other retail stores. The typical gross leasable area is 100,000 to 300,000 square feet. The required trade area population ranges between 40,000 and 150,000 people living within a three mile radius.

## Hyper-centers

Hyper-centers range in size from 50 to 70 acres. They typically consist of a single store with multiple departments with large selections. They rely on low prices to draw customers from a wide reaching market area of 25 to 30 miles from the center. Store sizes typically range from 175,000 to 330,000 square feet, Wal-Mart and Meijer are examples of this type of retail.

## Regional Centers

Regional centers are typically constructed on a site of 30 to 50 acres in area. Such centers are built around full-line department stores with a minimum gross leasable area of 100,000 square feet. Regional centers may have a total gross leasable area of 300,000 to 1,000,000 square feet. The required trade area population is 150,000 people or more living within a 10 to 15 mile radius. A mall is an example of a regional center.

Not all commercial uses are sited within pre-planned shopping centers. Attention must also be given to uses which occupy freestanding structures or which are part of strip commercial areas. Most of these uses are considered highway-oriented businesses, since much of their trade results from exposure and accessibility to passing motorists.

Data in Market Criteria for Selected General Commercial Land Uses present the market base

standards for many of these types of uses. For land use planning purposes, it is recommended that 10 acres per 1,000 people be allocated for such development. This table also documents the population base necessary to support different types of office development (doctors, real estate, accounting, travel agencies, legal offices, and banks). To provide for office development, 3 acres per 1,000 people is the recommended guide.

Bear Creek Township serves as a destination shopping center for northern Michigan. Many communities, including those located in Mackinac, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, and Presque Isle Counties visit Bear Creek Township for the shopping opportunities.

## Industrial Needs Analysis

The quantity of developed industrial land a community will need in the future depends on its current employment base, utility availability, local political philosophy, as well as numerous other factors industries consider when choosing a location for a new facility. The availability of housing is also a factor when determining a location to build or expand. Data in the Table 7-5 describes some of the factors industries use when choosing sites.

The employment/density ratios method, described in Table 7-6 predicts industrial land use demand. If employment by industry can be projected, a worker density factor can be applied, resulting in a total acreage requirement. Employment levels forecasting is beyond the scope of this plan.

It should be noted that computerization has increased efficiencies, thereby reducing the number of employees needed to work in an industrial operation. Market and employment studies would provide more current information.

Table 7-6  
Employment Density Ratios

Industry	Average # of Employees per Acre
1. Intensive Industries	30
2. Intermediate Extensive Industries	14
3. Extensive Industries	8

Source: Urban Land Institute, *Industrial Development Handbook*, 1975.

1. Industries include electrical equipment and supply; printing and publishing; apparel and textile products; transportation equipment; and similar uses.

2. Industries include lumber and wood products; furniture and fixtures; food and kindred products; chemicals; and similar uses.

3. Industries include tobacco products; petroleum and coal products; wholesale trade; and similar uses.



Table 7-5

## Location Criteria Used by Industry

Availability of Adequate Sites	The trend is to develop one-story plants with adequate space for parking, loading, a reserve for expansion, and, if the industry abuts a residential area, a landscaped buffer strip.
Reasonable Tax Rates	Two of the more frequently stated reasons for an industrial move are the lack of an adequate site or the lack of a reasonable tax rate.
Location of Production Material	Improved methods for moving bulk products are lessening the importance of this factor.
Power	Electric power is the type most often required today, and there should be no local problems in this respect.
Water	Many industries require large quantities of water, either raw or treated, in their manufacturing process, and some find it desirable to have water as a means of cheap transportation.
Waste Treatment Facilities	A prerequisite to industrial operations locating in a particular area is its ability to handle the disposal of wastewater. Either public utilities with readily available access to or on-site waste treatment facilities with sufficient capacity to meet operational requirements have become integral location criteria, requiring careful consideration.
Industrial Fuel	Industries requiring gas are limited to their potential locations. If large quantities of coal are required, the industry should be located along railroads or waterways.
Transportation Facilities	The importance of rail sites has diminished for some industries. Many rely solely on major highways as the means of bringing in production materials and distributing the finished product.
Favorable Competitive Pattern	Certain industries are finding it worthwhile to establish branch plants and to decentralize in order to maintain competitive advantages
Living Conditions	An industry will also investigate a community's resources in terms of educational and recreational facilities, housing, availability of professional services, nature of shopping facilities, and public attitudes.
Compatible Laws	Up-to-date industrial thinking recognizes the desirability of sound zoning, building, and other codes.
Site Characteristics	Such things as soil and topography, amount of grading required, drainage conditions, waste disposal service, etc., are important to certain industries.
Labor	Labor cost as a factor of production is important to industries where added costs cannot be shifted to the consumer without sacrificing competitive advantage.

Compiled by Wade Trim

# 2008 Public Input

Public input is critical when updating a Master Plan. History indicates that citizens play a powerful role in the decision making process, whether or not they have been asked to participate. In the creation of the 2008 Master Plan, several methods were used to gain public input and create a vision and goals for the Master Plan. Public input obtained from visioning sessions, stakeholder interviews, and a community survey is summarized below.

## Visioning Sessions

Four visioning sessions were held with residents throughout the Township in 2005. The exercises in these visioning sessions included asking residents to describe the Township, involve them in a mapping exercise to allow them create their own future land use map, and asking them a series of questions, including:

- What do you enjoy about the Township?
- What concerns do you have about the Township?
- What you would like to protect in the Township?
- What you would like to see accomplished?

The information from these meetings was used to develop the vision statement, guiding principles, and provide a basis for the future land use map.

Participants were asked to draw or place stickers on a map of Bear Creek Township describing the land uses they would like to see in the future. Ideas and concepts that were frequently shown on the individual maps were compiled to develop a composite Public Input Session Map, with key ideas for land use including:

- Park Land - Large areas that might be designated as parkland.
- Open Space System (stream and wetland corridor) - Either interconnected natural resource corridors or larger land areas that may be considered to be unique and worth of preservation.
- Agricultural Land - Land that is to be protected for agricultural use, consisting of farmable acreages and farm dwellings.

- Rural Residential - 5 acres lots and larger. Estate-size, non-farm residential lots that are neither serviced, nor intended to be served, by public sewer and water and are intended to preserve the natural landscape and land forms.
- Low Density Residential - 1 to 5 acre lots- Areas of relatively large lots that are neither served, nor intended to be served, by public sewer and water.
- High Density Residential - 2 to 5 units/acre- Lots one-half acre or smaller in size for single family detached and attached housing. Such lots already are, or are intended to be, serviced by public sewer and water.
- Urban Residential - Over 5 units/acre – Is the highest density for housing, includes apartment buildings and multifamily dwelling units
- Cluster Residential - A development design technique that concentrates housing on part of a site to allow the remaining land to be used for recreation, common open space, and the preservation of natural resources.
- Mixed-Use Development - Compact development (vs. strip development) of land offering a variety of complementary and integrated uses, including, but not limited to, residential, office, manufacturing, retail, restaurants, public, or entertainment.
- Commercial - Places to Shop- New shopping centers, lifestyle centers, neighborhood centers, and highway service centers.
- Businesses - Places to Work –New industrial parks, offices, etc.
- Neighborhood Convenience - Places to Go- Small shops and/or restaurants located in neighborhood.
- Viewshed Protection - Areas where views (primary to water or open space) from the roadways or other accessible vantage points, are protected for present and future generations to enjoy.
- Roadside Character Protection - Locations to preserve the perception of roadsides green by setting buildings back from the edge, landscaping, retaining existing vegetation and

clustering away from the road.

- Trails - Inter-community bikeways and walkways.

## **Community Survey**

In September 2005, 2,647 community surveys were mailed to the property owners in Bear Creek Township, with a return rate of 34%. The survey questions and the responses are on the following pages. The significant findings include:

- The vast majority of residents feel their quality of life is good to excellent in the Township.
- Property owners are very concerned with sprawl development, especially occurring along the roadways.
- Property owners would like to limit the number of driveways on high traffic roads
- One area of major concern is the appearance of US 131 and US 31. Landscaping requirements, requiring parking lots to be interconnected, regulating the size and location of signs, and establishing architectural controls for all buildings along these corridors are supported by property owners.
- People are concerned with protecting the significant views of the landscape and water bodies and would favor development restrictions.
- Residents favor incorporating walking and biking areas, open space areas, and tree-lined streets into developments.
- People favor small single-family lots, duplex housing, and housing for the elderly to increase the housing options. They are mixed when considering accessory dwelling units and townhouses.
- Farmland preservation is important. Residents would like to work with land owners to allow for creative layouts of subdivisions to preserve some farmland while allowing for development. They also favor purchase of development rights programs and encouraging agricultural related businesses.
- People are concerned about the job opportunities and would like the Township to conduct an Employment Study. They also would like to increase the opportunities for people to work at home.
- People believe the overall adequacy of zoning

enforcement is fair to good.

- Zoning is believed to be more about controlling private property rights than protecting property.
- Residents favor having public sewer if growth were controlled. The majority of residents are opposed to being connected to public water.

## **2018-2019 Focus Group Meetings**

Bear Creek Township held various focus groups in the process of updating the master plan in 2018 and 2019. Topics covered within these groups include coastal resiliency, industry, transportation and agri-tourism. These meetings allowed the update to include current conditions, opportunities and challenges within the covered topics.

# Chapter 11:

## Guiding Principles

The planning principles and policies of Bear Creek Township should be used to guide decision-making relative to land use, transportation, and public improvements. The Guiding Principles were developed using public input from the Visioning Sessions, Stakeholder Interviews, and the 2005 Community Survey, and were updated based on input received from stakeholders and the Master Plan Committee as part of the 2019 Master Plan Update.

Each Guiding Principle is tailored to aid the Township in guiding growth. They should be reviewed when considering development proposals, administering or amending the zoning ordinance, and considering public opinion. Each principle includes a list of policy statements to implement the guiding principle.

The following are the planning principles and policies of Bear Creek Township.

**1. Proactively guide growth. Maintain the rural character of the Township while promoting smart growth. Identify existing land use patterns and infrastructure needs when developing comprehensive land use guidelines and regulations. Promote developments with higher density when possible. Discourage sprawl and encourage compact growth patterns. Manage and guide growth, don't allow it to control the Township.**

- Use natural features and topography to distinguish between land uses.
- Encourage neighborhood designs in suburban developments.
- Encourage cluster housing with useable open space and trail development that connects neighborhoods and nearby amenities.
- Enhance land values by managing the impacts



of development on adjacent lands.

- Utilize existing infrastructure to its design capacity before allowing development to expand into undeveloped areas.
- Provide incentives to establish continuous natural corridors.
- Designate an appropriate amount of land for commercial and industrial uses.
- Communicate and work with the City of Petoskey, the surrounding townships, and Emmet County. Understand that no community exists in a vacuum, and what happens in one area affects another.
- Plan and communicate infrastructure and road improvements together to maximize efficiency and minimize costs.
- Work with school districts and the road commission to become familiar with their plans, knowing that they all serve the same population.

**2. Preserve the Rural Character of Bear Creek Township. Rural character is essential to Bear**



**Creek Township's identity, and maintaining it is important to the future. Although Bear Creek Township is growing and urbanizing, the majority of it is still considered "rural." People want to maintain this characteristic.**

- Save as many trees as possible. Trees are a key characteristic of a community considered rural.
- Minimize road infrastructure that would result in excessive widening, paving, and curbing. Design roads to follow the natural contour.
- Permit lighting where site-specific safety conditions are a factor and meet the Emmet County Lighting Ordinance.
- Encourage developments designed around a common theme, such as a park, open space, or civic building.
- Preserve the continuity of natural features and greenway infrastructure, such as woodlands and wetlands, as a means to preserve permanent open space.
- Promote native vegetation.
- Establish incentives to encourage the incorporation of desirable views and vistas, woodlands, farmlands, and the protection of ridgelines into development plans.

**3. Make the US 131, US 31, and M-119 corridors appealing to drivers and to businesses. People identify an area with what they see from the road. Although the majority of roads in the northern part of the Township are commercially oriented, design measures can be undertaken to beautify these areas. These improvements will not only improve the scenic beauty, but can enhance the businesses themselves. People like shopping at nicely designed locations.**

- Make the corridors clean, landscape proposed and existing businesses, and continues partnerships with M-DOT in roadway planning and access management.
- Control signage and limit billboards.
- Explore landscaping requirements in greenbelt areas.
- Promote access management provisions.

- Reduce driveway access points wherever possible. Encourage internal connections between business properties. Promote alternative accesses, such as frontage roads. Utilize access management to require ancillary road access for businesses, where applicable.
- Encourage compact development, rather than allowing development to "strip" down the roadway.
- Promote trees and landscaping along the corridors.
- Regulate parking lot design and location.

**4. Protect the scenic view corridors. Bear Creek Township has many beautiful, highly visible vantage points. These locations are located throughout the Township. The varying topography, forested lands, open areas and views of Little Traverse Bay are magnificent to look at and well traveled. They are important resources and preserving them is a high priority. These are not just attractive sites, they add to the quality of life and tourism experience. A main objective is to protect these areas from highly visible, inappropriate development or ill-suited development such as signage, billboards, multiple access points, and obtrusive building placement.**

- Define and categorize the significant view shed areas. Work with land owners to preserve these areas. Consider programs for view shed protection areas.
- Discourage development in open fields.
- Discourage clear-cutting trees by promoting "filtering with views"
- Keep the long vistas of open space and wooded areas along the roads.
- Encourage clustering to minimize the visual impact of development along the roadways. Prevent strip development along the road corridors.
- Minimize driveway cuts.
- Control signage and limit billboards.

**5. Retain farming and farmlands. Agriculture plays an important role in Bear Creek**

**Township's history and current character. Retain large tracts of farmland for as long as possible. Maintain large tracts of land for farming where they correlate with other farmlands or have conditions such as soil and topography that are conducive to farming. Think of these areas as perpetually being farmed and not as future residential areas. Once these lands are developed into residential or commercial developments, it is nearly impossible for them to be farmed in the future.**

- Encourage new agricultural activity within the community.
- Support traditional agriculture and new agri-business practices which help sustain farming operations.
- Think of these areas as employment locations; work with farmers and interested agencies to develop agricultural related businesses such as U-pick operations, and nurseries.
- Work with farmland preservation groups and land conservancies to retain larger areas of contiguous agricultural lands in the Agricultural designated areas.
- If a farmland is proposed for development, work with the land owner to create a site plan that continues the unique agricultural components such as the structures (farm houses, barns, and silos) and open land area adjacent to roadways. Have an agriculture buffer between the development and any active farms.

**6. Plan for Infrastructure. Provide water, sewer, and utilities for increased business opportunities and denser residential development in areas designated for urban densities. Study the cost, location, and need of such facilities. Understand that these facilities are anticipated within the next twenty years.**

- Coordinate and communicate infrastructure and road improvements with private and governmental agencies.
- Use public utilities such as water and sewer as a tool to encourage development within urban service areas.
- Provide incentives to promote infill in areas

having infrastructure.

**7. Celebrate the Bear River Valley and existing natural resources. Preserve and protect the scenic and natural features of the Bear River Valley by keeping it clean. Enforce existing regulations for the protection of natural resources including wetlands, stream corridors, and woodlands when development occurs. Save land for open space.**

- Overlay the natural features with regulations designed to protect their features and characteristics.
- Have measures in place to preserve the natural features, control pollution, and limit erosion.
- Maintain the Bear River Valley and forestlands by protecting wildlife corridors and habitat.
- Limit the amount of development. Work with developers to incorporate environmentally sensitive designs.
- Encourage development in and around wooded areas to be planned, constructed, and maintained so that existing quality vegetation and native species are preserved.
- Create a linear open space system and connect it with other open areas in the Township.

**8. Provide housing for everyone. Not everyone will wish to live in the same house for as long as they live in the Township and then move away from familiar surroundings when their housing needs change. Likewise, businesses will need employees of varying income levels and these employees will need housing that is affordable in reasonably close proximity to their jobs. It is the intent of the Township to provide opportunities for a variety of housing as follows:**

- Provide a wide range of housing opportunities to satisfy the lifecycle housing needs of residents of all income and age levels.
- Accommodate a range of quality affordable housing types to satisfy the needs of employees.
- Disperse affordable housing throughout the Township rather than concentrate it in monotype developments.
- Allow for and promote homes on small lots

where there is infrastructure.

- Permit and regulate work/live environments in rural areas. Allow home owners to operate small scale businesses from their homes when the impact will be minimal.

**9. Develop and maintain safe and quiet neighborhoods. While much of Bear Creek Township has a rural character, new developments typically have densities that can develop “neighborhoods.” Neighborhoods are the building blocks of a community. Therefore, they need to be designed to be safe and accessible by emergency vehicles and compatible with adjacent nonresidential development so they can be relatively free of adverse influences. It is the intent of the Township to influence the design of neighborhoods and to:**

- Encourage the establishment of connected, walk-able neighborhoods to encourage interaction between residents of the developments.
- Employ cluster-housing options to establish neighborhoods that are organized around generous open spaces and green infrastructure.
- Require a mixture of housing types to provide housing choice for residents.
- Require neighborhood road designs that slow traffic to promote safety for children and pedestrians within developments.
- Establish and enforce performance standards that minimize noise, visual access, odor, vibration, dust and particulate matter, and the other potential impacts of industrial, commercial, and resource based land uses when they abut residentially zoned areas.
- Maintain buffers at the edges of neighborhoods to provide definition and identity from adjacent non-residential land uses.

**10. Promote diverse working opportunities. One of the important components a community needs to be sustainable is a solid job force. This can be accomplished by a mixture of job opportunities, including professional, manufacturing and service oriented. Although it is not the Township’s responsibility to create**

**these job opportunities, the Township should continue to provide viable locations for them.**

- Continue to work with responsible parties to ensure that high speed internet and wireless communication is available throughout the Township.
- Allow for complementary uses to be placed next to each other, such as a restaurant in an industrial park.
- Communicate with MichiganWorks and Emmet County to develop incentives that would encourage businesses/industries to locate in Bear Creek Township.
- Designate areas where small businesses can afford to operate and allow for smaller lots.
- Promote homegrown businesses. Allow for incubator businesses in homes where feasible.

**11. Clean up messes and control blight. Unfortunately, most communities have difficulties with resident-induced blight, especially townships. The Township has the right to enforce reasonable standards and it has the responsibility to protect the rights of the offending property owner and those others who are affected by his/her individual abuses. It is the intent of the Township to:**

- Continue consistent nuisance ordinance enforcement to define, process, and eradicate of nuisances that violate the property rights of others.
- Communicate openly, frequently, and meaningfully with the public at large to create an understanding of the Township’s intent and willingness to abate nuisances.
- Have an annual Township sponsored clean-up program.

**12. Balance property rights with the public interest. Property rights are deeply held tenets that deserve careful attention when any public policy is developed. While balancing the rights of property owners and the public interest is always difficult, equal consideration should be given to the benefits a community receives when good public policy is implemented.**

**It is the intent of the Township to carefully balance the rights of property owners with the public interest by:**

- Rely on the principles, policies, and patterns embodied in the Master Plan to help evaluate the rights of property owners and compare them to the public interest.
- Evaluate each public interest and determine if alternative approaches can be used to minimize affects on property rights.
- To the extent possible, ascertain and publicly reveal the facts of any land use issue before making a decision.
- Make decisions on the basis of sound land use practice.
- Keep the public informed and involved in key land use issues. The more difficult the issue, the more input should be elicited from the public.
- Accommodate uses that may adversely affect the public interest (wind energy, telecommunications towers, etc.) in locations that meet legal requirements and satisfy the public needs while minimizing impacts.
- Provide residents with a clear understanding of permitted uses and the approval process. Streamline the approval process when possible.
- Keep the public informed of land use issues. Go beyond the normal required public hearing requirements when there is a major issue of concern.



# Chapter 12:

## Future Land Use

### Description of a Future Land Use Plan

A Future Land Use Plan provides a comprehensive overview of a community's desired future. The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (Public Act 110 of 2006) states "a zoning ordinance shall be based upon a plan designed to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare, to encourage the use of lands in accordance with their character and adaptability, to limit the improper use of land, to conserve natural resources and energy, to meet the needs of the state's residents for food, fiber, and other natural resources, places of residence, recreation, industry, trade, service, and other uses of land, to ensure that uses of the land shall be situated in appropriate locations and relationships, to avoid the overcrowding of population, to provide adequate light and air, to lessen congestion on the public roads and streets, to reduce hazards to life and property, to facilitate adequate provision for a system of transportation including, subject to subsection (5), public transportation, sewage disposal, safe and adequate water supply, education, recreation, and other public requirements, and to conserve the expenditure of funds for public improvements and services to conform with the most advantageous uses of land, resources, and properties..." The Planning Enabling Act (Public Act 33 of 2008) refers to this language, therefore, it is important that the Bear Creek Township Future Land Use Plan addresses all of these elements.

The recommendations in the Future Land Use Plan are based on existing land uses and patterns, natural features, and economics. A substantial factor in the recommendations is the public input. The Bear Creek Township Planning Commission and Township Board worked to ensure there would be a significant amount of public input and involvement. This included having four visioning sessions, interviewing community stakeholders, mailing a land



use survey to all of the residents, and developing future land use alternatives, thereby allowing residents to select their desired master plan. The result of these initiatives will assist the recommendations of the Future Land Use Plan.

### Future Land Use Implementation

There are many ways to implement a Master Plan and the associated Future Land Use Plan (see Chapter 11, Implementation). The most common and powerful is developing a zoning ordinance based on the Future Land Use Plan recommendations. Infrastructure and capital improvement plans should also be based on the Future Land Use Plan.

Since zoning shall be "based on a plan," all rezoning in Bear Creek Township should comply with the recommendations in this Future Land Use Plan. If they are not compatible, then the zoning should be changed to match the master plan descriptions. If a zoning change is requested, it is important that the change comply with the Future Land Use plan. If it does not, then it could violate the Zoning Enabling

Act. The master plan should be reviewed and revised, if necessary, prior to any substantial zoning changes.

It should be noted that Emmet County currently administers the zoning for Bear Creek Township. The Planning Commission should work with the County Planners to ensure that the recommendations in this plan are implemented.

### **Future Land Use Recommendations**

The following descriptions are shown on the Future Land Use Plan (Map 121), at the end of this section.

#### **City of Petoskey**

The City of Petoskey functions as the social, economic, entertainment, housing, and business center for Emmet County. It is a mixed-use location with businesses and residential uses. Development in the City influences the Township, and vice-versa. Development around the City should be compatible with the existing development's use and density. There are no land use recommendations for this specific area, only recognition of the City's influences on the Township.

#### **Bay View**

Bay View is known as the largest Victorian community in Michigan. This area provides community character and a source of taxing revenue. This has been fully developed and there are no plans for any new development. This area should be recognized more as a resource and attraction, such as a park, than a development area. No changes are expected or desired in the Bay View area.

#### **High Density-Residential**

Land with this designation is intended to provide areas for single-family developments on smaller lots and multifamily units. As the Socioeconomic Profile describes, there will be an increase in the number of baby boomers and elder population in the Township. Typically, this group of people will not desire a large lot size. They will prefer smaller lots that are easier to maintain and in close proximity to services such as small scale stores, restaurants, and walking trails.

In addition, there is a concern that the price of housing is making home ownership more difficult to

attain in Bear Creek Township. This is especially true for people working at entry-level jobs and in the service industry (which accounted for 25.1% of Township employment). A year-round diverse population that creates a productive workforce in all industries is critical for a community to sustain itself. To ensure that the Township continues to have a diverse population, this designation can provide for more attainable priced housing. Allowing for smaller lots and a mixture of housing types, may help make housing prices more attainable.

Parcels designated High Density-Residential should be located near other higher intensity developments (such as the City of Petoskey and Mixed Use areas) for compatibility and to share services such as sewer, water, trails, utilities, roads, refuse disposal, and other infrastructure. This sharing of services should also reduce the overall cost of housing. Since the density will be higher in these locations, it will be important that all developments have a trail component allowing residents to walk to nearby facilities such as churches, schools, parks, stores, job centers, and restaurants. This pedestrian movement will help reduce the reliance on the automobile.

The recommended density is five (5) to ten (10) units per acre, depending on the availability of water and sewer. Permitted uses in this designation should include townhouses, multiple family condominium developments, elderly housing, and single family homes. It is important that the multiple-family developments are well-designed and include characteristics such as adequate distance between structures, safe and efficient egress and ingress, access to a paved road, and a landscaped greenbelt when adjacent to roadways or lower density land area.

High Density Residential land uses should be developed with significant and useable recreational and aesthetic green spaces or undeveloped open space using cluster development concept.

#### **Medium Density Residential**

Land uses in this category are intended to provide areas for single-family development of a more suburban nature and provide appropriate neighborhood facilities such as a church, school, day care, and recreational facility.



The recommended lot size should range from (1/2) to one (1) acre lots, depending on the layout of the subdivision and services. Developments should be linked together with an interconnecting trail system. These trails should also link developments to the neighborhood facilities.

Medium Density Residential land uses should be developed with significant and useable recreational and aesthetic green spaces or undeveloped open space using cluster development concept.

### **Low Density Residential**

These areas of the Township are intended for single-family development and are near open space areas or agricultural lands. These areas are not anticipated to have high growth and the majority of them are not expected to have public services. Development should range from one (1) to two (2) acre lots.

In many cases, this designation acts as a transitional boundary from a higher intensity classification to a lower intensity classification. This transitional function is important; therefore, parcels with this designation should not have a zoning designation higher than the recommended density.

Cluster developments should be encouraged in this land use. Clustering is a form of residential development that permits housing units to be grouped on sites or lots with dimensions, frontages, and setbacks reduced from conventional sizes, provided the density of the tract as a whole shall not be greater than the density allowed by the zoning

district under existing regulations. The remaining land area is devoted to common open space. A condition of the cluster design approval is that open space may not be further subdivided, and must be designed for the common use of the residents of the development. Maintenance agreements should be prepared to ensure that the common open space remains useable and aesthetically pleasing.

### **Steep Slope Residential**

Parcels with this designation have higher elevations and the houses in this area are usually built on the hillside to take advantage of the views. The views in this area are spectacular, which makes them desirable. Unfortunately this development can create problems, such as steep access road and driveways making it difficult for emergency vehicles and winter driving; increased runoff and drainage concerns caused by the topography; and interruption of the visual quality of the Township when houses are placed in view sheds.

These concerns should be addressed prior to approving a development. Access roads (both public and private) should have a maximum grade of 8%. Housing units should have an overall density of one (1) unit per one (1) acre; however, they should be clustered together to minimize the disruption to the hillside. Buildings should be sensitively located so they will not be obtrusive. This can be done by limiting the height of structures, regulating the location of driveways and access roads, minimizing the amount of tree loss, restricting the amount of site grading and impervious coverage, reducing the amount of infrastructure in these areas, and specifying muted colors for structures. Parcels in this designation were determined by using the Natural Features Map and site visits (see Existing Land Use Analysis, Chapter 2).

### **Lakefront Residential**

This area of the Township has a different character and the majority of the parcels have been developed. Homes are along Walloon Lake and adjacent to other lots in this vicinity. It is heavily forested and has a resort-like appearance. The intent of this Future Land Use Plan is to preserve this character by ensuring that future development is compatible with existing development.

The overall density should not exceed one unit per

acre. When possible, non-conforming lots should be combined thereby minimizing the impact of development on bodies of water (Lake Michigan, Walloon Lake, Crooked Lake, Round Lake).

### **Agricultural**

The intent of this designation is to maintain, retain, promote, and encourage existing farming operations by protecting them from encroachment of incompatible uses. The recommended future land uses should primarily be agricultural operations, rather than residential development. These are the places where Purchase of Development Rights (PDR), Transfer of Development Rights (TDR), or agricultural security zoning could be implemented. The TDR program should be used as a tool to transfer residential density from these parcels to areas in the Township where growth is desired. The PDR program could be used to purchase development rights from a farm that is at risk for development.

In 2004, the Petoskey Area Open Space Task Force commissioned an Open Space and Farmland Preservation report. A majority of the respondents believed it was important to take action now to make sure that some undeveloped land in the Petoskey Areas could never be developed. About 70% of the respondents said it was either very important or somewhat important to preserve undeveloped land. The study also identified the prime farmlands based on soil conditions.

Interestingly, during the 2005 visioning sessions, these lands were identified by residents as “Agricultural land that is to be protected for agricultural use, consisting of farmable acreages and farm dwellings” (see Chapter 8). In addition, preserving farmland was identified as one of the top priorities during the visioning exercises. Many of these farms have been in operation for over a hundred years.

Agricultural operations also play a vital role in Bear Creek Township’s rural character. People visiting northern Michigan enjoy seeing the wide open lands (much of it is farmland) and farm crops. Agricultural related businesses such as U-Pick operations, wineries, and farm markets attract tourists to the Township, thereby creating self-sustaining businesses. People initially visit the City of Petoskey

for its small town charm, but then drive through Bear Creek Township to view the openness, natural features, and farmlands.

The primary uses of land in this area should focus on agricultural activities including crops, horticulture, fruit growing, ranching, beekeeping, poultry and egg production, animal breeding, stabling, milk production and similar uses, and the associated storage relating to these uses and activities permitted by the Michigan Right to Farm Act.

Although single-family residential developments are not encouraged in this area, if they are permitted they should be clustered with no less than 50% of the land areas remaining as open space or for farming operations. These developments should be located at least 100 feet from active farming operations to minimize the obtrusive impacts.

It is not the intent of this Future Land Use Plan to prevent people from developing their land, but it is the intent to minimize the development’s impact. The overall density should be one (1) unit per two (2) acres; however individual lots that are devoted solely to non-agricultural residential use should not exceed one (1) acre. Therefore a person owning a 20-acre parcel would be allocated 10 residential units on 10 acres, leaving the remaining acreage undeveloped.

In instances where a person wishes to divide a portion of their land, but does not wish to go through the formal development process, such as clustering, they should be able to use the land division process. These land divisions for a single family lot should not exceed one (1) acre. This maximum lot size limitation will allow the landowner to profit from the sale of land without having to sell a significant portion of their land that could be used for farming. In addition, this limitation will prevent the “bowling alley lots” (lots where their length is significantly greater than their width, such as a 100 foot width by 500 foot length) and other lot configurations that result in fallow land.

### **Agri-Business Overlay Zone**

Overlay zones create additional criteria on top of the designation it encompasses. In this case, the Agri-Business Overlay Zone identifies areas in the township where agri-business is encouraged to begin and grow.



This overlay is not intended to restrict agri-business to certain areas, but identifying a place to start when considering agri-business growth. Agri-business starting in this overlay should be connected and reliant on the use of the land. Special Use Permits can be pursued for those interested in agri-business outside the overlay.

Agri-business is a rather broad category which can include, but is not limited to, wineries, educational classes, beekeeping, bed and breakfasts, corn mazes, petting zoos, and farm dinners.

Agri-business is increasing in popularity as farmers, and others, look at ways to diversify and increase revenue of their land. Supporting agri-business also assists with the local economy, helps educate the public on agricultural uses, and attracts visitors to the area.

### **Open Space/Greenway**

Open space was the most frequently cited item needing protection in the 2005 Community Survey and Visioning Session. Bear Creek Township has parcels that are devoted exclusively to open space because they are in public ownership. These publicly owned parcels should remain as open space used for outdoor recreation, trails, and for the ecological functions such as providing wildlife habitat, preserving wetland, and maintaining the Bear River Valley.

To assist in these functions, lands with wetland characteristics, parcels near the Bear River, and privately owned properties having significant terrain were designated as "Greenways." A greenway is a natural area of unbroken vegetation where recreation and conservation are the primary values. They link parks, forests, wildlife refuges and historical landmarks. Greenways can follow rivers, streams, wetlands, barrier beaches, hilltops and abandoned rail lines, and forests. Some greenways are publicly owned; others are private. Some are for recreation; others protect a scenic view or wildlife habitat. Greenways can include biking and hiking trails, and paths of grass and trees threading their way through cities and countryside like ribbons of green.

The greenways assist in the environmental functions of the land; they also provide a natural break between two distinct land uses. Private land with this

designation is not prohibited from development; however, the development should follow specific guidelines. These guidelines should include clustering houses away from the natural features area; designating open space areas that are connected to neighboring open space areas thereby creating an open space linkage system; and the overall density should not exceed one (1) unit per one (1) acre.

### **Commercial**

Commercial development is an important aspect of a community. Commercial land uses provide local services to residents as well as increase tax base and employment opportunities. The extent of a community's commercial base is linked to the size of its potential market area and the regional market itself. Neighborhood commercial uses service a relatively small, local market, and depend almost exclusively upon the population residing within the community. Community commercial uses, such as planned shopping centers, demand a much larger market that may extend beyond the municipality's borders.

The commercial classification is designed to accommodate retail and office uses that exist along the major travel corridors, and to encourage additional infill along these routes to take advantage of the existing passer-by traffic.

Uses permitted in the commercial designation should include office-type businesses related to professional occupations, medical/dental clinics, financial institutions, retail businesses, restaurants, gasoline and vehicle services, and repair operations. Individual retail operations and offices should be encouraged to be grouped to minimize the number of curb cuts and signs along major thoroughfares (especially US 31 and US131).

Loading operations should be restricted to the rear or side yards (if the adjoining property is commercial). Overhead doors should not front the public rights-of-way. Landscaping should be used to give the commercial area an identity and improve community aesthetics. Building and parking areas should be set back from the road. Parking areas should be shared and minimized to the greatest extent possible. The number, size, and location of billboards as well as other forms of off-site

advertising should be minimized. Utility lines should be buried.

Excessive curb cuts currently exist along portions of US 31 and US 131 and therefore, the use of shared access drives and frontage roads is encouraged to improve traffic patterns and to assist in the maneuverability of vehicles between sites by limiting the number of cars turning from the main roads. All commercial developments along US-31, M-119, and US-131 should use the Access Management Plan to promote the number of shared drives and minimize the number of curb cuts. All commercial developments on US-131 south of Lears road should use Anderson Road as the access point to minimize curb cuts, reduce the need for future traffic lights, and improve road safety.

During the 2005 Community Survey, the majority of residents expressed concern about the appearance of US 31 and US 131. These are the main roads in the Township, and their view does affect how a person feels about the area. The Township should consider architectural criteria for structures in these areas. Commercial developments along US-31 and US-131 should work to preserve as much of the natural character of the parcel as possible. Developments on parcels with rolling terrain should work to maintain the existing terrain features as viewed from the main roadways. Mature stands of trees should be retained and worked into the development as possible. All structures should be setback to the rear of the property with topography and heavily landscaped green space used to minimize the visual impact of the buildings on these entrance roadways.

## **Industrial**

The industrial location is designed to incorporate existing industrial operations and provide for expansions near existing industrial uses, such as the Fochtman Industrial Park. The plan envisions the expansion of light industrial uses for the purposes of minimizing nuisance impacts such as smoke, noise, increases in traffic volumes, dust, etc. Light industrial uses are defined as wholesale operations, warehouse facilities, and manufacturing processes that involve pre-fabricated materials and generally do not create a significant nuisance to adjoining properties.

The main elements of well-designed industrial uses include controlled site access, service areas located at the sides and rear of buildings, convenient access, visitor parking and on-site circulation, screening of outdoor storage, work areas, and equipment, emphasis on the main building entry and landscaping.

Buildings and parking areas should be set back from the road and heavily landscaped between the parking area and the road right-of-way.

## **Mixed-Use**

Mixed-use development is typically more urban in character than most land uses within Bear Creek Township at this time. However, some mixed-uses exist along the major highways or adjacent to existing commercial areas. In the future, developers may request mixed-use developments in these same areas. Accordingly, it is appropriate that the Master Plan should address this matter.

Mixed-use designated areas are higher intensity uses with a mixture of commercial and high density residential units, internally connected with roadways and walking paths that also connect with surrounding properties. Existing areas in the Township that fit this description differ from the rest of the community because they already have some mixed use characteristics or are in transition areas between high intensity classifications.

Mixed use developments offer communities a way to use land more efficiently, expand market opportunities, and redevelop underutilized properties. Mixed use developments could range from a single building with two or more uses to a large-scale development with an assortment of office, retail, service, residential, recreation, and even light industrial uses.

Demographic shifts in market demand support construction of condominiums and multifamily developments within a walking distance of retail and support services, as well as live-work units that provide living space above a ground-floor shop, art studio, or office.

Live-work units provide an alternative housing and business option that can be adapted to different uses over time. Studies have demonstrated the monetary value of incorporating multiple uses in a

single building or complex. A recent survey by the New Urban News reveals office workers frequently shop on the way to and from work.

Since mixed use developments support activity throughout the day and into the night, site design and building orientation is critical to establishing an environment that allows for a diversity of uses with minimal impact on other uses. Compatibility between residential units and commercial establishments can be achieved by including separate entrances to courtyards or gardens as well as grouping buildings in larger developments. A site design and/or building's design must address the various uses, needs, and different "peak" activity times.

Retail, restaurants, and personal service businesses should be located on the ground floor to help generate pedestrian traffic throughout the day and evening. Incorporation of useable open space into the design of these areas will encourage outdoor activity as well as act as a buffer between incompatible uses. These developments should have reduced parking requirements due to the shared uses and encouragement of alternative transportation (such as walking or biking).

### **Road Connections**

An important factor to consider in land use planning is transportation. This Future Land Use plan addresses road connections and trails planning to help reduce existing transportation problem areas. Although this is not a comprehensive study, these improvements will allow for connections that will improve transportation and enhance public safety. (Refer to Chapter 6, Transportation and Utilities Analysis).

When a development is proposed near one of the designated road connection locations, the Township should work with the developer and the Road Commission to build road connections.

### **Rural Residential Boundary**

As stated numerous times in the Bear Creek Township Master Plan, open space is an important criterion for residents and visitors. People want to live near open space, they want to see open space from their homes and vehicles, they want to recreate in open space, and they see open space as an

important part of their life. The 2005 Visioning Sessions and site visits to the Township have created a definite dividing line between rural or open space areas and the remainder of the Township.

Township residents as well as the existing land use patterns, have indicated that the land areas south of the Rural Residential Boundary line remain primarily rural or open space. Although this designation contains large amounts of public open space, there is also privately owned land. Preserving large amounts of open space is important to the environment as well as protection of the economic values of the property. Open space or the perception of open space should be in every development.

All developments should remain clustered from the roadway, at a minimum of fifty (50 feet) to preserve the view from the road. Siting houses in treed areas will help preserve the appearance of a rural setting. In some instances, varied tree planting between the development and road right-of-way should occur. These developments should also be designed so that they have open space that connects to a greenway area or to neighboring open space areas to continue an open space linkage. The overall density should be one (1) unit per two (2) acres; however, residences should not require a minimum lot size if the development is clustered with 50% of the site remaining as open space.

The primary use should be single-family, however, home-based businesses that will have minimal impact on the surrounding properties and are located on the same property should also be allowed. These businesses provide jobs for on-site residents and can reduce transportation needs. Placing these businesses away from the roadside and within treed areas will help preserve the existing views and feeling of a rural setting. Avoiding businesses such as retail operations that depend on vehicle traffic will help preserve the rural residential feeling of this district.

### **Green Strip**

During the 2005 Community Survey, residents expressed concern about the view of US 31 and US 131. This concern can be applied to other high traffic roads. The Green Strip acts as a buffering area between the road right-of-way and development.

This Green Strip should vary in size from thirty-five (35) feet to fifty (50) feet. Construction of berms and planting dense tree buffers will help screen development from sight along US 31 and US 131. The only permitted improvements should be sidewalks and a maximum of one (1) entrance drive to a parcel. These entrance drives should not be on main roads, but instead on secondary roads. Shared access should be encouraged, if not required. The Green Strip should be thought of as a linear park along the roadways. Parking areas and structures should not be built in the Green Strip.

### **Township/Regional Trails and North Country Trails**

These trails systems were developed as part of the 2004 recreation planning process (see the 2004 Bear Creek Township Recreation Plan). As described in that plan, increased physical activity is an important component to the quality of life. During the 2005 Community Survey and 2005 Visioning Sessions, trails were identified as important. These trails serve as linkage between land uses and developments as well as create an alternative transportation linkage system.

The Township should work to acquire these areas for trails. In some instances, during a road improvement project, these trails could be built as part of the road improvement. Trails should be a minimum of eight feet wide and physically separated from the road. In addition, when land adjacent to these trail areas is being proposed; the Township should work with the developer to have the trail built on their property.

### **Neighborhood Commercial**

To help reduce traffic congestion, small convenience shopping centers containing one to three businesses that serve the surrounding neighbors should be allowed. These centers should have minimal parking and not require storage or servicing of vehicles on the site (such as a gas station or mechanic shop). These uses should be designed to serve the rural neighborhood areas and be built at crossroad locations. They should also be pedestrian friendly. These businesses should not be designed to create more traffic at these areas or become destination shopping areas.

### **Infrastructure Capital Improvements**

The Township should adopt a capital improvements program to help maintain its infrastructure systems. This program should be annually reviewed and updated.

## **Implementation**

An often overlooked, but important section of a master plan is the Implementation Section. Typically, people feel a master plan solely exists as a basis for the zoning ordinance. Although zoning is a very powerful implementation mechanism for a master plan, there are other means to implement the goals of a master plan.

This section provides a list of tasks that should be accomplished to ensure the goals stated in the guiding principles and the recommendations described in the Future Land Use plan are accomplished. These tasks are listed below in the form of a timeline. The tasks are not listed by priority, it is simply a listing.

#### **Ongoing**

- Review the Emmet County Zoning Ordinance and compare it with the Master Plan, noting areas of inconsistency . Focus on densities, lot sizes, and development design recommendations. Use this information to create a list of zoning changes to consider.
- Work with Emmet County during the zoning ordinance update, incorporating the density and design recommendations from this plan.

#### **Immediate Priorities (2020)**

- Distribute copies of the adopted Master Plan to the Emmet County Planning Department, City of Petoskey, and surrounding Townships.
- Distribute copies of the adopted Master Plan to the Emmet County Road Commission, working with them to develop a time line for the recommended road connections.
- Collaborate with Emmet County to implement access management plan for US 131, US 31, and M-119.

#### **One To Four Years**

- Work with Emmet County during their master plan update. Ensure the County Master Plan reflects the Guiding Principles and Future Land

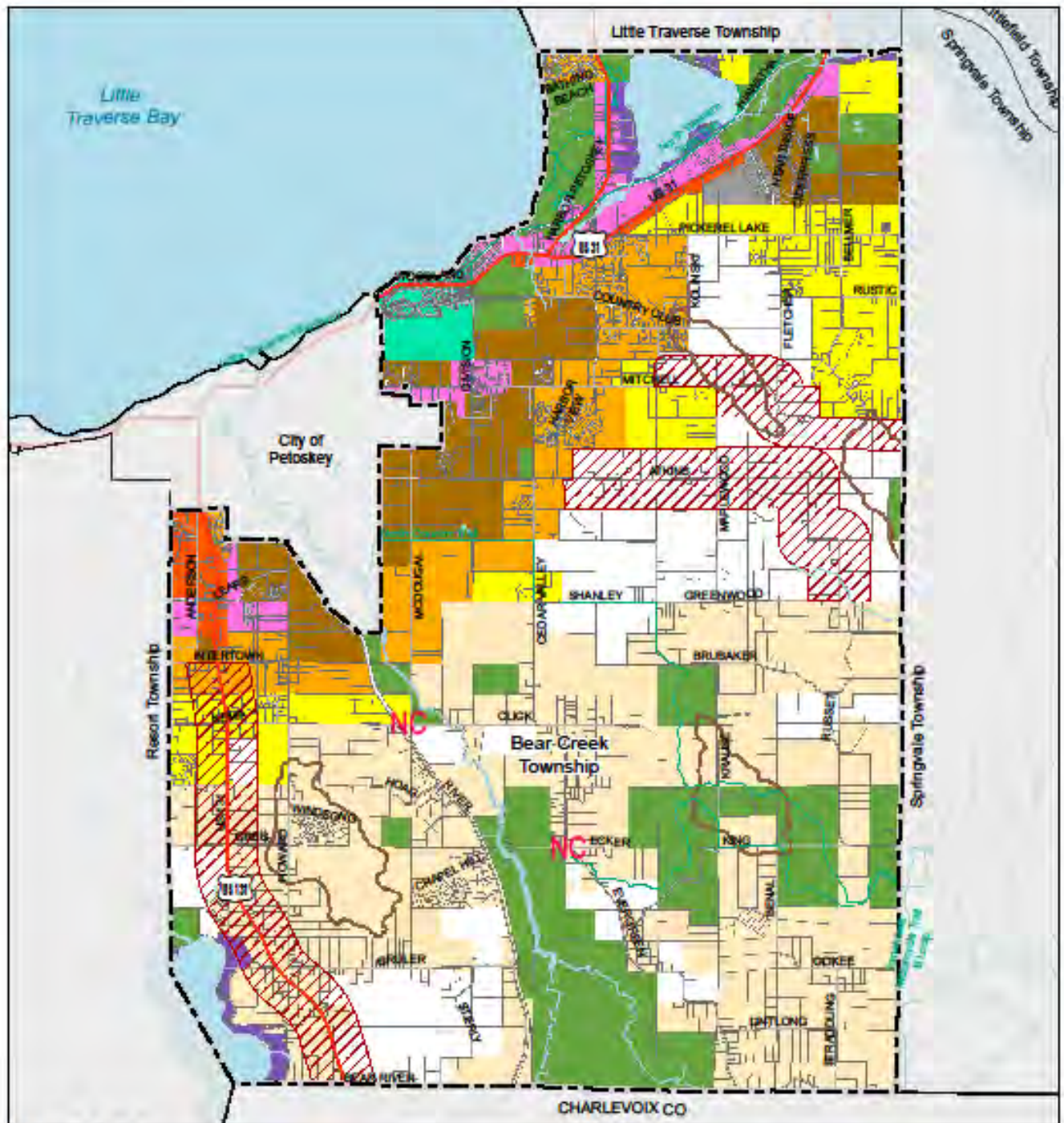


Use recommendations stated in the Bear Creek Township Master Plan.

- Commission a study about applicability of Purchase of Development rights in Bear Creek Township. This study could focus on Farmland Preservation and it could include components for preserving significant open space and/or viewing areas.
- Develop a graphic design guidebook to show developers and landowners how development should be built (i.e. with parks and trails).
- Work with farm groups and the Michigan State Extension office to promote agricultural related businesses.
- Work with businesses to share access drives and promote traffic circulation outside of the highways.
- Develop an Agritourism Overlay to promote future agritourism development in these identified areas. Explore the potential for Form Based Zoning in this overlay.
- Conduct a feasibility study on water and sewer expansion throughout the Township, especially in High Density Residential areas.
- Develop a plan with the City of Petoskey, Emmet County Road Commission, MDOT, and North Central Michigan College to connect Lears Road business's with residential areas to the north and east.
- Review the impact of marijuana as it relates to land use, utilizing current laws and the desires of the community.
- Work with surrounding communities to develop a plan for future industrial business zones outside of Bear Creek Township.

#### Five Years

- Review this task list to identify projects not accomplished.
- Review this master plan and update where needed.
- Compare development densities with improvements, such as road connections and sewer availability



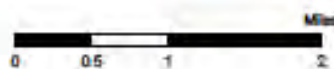
## Map 12-1 Future Land Use

*BEAR CREEK TOWNSHIP,  
EMMET COUNTY*

Date | December 2019

Source | Emmet County, Michigan GIS Data

- |                             |                            |                         |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Township Boundary           | High Density Residential   | Industrial              |
| Emmet County                | Medium Density Residential | Mixed Use               |
| Regional Trail              | Low Density Residential    | Rural Residential       |
| Local Street                | Lakefront Residential      | Neighborhood Commercial |
| State Highway               | Agricultural               | Steep Slope Residential |
| Future Land Use             | Open Space                 | Agri-Business Overlay   |
| Bay View / Historic Village | Commercial                 |                         |



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