

# LIVINGSTON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

2024



📞 989-732-1499  
📍 3218 Old 27 North, Gaylord MI 49735  
🌐 [www.livingstontownship.com](http://www.livingstontownship.com)

EAST OF EXPECTED  
*Northeast Michigan*  
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

# Livingston Township Master Plan

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	
	Rationale of a Master Plan	1-1
	Legal Jurisdiction	1-1
	Local and Regional Setting	1-1
	Historical Efforts of Planning Commission	1-4
	Description of Planning Approach	1-4
	Regional Description and Goals	1-4
<b>2</b>	<b>SOCIO-ECONOMIC DATA</b>	
	Population	2-1
	Race & Hispanic Origin	2-6
	Disability Status	2-6
	Educational Attainment	2-7
	Seasonal Population and Housing	2-9
	Income	2-13
	Labor Force	2-14
	Land Values	2-18
	Township Finances	2-19
<b>3</b>	<b>NATURAL FEATURES</b>	
	Climate	3-1
	Topography	3-1
	Soils	3-2
	Vegetation	3-5
	Wildlife	3-5
	Water Resources	3-7
	Oil and Gas Development	3-7
<b>4</b>	<b>COMMUNITY SERVICES &amp; FACILITIES</b>	
	Township Government	4-1
	Transportation	4-1
	Communications	4-4
	Telephone	4-4
	Internet Access	4-4
	Radio, Television, and Newspapers	4-4
	Energy Supplies	4-5
	Water	4-5

Sewer and Septic Systems	4-6
Solid Waste Disposal	4-6
Public Safety	4-7
Law Enforcement	4-7
Fire Protection	4-7
Ambulance Service	4-8
Health Services	4-8
Community Facilities and Organizations	4-9
Educational Facilities and Programs	4-9

## 5

### EXISTING LAND USE

Existing Land Use Statistics	5-1
Residential Uses	5-1
Agricultural Uses	5-2
Commercial Uses	5-2
Industrial and Utility Uses	5-2
Township/City/County Road Comm. Land	5-2
State of Michigan Land	5-2
Commercial Forest	5-2
Water	5-2
Transportation Corridors	5-2

## 6

### GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Introduction	6-1
Goals	6-1
Local Government	6-2
Transportation	6-2
Public Facilities	6-3
Health and Welfare	6-3
Utilities	6-4
Residential	6-4
Commercial	6-5
Industrial	6-5
Recreation Open Space	6-6
Agriculture	6-7
Environmental Preservation / Forestlands	6-7

## 7

### FUTURE LAND USE

Introduction	7-1
Environmental Conservation	7-1
Forestlands	7-1
Agricultural	7-2
Residential	7-2
Commercial	7-3
Resort	7-3
Institutional / Governmental	7-4
Industrial / Extractive	7-4

# 8

## PLAN IMPLEMENTATION & ADOPTION

Plan Coordination and Review	8-1
Public Hearing	8-1
Plan Adoption	8-1
Plan Implementation	8-1
Plan Adoption Documentation	8-2

### **Livingston Township Board**

Norm Brecheisen, Supervisor  
Elizabeth Mench, Clerk  
Cheryl Prusakiewicz, Treasurer  
Richard Carlson, Trustee  
Steven Dipzinski, Trustee

### **Livingston Township Planning Commission**

Guy Lovelace  
Michael Mang  
Tara Gerstenberger  
Diana Hlywa

*2024 Master Plan assistance provided by:*

### **Northeast Michigan Council of Governments (NEMCOG)**

80 Livingston Blvd Suite U-108  
PO Box 457  
Gaylord, MI 49735  
[www.nemcog.org](http://www.nemcog.org)



CHAPTER

1

---

# INTRODUCTION

---



Livingston Township Master Plan

## Rationale of a Master Plan

In order to function in an orderly fashion and plot out the future, individuals, organizations, and businesses require some form or method of operation. Processes and operations of these entities generally require planning prior to actions being taken. The same applies to a community of people. Once all of the facets of the community and its residents are set down in writing, all positive and negative elements are analyzed. Ideas and concepts in the form of goals and objectives are formulated. The community then has a guide to help it function in an orderly and consistent manner progressing toward the type of overall environment the people desire. This guide to development is called a Master Plan.

## Legal Jurisdiction

Livingston Township has been given the authority, by the State of Michigan through the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA33 of 2008, as amended), to "make and adopt a basic plan as a guide for the development of unincorporated portions of the Township". One of the primary purposes of this Act

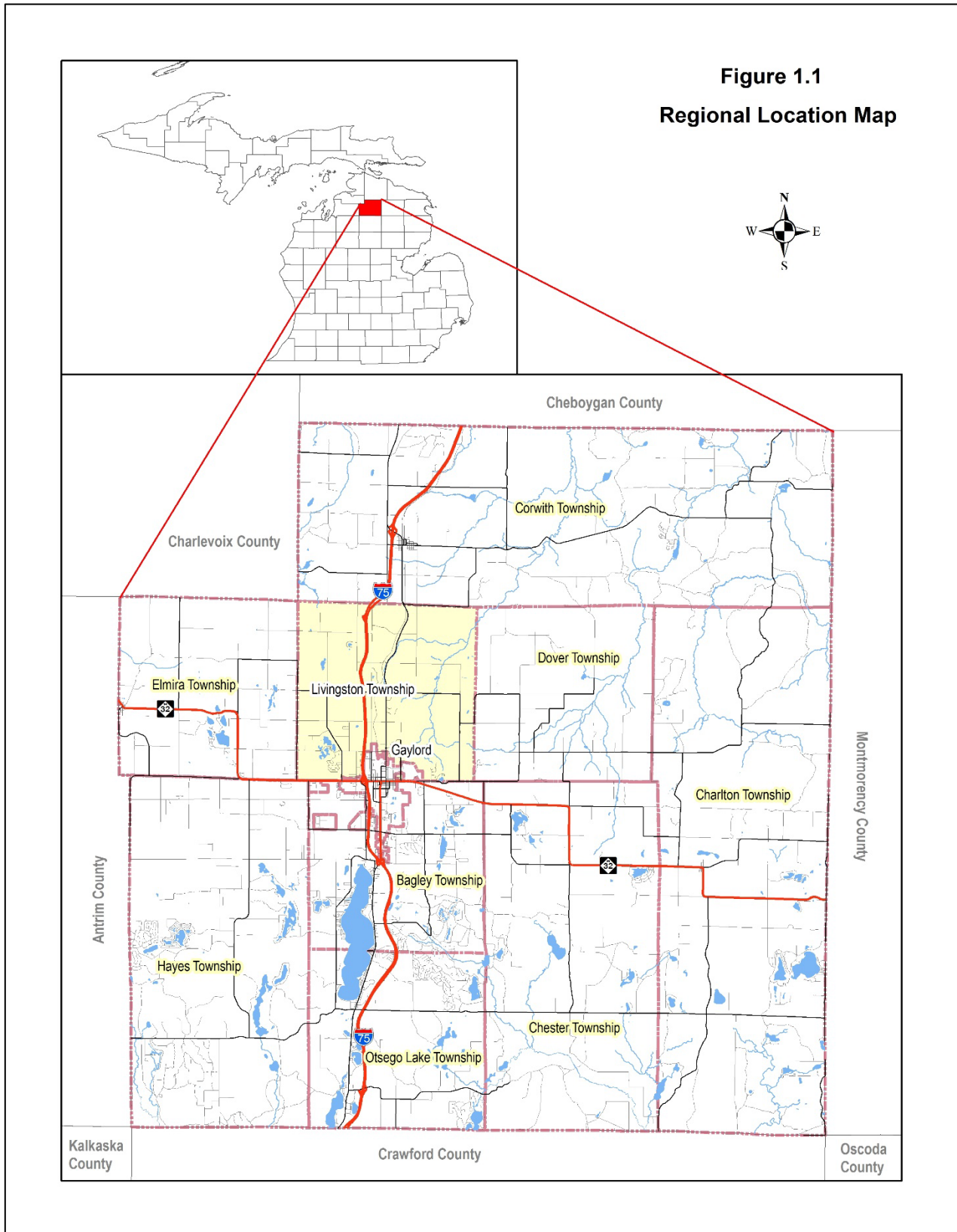
The overall Master Plan is not meant to be too detailed or to prescribe specific actions at specific times, because it is a comprehensive approach over a twenty-year planning period. That is, this plan concerns itself with the general aspect of the various personalities and activities that make up Livingston Township. However, specificity, for the short term, is essential to allow the Township to act in the best interests of its citizens. Consequently, this plan will have specific recommended actions for the short term (5 years) and much more general recommendations and directions for the long-term (20 years) planning process.

## Local and Regional Setting

The rural community of Livingston Township is located in Otsego County, which is situated in the northeast region of Michigan's Lower Peninsula. The regional location map (Figure 1.1) on the following page shows the location of the community. The Township is approximately 35 square miles in size, consisting of the majority of the government survey township, T.31N. – R.3W. Portions of Sections 33

is to secure the general, health, safety, and welfare of the Township by distributing wisely the Township's resources physical, economic, and social "in accordance with their character and adaptability".

and 34 are incorporated into the City of Gaylord. Both I-75 and Old 27, as well as the North Central State Trail, traverse the center of the Township in a north-south direction. State highway M 32 travels east-west along the Township's southern boundary. **Figure 1.2** shows the highway system of the community.



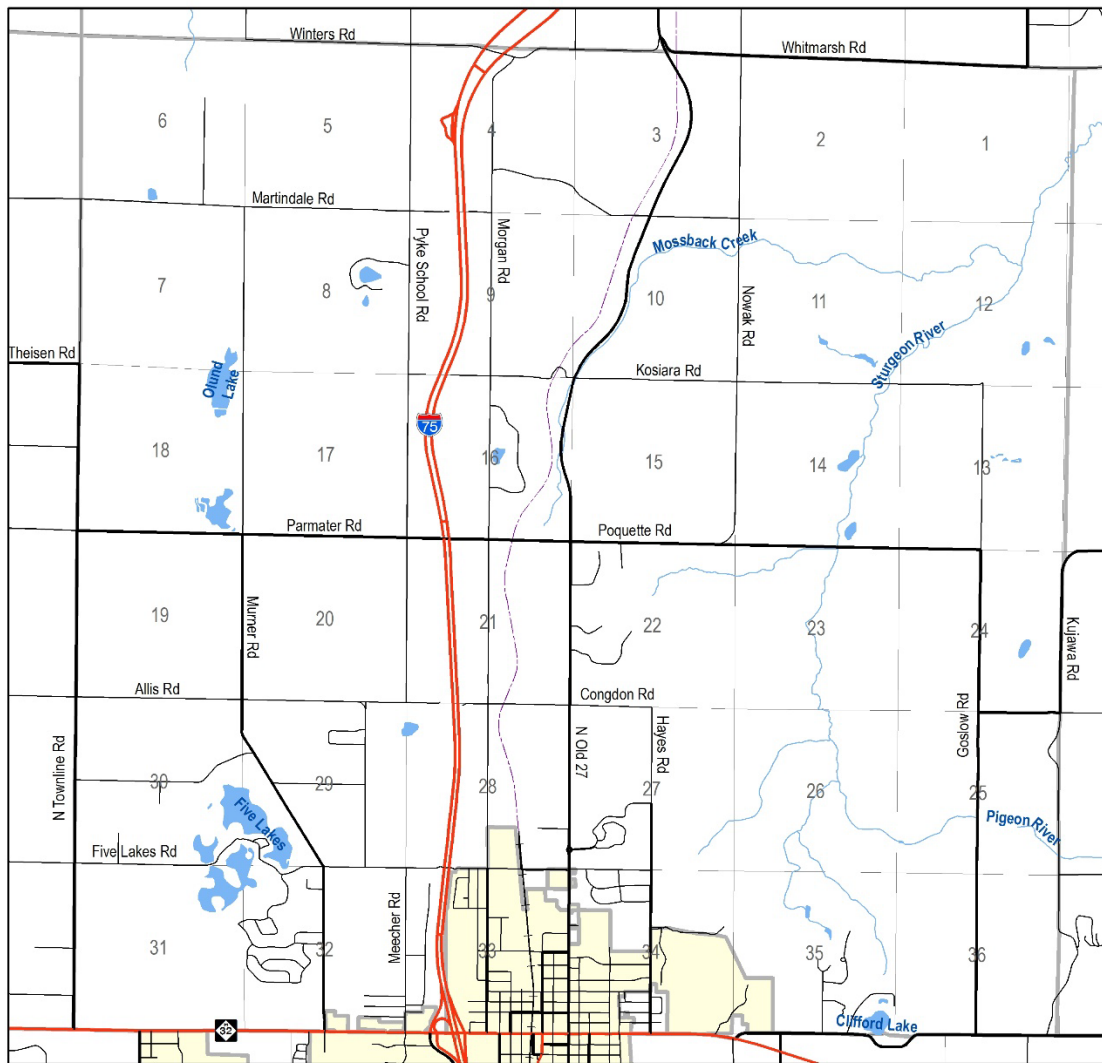
**Figure 1.2**

**Livingston Township  
Base Map**



**Map Legend**

- State Highway
- Primary Road
- Local Road
- North Central State Trail
- + + Detroit & Mackinaw Railway
- ~ Rivers
- Lakes
- Sections
- Township Boundary
- City of Gaylord





## Historical Efforts of the Livingston Township Planning Commission

No master planning effort is possible without the input of the residents of the community. The Livingston Township Planning Commission is appointed by the Livingston Township Board. In 1991, the Livingston Township Planning Commission adopted its first Master Plan. The Master Plan was most recently updated in 2013 and again in 2018.

In 1996, the Township conducted a Community Growth Management Study and Citizen Forum. The

Study and Forum provided direction to the Township that was consistent with past surveys. The residents provided the same basic direction that had been expressed in previous surveys. The residents of Livingston Township preferred rural living, wished to continue that lifestyle in Livingston Township, and were not in favor of expanding commercial or industrial growth aside from the specified zoning districts. Online community input surveys conducted with each plan update have reiterated this point.

## Description of Planning Approach

The drafting of a Master plan requires a logical method of collecting data, analyzing this data, and forming a set of guidelines for future development. Equally important is the input of the residents of the Township, both historical and current. As with sound planning approaches, this plan is built upon work completed previously, but the goals and objectives of the Township are modified based on the current attitudes and wishes of its residents.

NEMCOG assisted the Township Planning Commission to prepare this plan and to conduct a web-based citizen survey completed in the summer

of 2023. The survey asked questions pertaining to satisfaction with community services offered, the quality of life in the county, and general demographics of the household of the respondents. 115 people responded to the survey. The commission also relied on past planning efforts and the Community Growth Management Study and Citizen Forum of 1996. Imaginative as well as realistic thinking is necessary to encourage the best future for Livingston Township consistent with the wishes expressed in the Livingston Township Citizen Survey.

## Regional Description and Goals

Our Federal system has been established so that a division of responsibilities and privileges exists among the various levels of government. Certain functions, through enabling legislation, are allocated to cities, villages, townships, and counties, as well as states. Those responsibilities, which are best suited for local units of government and which the state does not have the capacity or will to administer, are given to counties, townships, and cities, with each varying in extent of its authority. Even though each type of local government fulfills a different need, there must be a process of communication and coordination within local governments. As part of an eight-

county area in Northeastern Michigan, Livingston Township should be analyzed in relation to this region, as well as the county in which it belongs.

The counties in Northeastern Michigan contain 3,256,649 acres (5,088 square miles), of which 3,078,000 acres (96 percent of the total area) are land surface and 122,000 acres are inland waters (lakes and streams). From the higher elevations of the region's western boundary, the terrain gently slopes toward Lake Huron, giving way to less undulating topography on the eastern boundaries. Water resources include numerous lakes and streams within heavily forested areas. Important

watersheds such as the AuSable, Pigeon, Sturgeon, Black, Ocqueoc, Thunder Bay, and Cheboygan

This region has been and still is primarily dependent upon its land and water resources. From the advent of the lumbering industry, through the utilization of cleared land for agricultural production, to its popularity as a recreation/second home area, the natural amenities of the physical environment have been the primary mainstay of the population. The protection of these resources and amenities is important to both the economic and social future of the Township. Overdevelopment and excessive growth can erode these amenities and destroy both the economic future and attractiveness of the Township.

occur in the region.

The Livingston Township Master Plan, therefore, addresses the special concerns of the Township while broadly conforming to regional goals and policies. The residents of the Township support the continued wise use of our natural resources to enhance growth in the agricultural, forestry, and recreation industries. The citizens of the Township also support the improvement of transportation systems within the Township. The residents are cautious about the Township's involvement in a Downtown Development Authority (DDA) or water and sewer authority.

This 2023 update of the Livingston Township Master Plan is being developed with the following goals:

- A. *To reflect the wishes of the residents of the Township.*
- B. *To provide the Township clear direction for development in the Township.*
- C. *To provide mechanisms to preserve farmland and forests in the Township.*
- D. *To identify infrastructure needs consistent with the goals of the Township plan.*

CHAPTER

2

---

SOCIO-ECONOMIC  
**DATA**

---

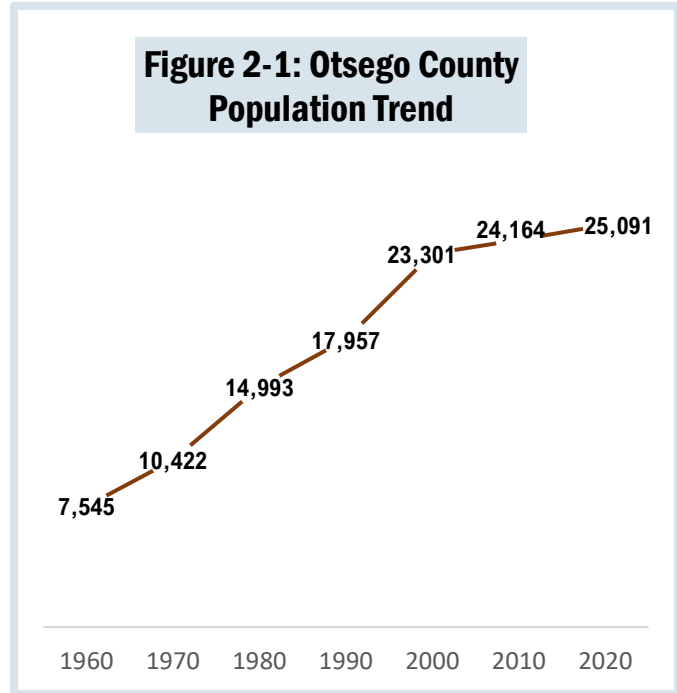


Livingston Township Master Plan

### Population

#### County Population

The official population count of Otsego County according to the 2020 Census was 25,091 persons. Over the past 20 years, many Northern Michigan counties have seen a slight to moderate decline in growth rates. Between 2000 and 2020, eight of the eleven counties around Otsego had a decline in population (see Table 2-1). Otsego itself had a moderate increase of 3.7 percent and 3.8 percent in each decade. Antrim, Emmet, and Kalkaska Counties, which also represent all three nearby counties that are outside the Northeast region, are the only other counties to see growth rates from 2000 to 2020. **Figure 2-1** shows Otsego County's population increase since 1960.



**Table 2-1: Population Change, Otsego County, Surrounding Counties & State**

County	2000	2010	% Change 2000 - 2010	2020	% Change 2010 - 2020
Alcona Co	11,719	10,942	-7.1%	10,167	-7.1%
Alpena Co	31,314	29,598	-5.5%	28,907	-2.4%
Antrim Co	23,110	23,580	2.0%	23,431	-0.6%
Charlevoix Co	26,090	25,949	-0.5%	26,054	0.4%
Cheboygan Co	26,448	26,152	-1.1%	25,579	-3.4%
Crawford Co	14,273	14,074	-1.4%	12,988	-7.7%
Emmet Co	31,437	32,694	4.0%	34,112	4.3%
Kalkaska Co	16,571	17,153	3.5%	17,939	4.6%
Montmorency Co	10,315	9,765	-5.3%	9,153	-2.2%
Oscoda Co	9,418	8,640	-8.3%	8,219	-4.9%
<b>Otsego Co</b>	<b>23,301</b>	<b>24,164</b>	<b>3.7%</b>	<b>25,091</b>	<b>3.8%</b>
Presque Isle Co	14,411	13,376	-7.2%	12,982	-3.0%
Michigan	9,938,444	9,883,640	-0.6%	10,077,331	1.9%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000-2020 (Decennial)

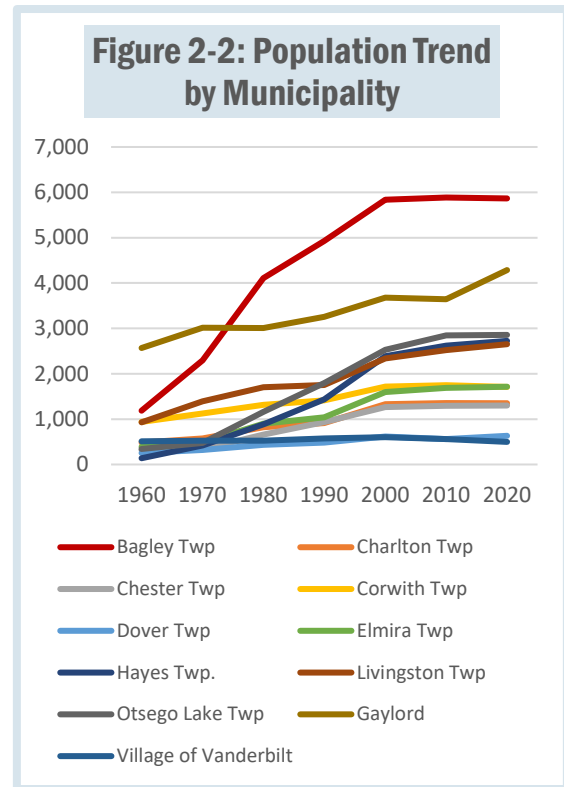
**Population by Municipality**

Although the amount of change in the populations of the 11 different municipalities in the County fluctuated greatly (see **Table 2-2**), a general increasing pattern can be seen. There are seven municipalities (aside from the County itself) that saw a slight to moderate growth rate, those being Chester Township with a 0.62 percent increase, Dover Township with a 12.66 percent increase, Elmira Township with a 1.60 percent increase, Hayes Township with a 4.05 percent increase, Livingston Township with a 5.03 percent increase, Otsego Lake Township with a 0.35 percent increase, and the City of Gaylord with a 17.59 percent increase. The three remaining townships

and the Village of Vanderbilt have all seen a decline in population since 2010, though Vanderbilt’s 11.39 percent is the only sizable decrease. During and after the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a shift to telework. This shift allows for more flexibility in where one lives. Homes that were previously used as vacation homes are being converted to year-round homes as some homeowners choose to move up north. The current real estate market is a seller’s market. All of these factors may affect Otsego County’s population and development into the future. **Figure 2-2** shows the population change since 1960 per municipality.

<b>Table 2-2: Otsego County Municipalities Population, 2010 &amp; 2020</b>				
	<b>2010</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>#</b>
Bagley Twp	5,886	5,867	-0.32%	-19
Charlton Twp	1,354	1,350	-0.30%	-4
Chester Twp	1,292	1,300	0.62%	8
Corwith Twp	1,748	1,708	-2.29%	-40
Dover Twp	561	632	12.66%	71
Elmira Twp	1,687	1,714	1.60%	27
Hayes Twp.	2,619	2,725	4.05%	106
Livingston Twp	2,525	2,652	5.03%	127
Otsego Lake Twp	2,847	2,857	0.35%	10
Gaylord	3,645	4,286	17.59%	641
Vanderbilt	562	498	-11.39%	-64

*Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010-2020 (Decennial)*



**Population by Age**

When examining the 2021 age distribution of Otsego County's communities, one finds that all except Vanderbilt have less than 10 percent of their population between the ages of 20-24 (see **Table 2-3**). All but three of the municipalities indicate half or more of their residents were 45 years or older, including approximately 60 percent

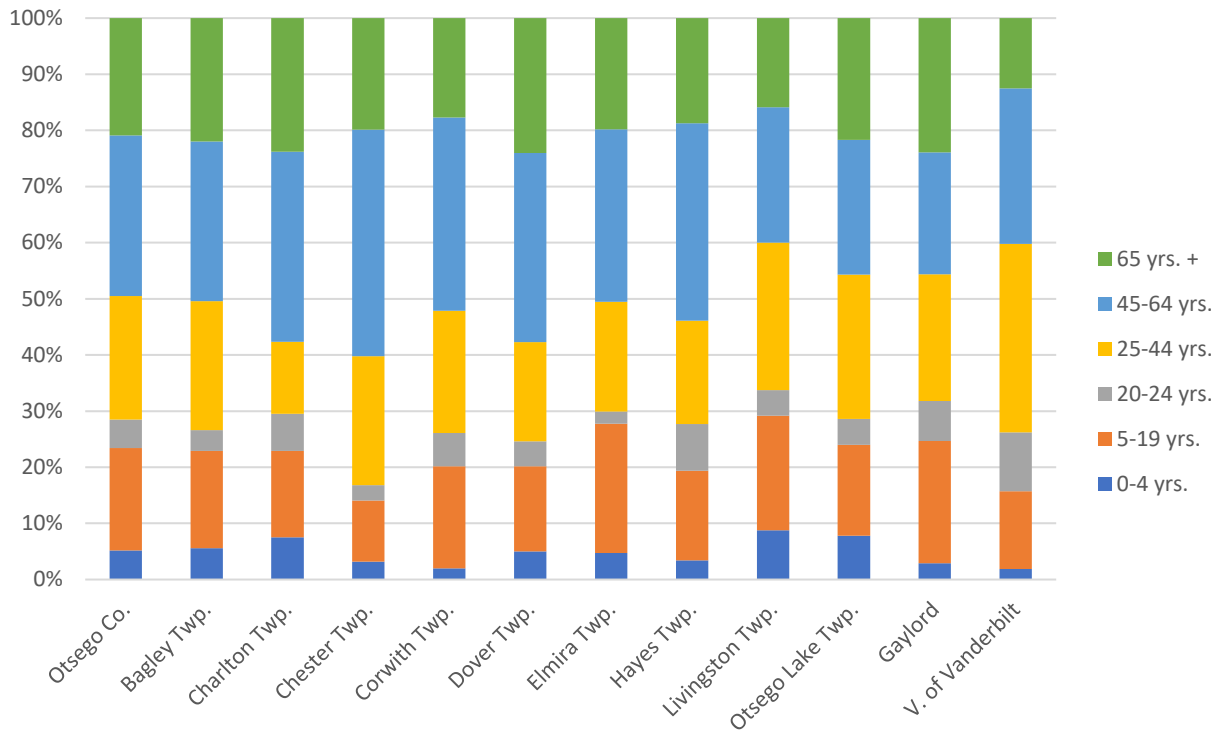
of residents in Charlton Township, Dover Township, and Chester Township. However, none of the municipalities show that even one-quarter of their population is over 65 years old, reflecting the relatively younger population of the County compared to other counties in the region. See **Figure 2-3**.

**Table 2-3: Population by Age by Municipality, 2021**

	0-4 yrs	5-19 yrs	20-24 yrs	25-44 yrs	45-64 yrs	65 yrs +
Otsego Co.	5.2%	18.2%	5.1%	22.0%	28.6%	20.9%
Bagley Twp.	5.6%	17.3%	3.7%	23.0%	28.4%	22.0%
Charlton Twp.	7.5%	15.4%	6.6%	12.8%	33.8%	23.8%
Chester Twp.	3.2%	10.9%	2.7%	23.0%	40.4%	19.9%
Corwith Twp.	2.0%	18.1%	5.9%	21.7%	34.3%	17.6%
Dover Twp.	5.0%	15.2%	4.4%	17.7%	33.7%	24.0%
Elmira Twp.	4.7%	23.0%	2.2%	19.5%	30.7%	19.8%
Hayes Twp.	3.4%	16.0%	8.3%	18.4%	35.2%	18.7%
Livingston Twp.	8.8%	20.4%	4.6%	26.3%	24.1%	15.9%
Otsego Lake Twp.	7.8%	16.2%	4.6%	25.7%	24.0%	21.7%
Gaylord	2.9%	21.8%	7.1%	22.6%	21.7%	23.9%
Village of Vanderbilt	1.9%	13.8%	10.5%	33.6%	27.7%	12.5%

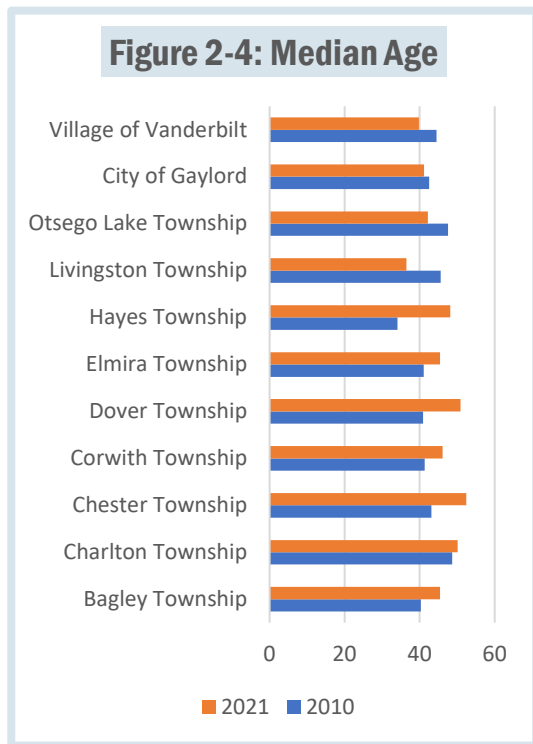
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2021

**Figure 2-3: Age Breakdown by Municipality**



**Median Age**

The median age of residents within the County increased from 42.1 years of age in 2010 to 44.6 in 2021 (see **Table 2-4**). This trend is similar to that found in all of the surrounding counties, though still relatively smaller and younger. The State and National level has seen a significantly smaller median age throughout the years. The only municipalities showing a decrease in median age are Livingston Township, Otsego Lake Township, City of Gaylord, and Village of Vanderbilt. **Table 2-5** shows a fairly even split between males and females in the County.



**Table 2-4: Median Age 2010-2021**

Governmental Unit	2010	2021
Alcona County	54.3	58.7
Alpena County	44.7	48.1
Antrim County	46.3	51.6
Charlevoix County	44.2	49.2
Cheboygan County	45.7	51.7
Crawford County	46.1	51.0
Emmet County	41.9	45.6
Kalkaska County	42.5	43.4
Montmorency County	51.7	56.4
Oscoda County	48.9	52.4
Otsego County	42.1	44.6
Presque Isle County	50.5	55.8
State of Michigan	38.1	39.8
United States	37.2	38.8

**Municipalities within Otsego County**

Bagley Township	40.3	45.4
Charlton Township	48.7	50.1
Chester Township	43.1	52.4
Corwith Township	41.3	46.1
Dover Township	40.9	50.9
Elmira Township	41.1	45.4
Hayes Township	34.1	48.2
Livingston Township	45.6	36.5
Otsego Lake Township	47.6	42.2
City of Gaylord	42.5	41.2
Village of Vanderbilt	44.5	39.8

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2000, 2010, 2021

**Table 2-5: Population by Gender, Otsego County**

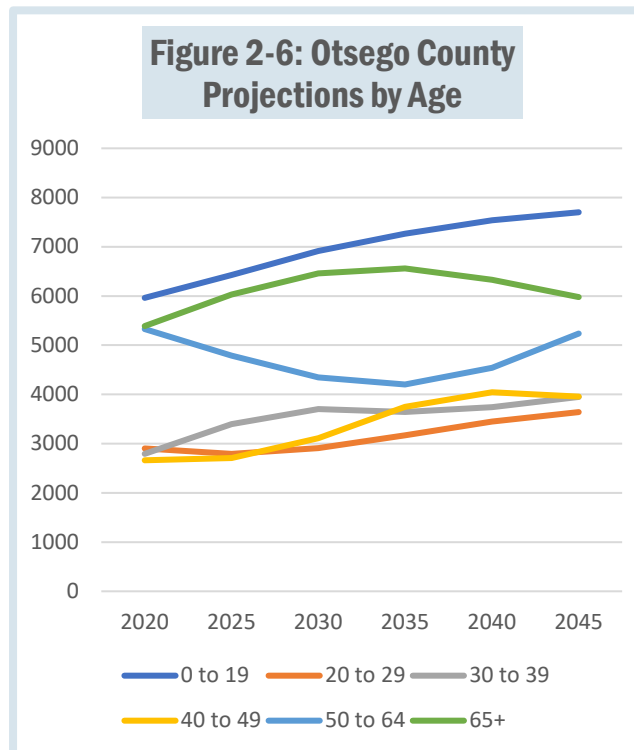
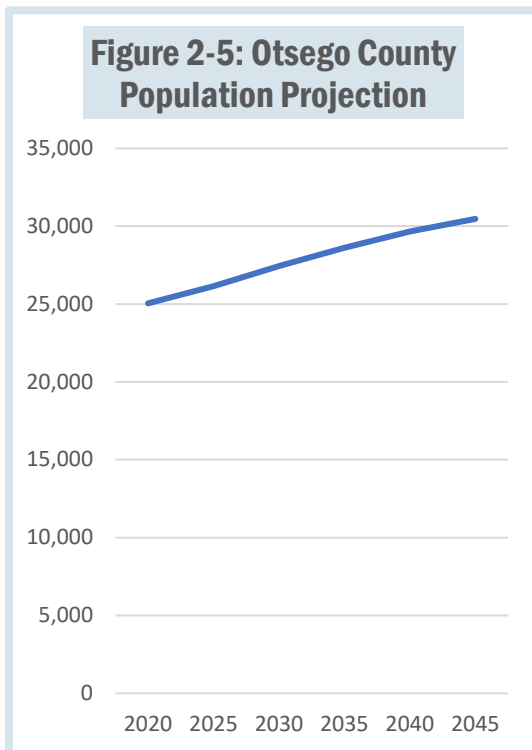
Year	Males		Females	
	#	%	#	%
2010	12,038	49.2%	12,407	50.8%
2019	12,153	49.6%	12,337	50.4%
2021	12,563	50.2%	12,453	49.8%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010, 2019, 2021

### Population Projections

County-level projections are sourced from the Michigan Department of Technology, Management and Budget shown below in **Figure 2-5**. The projections take into consideration the birth and death rate trends along with net migration trends to produce a projected population for the year 2045.

The State is projecting an increase in population in Otsego County overall, which is a trend that is not seen for the rest of Northeast Michigan. **Figure 2-6** shows the projected trends in population by age in the County. Population projects are not available at the municipal level.



Source: Michigan Department of Technology, Management, and Budget, Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives (LMIS)



## Race and Hispanic Origin

The population of Otsego County is relatively homogenous, with minorities composing a small percentage of the population. In 2020 Otsego County's population was made up of 92.9 percent white persons (see **Table 2-6**). The minority population has remained small but still more than doubled over the last 10 years. From 2010 to 2020, the minority population increased from 3.1 to 7.1 percent. Excluding the two or more races

category, Hispanic was the largest minority group with 1.8 percent of the population, followed by American Indian at 0.7 percent, some other race at 0.5 percent, and Black and Asian at 0.4 percent, each. There are only two Pacific Islanders within the County. Most minority classifications increased in population over the last two decades.

**Table 2-6: Population by Race and Hispanic Origin, Otsego County, 2010 & 2020**

	2010		2020	
	#	%	#	%
Total Population	24,164	100.0%	25,091	100.0%
White	23,413	96.9%	23,320	92.9%
Black	80	0.3%	101	0.4%
American Indian	160	0.7%	169	0.7%
Asian	93	0.4%	91	0.4%
Pacific Islander	11	0.0%	2	0.0%
Two or More Races*	363	1.5%	1,279	5.1%
Other Race	44	0.2%	129	0.5%
Hispanic Origin	299	1.2%	446	1.8%
Total Racial Minority**	751	3.1%	1,771	7.1%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010-2020 (Decennial)

## Disability Status

Data shown in **Table 2-7** indicates how many disabled or handicapped people reside in Otsego County. Not surprisingly the data shows that the number of persons with disabilities increases with age. It should be noted that the disability data consists of self-reported disabilities. In Otsego County, 7.7 percent of those between 0 and 17 years of age have a disability, 14.1 percent between 18 and 64 years of age, and 35.0 percent of people

aged 65 years and over are disabled. A significant number of persons with disabilities are active in the workforce as 7.3 percent of employed persons 18-64 years of age are disabled. Disability indicators for the County's municipalities show that the Village of Vanderbilt has the highest percentage of disabled children of any local unit within the County. 24.6 percent of those aged 0-17 in Vanderbilt have a disability. Vanderbilt also has the

most disabled adults and the most disabled seniors with 24.0 percent of those 18-64 having a disability and 77.6 percent of those 65 and over having a disability, respectively. However, the population of the Village is very small and actually possesses the second-lowest raw number of

disabled persons after Dover Township. In every municipality except Dover and Elmira Townships, 10 percent or more of the persons 18-64 are disabled. In all but Bagley and Dover Townships, over one-quarter of the persons 65 and over are disabled.

**Table 2-7: Disability Status, 2021**

	Total persons 0-17 yrs.	# of persons 0-17 with disability	% of persons 0-17 with disability	Total persons 18-64 yrs.	# of persons 18-64 with disability	% of persons 18-64 with disability	% of employed and 18-64 w/ disability	Total persons 65 yrs. & over	# of persons 65 & over with disability	% persons 65 & over with disability
Bagley Twp	1,223	92	7.5%	3,372	500	14.8%	5.0%	1,296	313	24.2%
Charlton Twp	300	9	3.0%	821	95	11.6%	10.2%	351	100	28.5%
Chester Twp	151	3	2.0%	754	136	18.0%	9.1%	225	74	32.9%
Corwith Twp	327	37	11.3%	1,039	173	16.7%	10.7%	294	106	36.1%
Dover Twp	112	0	0.0%	357	30	8.4%	5.7%	148	29	19.6%
Elmira Twp	453	29	6.4%	999	87	8.7%	10.8%	361	115	31.9%
Hayes Twp	976	180	18.4%	2,165	412	19.0%	11.0%	909	481	52.9%
Livingston Twp	442	27	6.1%	1,763	261	14.8%	5.1%	501	155	30.9%
Otsego Lake Twp	654	16	2.4%	1,566	161	10.3%	7.4%	420	183	43.6%
Gaylord	646	16	2.5%	1,598	185	11.6%	7.7%	621	239	38.5%
Village of Vanderbilt	65	16	24.6%	342	82	24.0%	15.6%	58	45	77.6%
Otsego County	5,284	409	7.7%	14,434	2,040	14.1%	7.3%	5,126	1,795	35.0%

Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

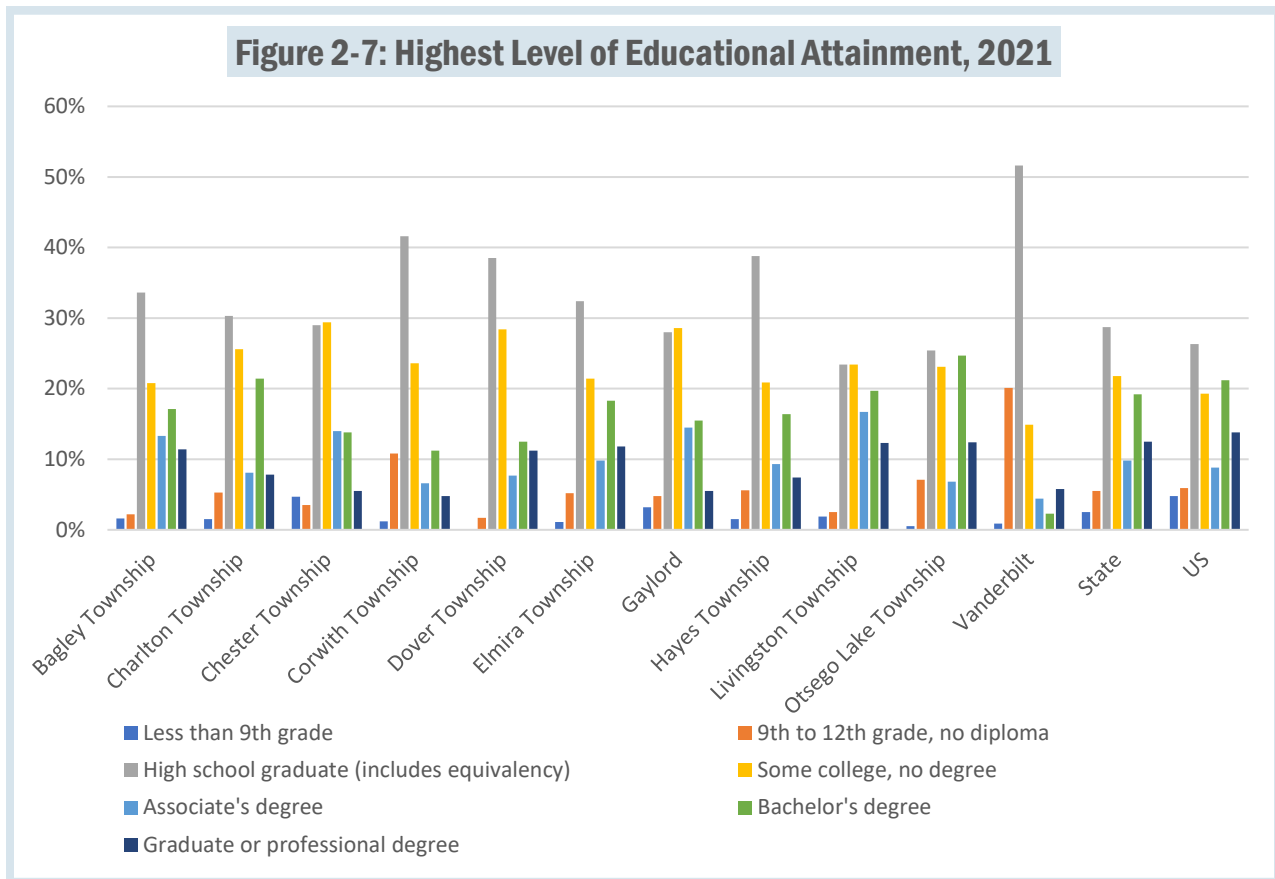
### Educational Attainment

Data found in **Table 2-8** shows that the educational attainment of the residents of Otsego County had improved over the last decade. The percentage of persons that had at most a high school diploma or less in 2010 decreased by moderately large amounts by 2021. However, these groups form the majority of residents of the County. Conversely, the percentage of persons who had obtained advanced degrees all increased substantially from 2010. This has resulted in the County experiencing overall growth at the highest end of the educational attainment scale. The State had a greater

percentage of persons holding a college degree than did the County and most of the townships (**Figure 2-7**) but actually lagged behind for those possessing a high school degree. Livingston Township is the municipality with the highest percentage of persons with a college degree, with 32.0 percent of residents possessing a bachelor's degree or higher. Otsego County's percentages are approximately equal to those of the State and most of the townships. The County's lower college graduation rate is due, in part, to the limited amount of higher educational opportunities in the area.

Table 2-8: Change in Educational Attainment, Otsego County 2010-2021			
Level of Education	2010	2021	% Change
Less than 9 <sup>th</sup> grade	2.8%	1.8%	-35.7%
9th to 12th grade	8.0%	4.6%	-42.5%
High school graduate	39.2%	31.5%	-19.6%
Some college	24.2%	23.8%	-1.7%
Associates degree	6.4%	11.5%	79.7%
Bachelors degree	13.0%	17.5%	34.6%
Graduate or professional degree	6.4%	9.3%	45.3%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey 2021 5-Year Estimates



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey 2021 5-Year Estimates

### Seasonal Population and Housing

#### Seasonal Population

In 2021, as illustrated in **Table 2-9**, the ACS showed that 27.1 percent of the housing units in the County were seasonal. This was a small decrease from 28.8 percent in 2010. This means that over one-quarter of the County's total housing stock is owned by seasonal residents. The percentage of Otsego County's housing units that are seasonal is roughly comparable to the surrounding counties and reflects the importance of Northern Michigan counties as a

tourism and recreation center and retirement community. A rough estimate of the number of County seasonal residents can be calculated by multiplying the number of County seasonal housing units (4,026) by the average number of persons per household (2.35) for a total of 9,461 persons (**Table 2-11**). This figure does not include those seasonal visitors or tourists staying in area motels, campgrounds, or family homes.

**Table 2-9: County Trends in Percent Seasonal Housing Units, 2010 & 2021**

Unit of Government	2010 Percent Seasonal Housing Units*	2021 Percent Seasonal Housing Units*
Alpena	10.4%	11.3%
Cheboygan	28.7%	33.7%
Montmorency	49.7%	47.9%
<b>Otsego</b>	<b>28.8%</b>	<b>27.1%</b>
Presque Isle	32.5%	33.9%
Michigan	5.9%	6.0%

\* The percent of seasonal housing units as compared to each county's total housing units.  
 Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

#### Housing

The number of residential housing units in the County has decreased slightly since 2010. **Table 2-10** shows that between 2010 and 2021, the number

of owner-occupied housing units in the County decreased by 1.6 percent over the past decade. Renter-occupied housing units increased by 46.5 percent.

**Housing Units by Municipality**

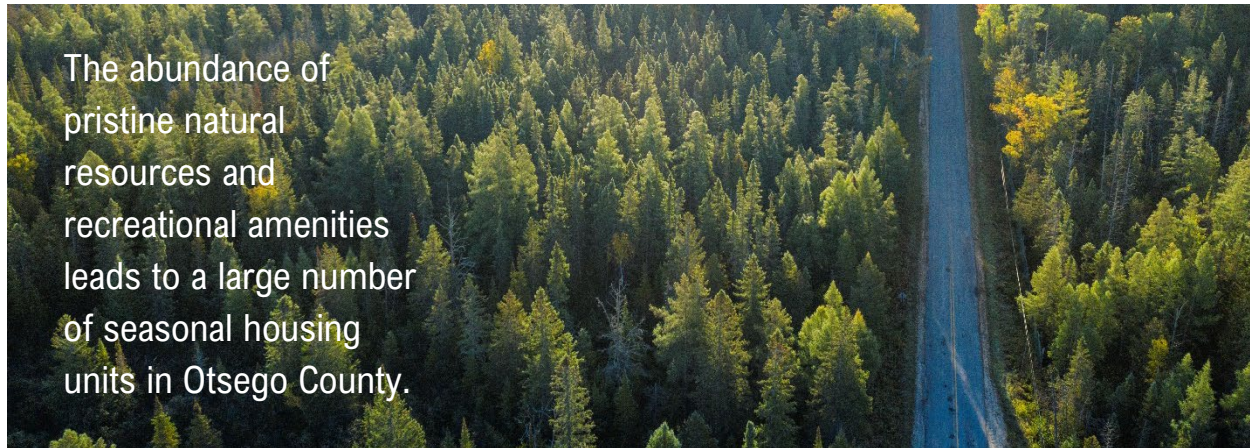
**Table 2-11** shows that the greatest number of housing units are located in Bagley Township (3,166), the City of Gaylord (2,345), and Otsego Lake Township (2,178). Although Bagley Township, Otsego Lake Township, and Gaylord each have approximately 15 to 20 percent of the total housing units in the County, a larger portion of the units in Bagley Township and Gaylord are occupied year-round (76.2 percent and 93.2 percent) as opposed to Otsego Lake Township (49.5 percent). Similar to the Bagley Township and Gaylord, a large majority of the housing units in the Village of Vanderbilt are occupied year-round. Otsego Lake Township has the largest raw number of seasonal housing units (1,071) within Otsego County, and they make up 49.2 percent of all housing units within the Township. Charlton Township has a greater number of seasonal housing units than occupied (year-round) housing units. (Otsego Lake does not by a difference of seven units). Most notably in Charlton Township, 56.9 percent of the housing is seasonal.

**Table 2-10: Housing Characteristics, Otsego County, 2010 & 2021**

	2010	2021	% Change
Total Housing Units	14,718	14,481	-1.61%
Total Occupied Units	9,753	10,452	7.17%
Owner-Occupied (#)	7,982	7,857	-1.57%
Owner-Occupied (%)	81.8%	75.2%	-8.07%
Renter-Occupied (#)	1,771	2,595	46.53%
Renter-Occupied (%)	18.2%	24.8%	36.26%
Total Vacant Units	4,965	4,389	-11.60%
Seasonal Units	4,234	4,026	-4.91%
Persons Per Household	2.46	2.35	-4.47%

*Vacant housing includes those housing units, which are vacant, for sale or rent and are not seasonal housing units.*

*Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*



**Table 2-11: Housing Units by Municipality Otsego County, 2021**

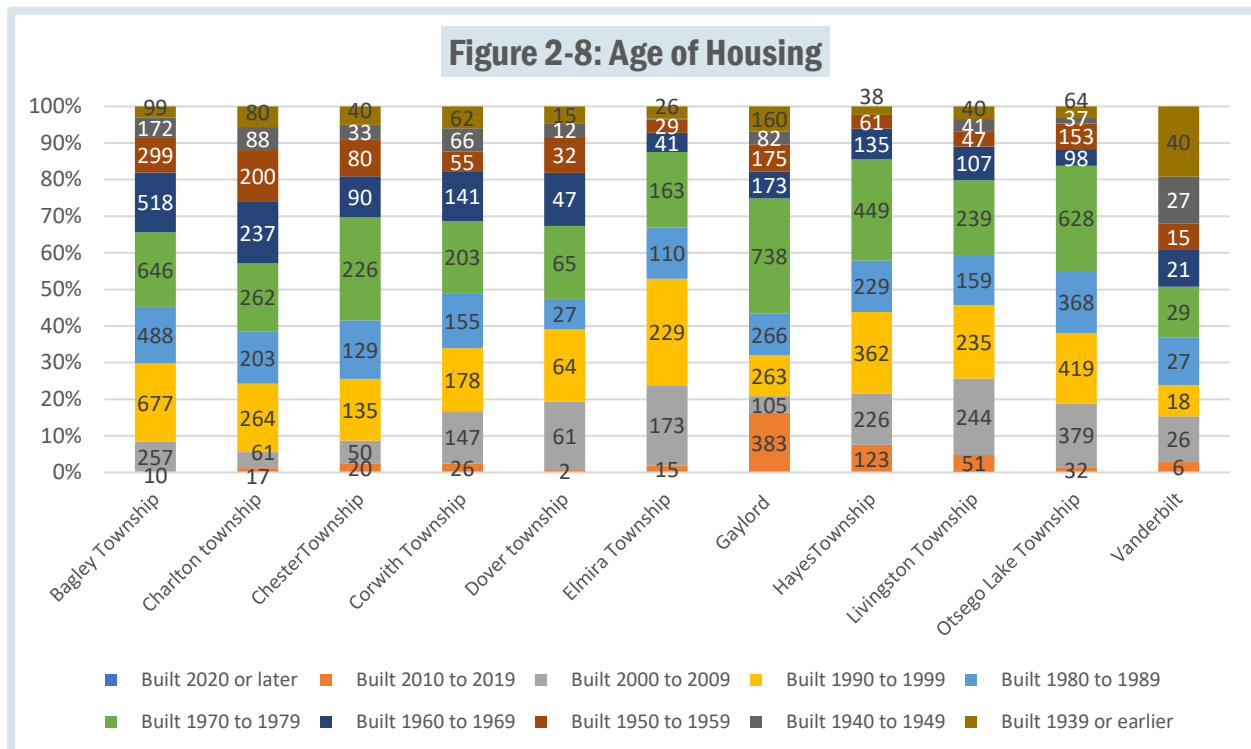
Municipality	Total Housing Units	% of County's Total Units	Occupied Housing Units	Occupied % of Total Units	Vacant Housing Units	Vacant % of Total Units	Seasonal Housing Units	Seasonal % of Total Units
Otsego Co	14,841	100.0%	10,452	70.4%	4,389	29.6%	4,026	27.1%
Bagley Twp	3,166	21.3%	2,411	76.2%	755	23.8%	677	21.4%
Charlton Twp	1,412	9.5%	598	42.4%	814	57.6%	804	56.9%
Chester Twp	803	5.4%	509	63.4%	294	36.6%	262	32.6%
Corwith Twp	1,033	7.0%	683	66.1%	350	33.9%	294	28.5%
Dover Twp	325	2.2%	233	71.7%	92	28.3%	76	23.4%
Elmira Twp	788	5.3%	686	87.1%	102	12.9%	81	10.3%
Hayes Twp	1,623	10.9%	1,070	65.9%	553	34.1%	501	30.9%
Livingston Twp	1,168	7.9%	998	85.4%	170	14.6%	143	12.2%
Otsego Lake Twp	2,178	14.7%	1,078	49.5%	1,100	50.5%	1,071	49.2%
Gaylord	2,345	15.8%	2,186	93.2%	159	6.8%	117	5.0%
V. of Vanderbilt	209	1.4%	192	91.9%	17	8.1%	3	1.4%

Source: US Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

### Age of Housing Units

When analyzing the age of the County's housing stock, it was found that 15.4 percent of all the housing units in Otsego County were built before

1959 (see **Table 2-13** and **Figure 2-8**). The largest number and percentage of housing units within the County were constructed between 1970 and 1979.



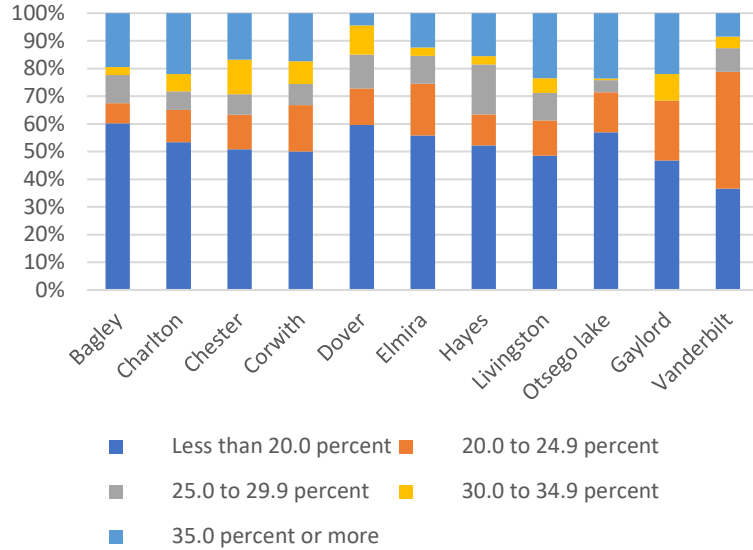
## Housing Affordability

Housing availability and affordability have become significant issues in Otsego County leading to workforce development difficulties and a variety of other outcomes. **Figure 2-9** shows the breakdown of mortgages as a percent of household income for all municipalities. While the greatest percentage of homeowners have mortgages which equal 20 percent or less of their household income in all municipalities, a good percentage also have mortgages which total 35 percent or more of their income.

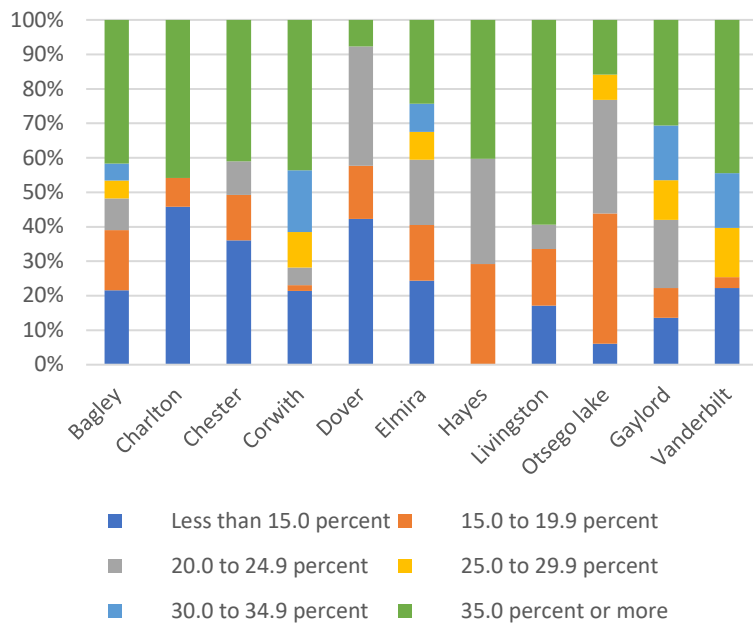
**Figure 2-10** show the breakdown of rent as a percent of household income. This figure makes it clear that renters are paying a higher portion of their household income for rent than homeowners. Over 59 percent of Livingston Township renters use more than 35 percent of their income for housing. In fact, renters in Bagley Township, Charlton Township, Chester township, Corwith Township, Hayes Township, and the Village of Vanderbilt use over 40 percent of their household income for rent.



**Figure 2-9: Mortgage as Percent of Household Income**



**Figure 2-10: Rent as Percent of Household Income**



### Income

Historically, income levels in Otsego County have lagged behind those of the state as a whole. However, in recent years, the gap has begun to close, as can be seen in **Table 2-14**. Charlton and Livingston Townships, on the other hand, have income levels slightly exceeding that of the County and just behind those of the State. Elmira Township's income levels exceed those of both the County and the State.

### Poverty Rates

Poverty rates have generally shown increases over the past three decades. **Table 2-13** shows rates for 2021. However, it is important to note that, in 2020, the U.S., as a whole, saw an economic downturn due to the pandemic. This left many out of work and many without any source of income. Families with a female head of household generally have a rate of poverty much higher than families and individuals (it should be noted that the 0 percent poverty rates shown for Dover and Elmira Townships is likely due to the fact that the American Community Survey is a survey sent to random households rather than the poverty rate actually being 0 percent). Several municipalities have poverty rates for individuals higher than the State including Corwith Township, Hayes Township, City of Gaylord, and Village of Vanderbilt.

**Table 2-12: Median Household Income**

Municipality	Median Household Income
United States	\$69,717
State of Michigan	\$63,202
Otsego Co	\$59,330
Bagley Twp	\$66,825
Charlton Twp	\$62,222
Chester Twp	\$65,729
Corwith Twp	\$52,303
Dover Twp	\$79,063
Elmira Twp	\$74,700
Hayes Twp	\$63,194
Livingston Twp	\$62,083
Otsego Lake Twp	\$66,250
City of Gaylord	\$33,952
Village of Vanderbilt	\$38,750

*Source: US Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates*

**Table 2-13: Percent Below Poverty Level 2021**

	Individuals	Families	Families with Female Head of Household
Bagley Twp	10.0%	8.7%	21.2%
Charlton Twp	9.0%	6.1%	24.3%
Chester Twp	9.0%	10.7%	55.3%
Corwith Twp	14.3%	13.2%	32.4%
Dover Twp	5.2%	2.5%	0.0%
Elmira Twp	3.0%	1.4%	0.0%
Hayes Twp	14.1%	9.0%	37.9%
Livingston Twp	11.7%	8.0%	25.0%
Otsego Lake Twp	6.6%	2.1%	20.5%
Gaylord	16.3%	9.8%	12.3%
Vanderbilt	24.3%	24.5%	15.8%
Otsego County	10.8%	7.6%	21.1%
State of Michigan	13.3%	9.0%	25.3%
U.S.	12.8%	9.1%	24.4%

*Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*



## Labor Force

### Employment & Unemployment

The labor force is defined as all individuals over age 16 who are employed or actively seeking employment. Labor force numbers can change rather quickly, in response to economic

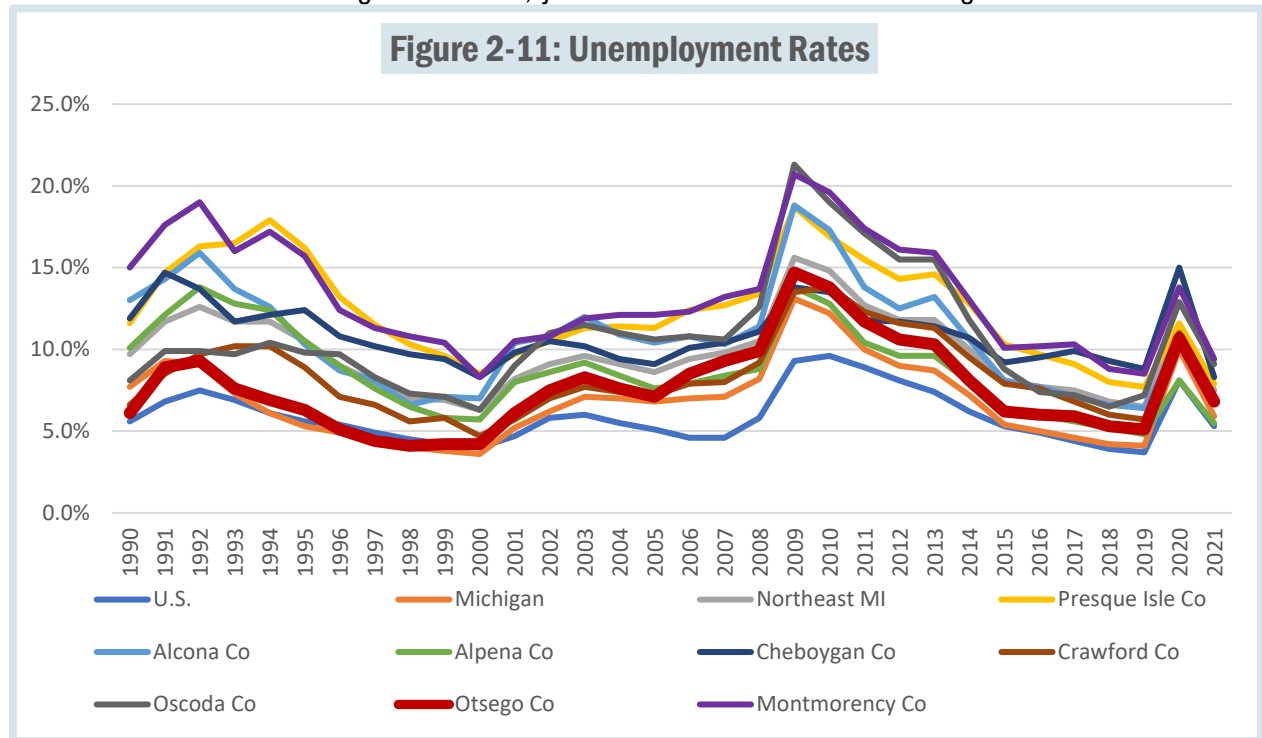
conditions. During prolonged periods of unemployment, unsuccessful job seekers can drop out of the market by going back to school, leaving the area in search of work elsewhere or by simply stopping the search for work.

Table 2-14: Otsego County Labor Force & Employment, 1990-2022								
	1990		2000		2010		2022	
	Jan	July	Jan	July	Jan	July	Jan	July
Civilian Labor Force	8,751	9,820	12,030	12,985	11,565	12,370	11,221	12,030
Percent Unemployed	6.9	4.7	4.8	3.9	15.4	13.6	6.4	5.8

Source: Michigan Dept. of Technology, Management, & Budget

Table 2-14 above shows a sample of the fluctuations in the labor force and unemployment rates at ten-year intervals over the past thirty years, including seasonal highs and lows. Although the rates of unemployment have dropped considerably, they remain well over the unemployment rates of Michigan as a whole and tend to spike sharply upwards during the winter months. It is also worth noting that in 2021, just

59.0 percent of Otsego County's population aged 16 and above was in the labor force; down from 62.4 percent in 2010. These decreasing participation rates relate to the variable number of retired persons residing in the County. Unemployment rates since 1990 are shown in Figure 2-11 and Table 2-15. Otsego County has had one of the more moderate unemployment rates in Northeast Michigan.



**Table 2-15: Unemployment – County, Region State, and US**

	United States	Michigan	Northeast MI	Presque Isle Co	Alcona Co	Alpena Co	Cheboygan Co	Crawford Co	Oscoda Co	Otsego Co	Montmorency Co
2021	5.3%	5.9%	7.5%	7.9%	7.1%	5.5%	8.3%	7.1%	9.1%	6.8%	9.4%
2020	8.1%	10.0%	11.4%	11.6%	10.4%	8.1%	15.0%	11.0%	12.9%	10.7%	13.8%
2019	3.7%	4.1%	6.5%	7.7%	6.4%	4.8%	8.8%	5.7%	7.2%	5.1%	8.5%
2018	3.9%	4.2%	6.8%	8.0%	6.6%	5.2%	9.3%	6.0%	6.5%	5.3%	8.8%
2017	4.4%	4.6%	7.5%	9.1%	7.1%	5.6%	9.9%	6.8%	7.2%	5.9%	10.3%
2016	4.9%	5.0%	7.7%	9.7%	7.7%	6.0%	9.5%	7.6%	7.4%	6.0%	10.2%
2015	5.3%	5.4%	8.0%	10.3%	8.1%	6.3%	9.2%	7.9%	8.8%	6.2%	10.1%
2014	6.2%	7.2%	10.0%	12.8%	10.6%	8.0%	10.7%	9.5%	11.8%	8.1%	13.0%
2013	7.4%	8.7%	11.8%	14.6%	13.2%	9.6%	11.4%	11.3%	15.5%	10.3%	15.9%
2012	8.1%	9.0%	11.8%	14.3%	12.5%	9.6%	11.7%	11.6%	15.5%	10.6%	16.1%
2011	8.9%	10.0%	12.7%	15.5%	13.8%	10.4%	11.8%	12.3%	17.1%	11.7%	17.4%
2010	9.6%	12.2%	14.8%	16.9%	17.3%	12.8%	13.5%	13.8%	19.0%	13.8%	19.6%
2009	9.3%	13.1%	15.6%	18.7%	18.8%	13.8%	13.8%	13.5%	21.3%	14.7%	20.7%
2008	5.8%	8.2%	10.5%	13.4%	11.4%	8.8%	11.1%	9.2%	12.6%	9.9%	13.7%
2007	4.6%	7.1%	9.8%	12.7%	10.3%	8.4%	10.4%	8.0%	10.6%	9.3%	13.2%
2006	4.6%	7.0%	9.4%	12.4%	10.8%	7.9%	10.1%	7.9%	10.8%	8.5%	12.3%
2005	5.1%	6.8%	8.6%	11.3%	10.4%	7.6%	9.1%	7.2%	10.6%	7.1%	12.1%
2004	5.5%	7.0%	9.1%	11.4%	10.9%	8.4%	9.4%	7.4%	11.0%	7.6%	12.1%
2003	6.0%	7.1%	9.6%	11.3%	12.0%	9.2%	10.2%	7.7%	11.5%	8.3%	11.9%
2002	5.8%	6.2%	9.1%	10.5%	10.8%	8.6%	10.5%	7.0%	11.0%	7.5%	10.8%
2001	4.7%	5.2%	8.2%	9.7%	10.4%	8.0%	9.8%	5.7%	9.0%	6.1%	10.5%
2000	4.0%	3.6%	6.3%	8.5%	7.0%	5.7%	8.3%	4.7%	6.3%	4.2%	8.3%
1999	4.2%	3.8%	6.9%	9.6%	7.1%	5.8%	9.4%	5.8%	7.1%	4.2%	10.4%
1998	4.5%	4.0%	7.0%	10.3%	6.6%	6.5%	9.7%	5.6%	7.3%	4.1%	10.8%
1997	4.9%	4.3%	8.0%	11.5%	8.1%	7.6%	10.2%	6.6%	8.3%	4.4%	11.3%
1996	5.4%	4.9%	9.0%	13.2%	8.7%	9.0%	10.8%	7.1%	9.7%	5.1%	12.4%
1995	5.6%	5.3%	10.5%	16.2%	10.3%	10.5%	12.4%	8.9%	9.8%	6.3%	15.7%
1994	6.1%	6.1%	11.7%	17.9%	12.6%	12.4%	12.1%	10.2%	10.4%	6.9%	17.2%
1993	6.9%	7.3%	11.7%	16.5%	13.7%	12.8%	11.7%	10.2%	9.7%	7.6%	16.0%
1992	7.5%	9.1%	12.6%	16.3%	15.9%	13.8%	13.7%	9.7%	9.9%	9.3%	19.0%
1991	6.8%	9.3%	11.7%	14.7%	14.3%	12.1%	14.7%	8.5%	9.9%	8.9%	17.6%
1990	5.6%	7.7%	9.7%	11.6%	13.0%	10.1%	11.9%	6.6%	8.1%	6.1%	15.0%

Source: Michigan Bureau of Labor Market and Strategic Initiatives

**Employment by Sectors**

Following a long-term trend, retail trade occupations are presently the largest employment sector for the County, followed by health care and social assistance and then by accommodation and food services. Administrative and waste jobs account for 1.17 percent of the County’s current employment base, contrasted to 7.21 percent at

the State level while both retail and accommodation employment are more important locally (24.90 percent and 14.07 percent in the County, versus 12.48 percent and 8.71 percent Statewide). **Table 2-16** breaks down employment sectors. **Table 2-17** shows a breakdown of the number of industry types and wages in the County.

Table 2-16: Employment Sectors, 2021		
Sector	Percent of Total Jobs	
	Otsego County	State of Michigan
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	1.02%	0.88%
Mining	2.08%	0.14%
Utilities	0.64%	0.58%
Construction	7.35%	4.90%
Manufacturing	12.03%	16.30%
Wholesale Trade	3.02%	4.58%
Retail Trade	24.90%	12.48%
Transportation & Warehousing	4.42%	3.98%
Information	0.45%	1.44%
Finance and Insurance	2.67%	4.52%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	0.60%	1.48%
Professional and Technical Services	2.52%	8.36%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0.0%	1.98%
Administrative and Waste Services	1.17%	7.21%
Educational Services	0.0%	1.67%
Health Care and Social Assistance	15.34%	15.92%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	2.07%	1.19%
Accommodation and Food Services	14.07%	8.71%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	4.30%	3.39%
Unclassified	0.30%	0.31%

*Source: Michigan Dept. of Technology, Management, & Budget  
The percentage of total jobs is based on average employment.*

TOP EMPLOYMENT SECTORS

- 1 Retail Trade
- 2 Health Care & Social Assistance
- 3 Accommodation & Food Services
- 4 Manufacturing



**Table 2-17 Establishment and Wages, Otsego County 2021**

Industry Code & Title	Number of Establishments	Avg Employment	Avg Weekly Wages	Total Wages
Federal Government	9	132	\$1,530	\$10,500,394
State Government	18	280	\$1,574	\$22,977,633
Local Government	16	674	\$969	\$33,956,539
00 -Total, All Industries	737	9,053	\$906	\$427,208,121
11 -Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	16	92	\$765	\$3,666,837
21 -Mining	25	188	\$1,223	\$11,966,509
22 -Utilities	6	58	\$2,000	\$6,043,085
23 -Construction	86	665	\$1,336	\$46,809,588
31 -Manufacturing	32	1,089	\$1,169	\$66,322,872
42 -Wholesale Trade	20	273	\$1,199	\$16,981,113
44 -Retail Trade	106	2,254	\$694	\$81,402,926
48 -Transportation and Warehousing	32	400	\$968	\$20,217,549
51 -Information	9	41	\$1,195	\$2,528,879
52 -Finance and Insurance	33	242	\$1,657	\$20,788,497
53 -Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	26	54	\$948	\$2,671,038
54 -Professional and Technical Services	61	228	\$1,199	\$14,232,820
55 -Management of Companies and Enterprises	3	0	\$0	\$0
56 -Administrative and Waste Services	26	106	\$835	\$4,574,123
61 -Educational Services	4	0	\$0	\$0
62 -Health Care and Social Assistance	84	1,389	\$1,058	\$76,378,220
71 -Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	18	187	\$383	\$3,679,928
72 -Accommodation and Food Services	75	1,274	\$439	\$29,236,320
81 -Other Services (except Public Administration)	66	389	\$772	\$15,635,497
99 -Unclassified	9	27	\$973	\$1,392,933

Source: Michigan Bureau of Labor Market and Strategic Initiatives, Industry Employment and Wages - QCEW

## Land Values

### Distribution of Real and Personal Property Values

Another measure of community wealth is land value. Real and personal property is an important part of a community's tax base. The tax base, in turn, can provide income to support local government, including law enforcement, emergency services, education, health and social services, land use controls, environmental

protection, and public administration. **Table 2-18**, below, shows the distribution of real and personal property within Otsego County. The County's total State Equalized Value (SEV) for 2022, including taxable real and personal property, was just over \$1.8 billion. This figure is an increase of 7.5 percent over the total SEV in 2021.

**Table 2-18 State Equalized Value of Real & Personal Property, 2022**

Municipality	Agriculture	Commercial	Industrial	Residential	Total Real	Total Personal	Total Real & Personal
Bagley Twp.	0	24,981,700	4,418,500	290,305,000	319,705,200	19,458,600	339,163,800
Charlton Twp.	13,625,500	2,129,500	2,273,600	124,591,500	142,620,100	24,226,700	166,846,800
Chester Twp.	6,649,500	1,200,700	1,461,800	86,306,100	95,618,100	25,696,800	121,314,900
Corwith Twp.	2,350,300	4,605,800	1,741,900	88,139,200	96,837,200	6,182,000	103,019,200
Dover Twp.	6,818,300	5,587,200	159,200	37,963,600	50,528,300	4,501,400	55,029,700
Elmira Twp.	5,916,200	2,727,100	6,459,400	86,543,600	101,646,300	90,397,800	192,044,100
Hayes Twp.	5,059,600	1,203,900	744,800	147,827,000	154,835,300	22,922,200	177,757,500
Livingston Twp.	11,247,600	32,945,600	388,600	104,236,000	148,817,800	23,255,000	172,072,800
Otsego Lake Twp.	0	6,674,100	0	221,967,600	228,641,700	8,617,700	237,259,400
Gaylord	0	149,616,205	13,037,300	58,238,900	220,892,405	30,153,900	251,046,305
County Total	51,667,000	231,671,805	30,685,100	1,246,118,500	1,560,142,405	255,412,100	1,815,554,505

*Michigan Department of Treasury: State Tax Commission*

Over 68 percent of the County's SEV is comprised of residential property. Commercial land comes as a distant second, at 12.8 percent. The total value of the agricultural and industrial categories is negligible, at 2.8 percent and 1.7 percent of the total SEV. Taxable personal property is the non-depreciated value of machinery and equipment owned by businesses and industries. It is interesting to note that in Otsego County, the total value of personal property (14 percent of the County's SEV) is over three times greater than the value of all agricultural and industrial real property combined (2.8 percent plus 1.7 percent, or a total of 4.5 percent). This is an indication of the relatively low market value of agricultural and industrial property in the County. The value of personal property also slightly exceeds the value of commercial property within the County. The City of Gaylord has the largest amount of industrial value, containing over 40 percent of the County's value. Gaylord also has the largest commercial sectors and the highest agricultural values are found in Charlton and Livingston Townships. The leader in residential value is Bagley Township. Bagley Township also has the highest total SEV of any local jurisdiction within Otsego County. That single township comprises 18.7 percent of the County's SEV.

### Township Finances

Munetrix ([www.munetrix.com](http://www.munetrix.com)) is an online system which displays fiscal data for local units of government in order to provide transparency and an understanding of local unit finances to the public. The Munetrix "Stress Meter" provides an overview of Indicator Scores used to calculate the financial stress of a municipality. The Indicator Score gives an overall picture of the soundness of local governments, the trend of stability over time, and allows the identification of local units that are most in need of help. Scores are generated based on the criteria of population growth, real taxable value growth, large real taxable value growth, general fund expenditures as a percent of taxable value, general fund operating deficit, prior general fund operating deficit, size of general fund balance, fund deficits in current or previous year, and general long-term debt as a percent of taxable value. The lower the number the more fiscally sound a local unit is determined to be.

**Figure 2-11** shows the indicator scores for all municipalities in Northeast Michigan (the region covered by the Northeast Michigan Council of Governments – the sponsor of the Munetrix data). The graph shows a trend of more moderate regional fiscal stress in 2008 through 2015 with financial stress lessening through 2020. However, most municipalities remain in the low-risk category throughout. **Figure 2-12** shows the indicator scores for municipalities within Otsego County. As can be seen, municipalities in Otsego County are in extremely low fiscal stress since 2016. The long-term effect of Covid-19 has yet to be determined at the time of the drafting of this plan. **Table 2-19** shows Livingston Township has maintained a low fiscal stress score.

#### Munetrix Stress Meter:



Figure 2-12

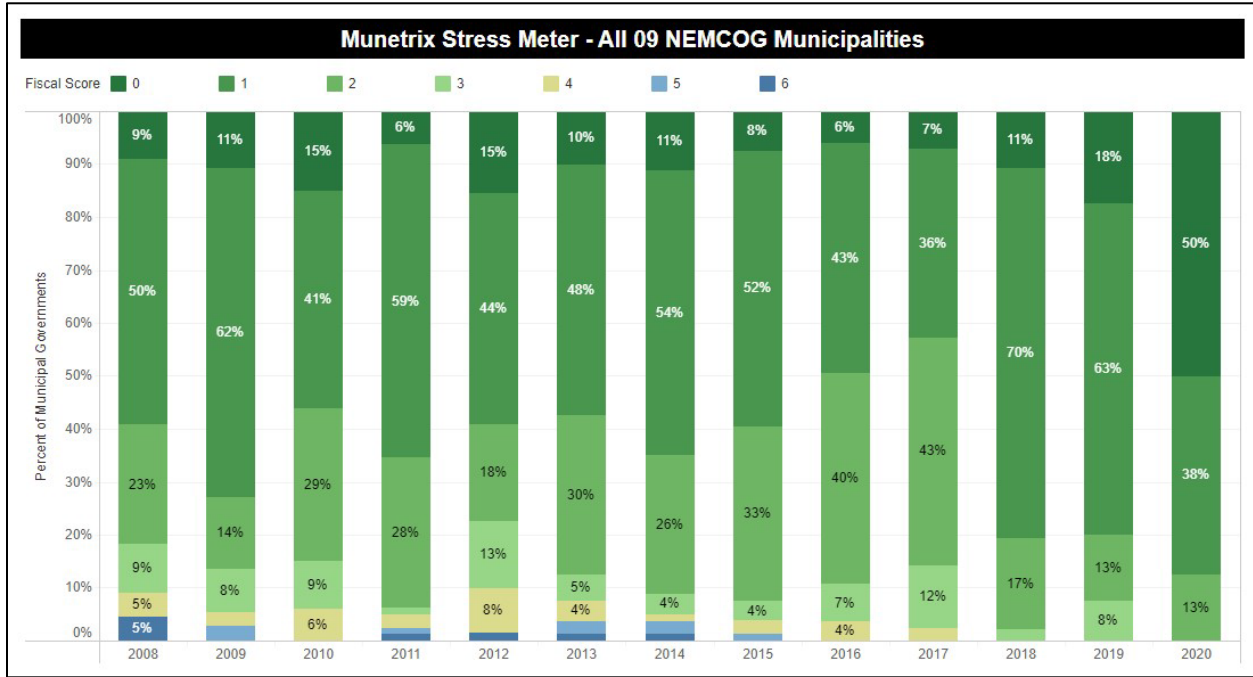
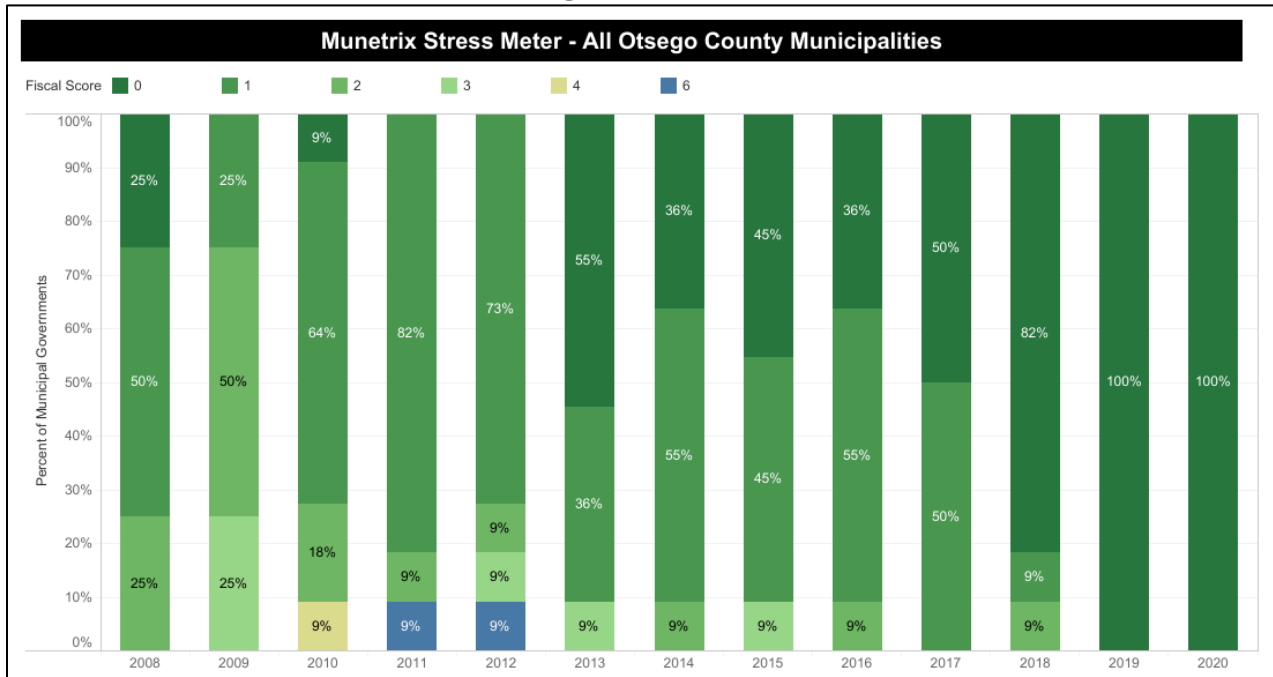


Figure 2-13



**Table 2-19 Livingston Township Finances**

Year	Indicator Score	Revenues	Expenditures	Fund Balance	Long Term Debt	Taxable Value
2022	0	\$472,690	\$304,706	\$1,029,209	\$0	\$132,789,679
2021	0	\$458,534	\$302,819	\$861,226	\$0	\$129,877,616
2020	0	\$410,987	\$275,883	\$705,510	\$0	\$128,155,166
2019	0	\$390,707	\$409,806	\$570,406	\$0	\$128,183,910
2018	0	\$386,057	\$340,547	\$589,505	\$0	\$125,887,399
2017	0	\$353,484	\$417,691	\$543,995	\$0	\$124,554,339
2016	0	\$328,871	\$274,126	\$608,201	\$0	\$121,699,661
2015	0	\$310,488	\$293,545	\$553,456	\$0	\$121,278,752

Source: Michigan Department of Treasury (through Munetrix)

### Revenues & Expenditures

Revenue is generated from tax dollars received from residents and businesses which are generated from the millage rate multiplied by property valuations. Revenue is also generated from other sources such

as State and Federal grants, permits, and fees. **Figure 2-14** shows the sources of revenue for Livingston Township. The largest sources of revenue are property taxes and state contributions.

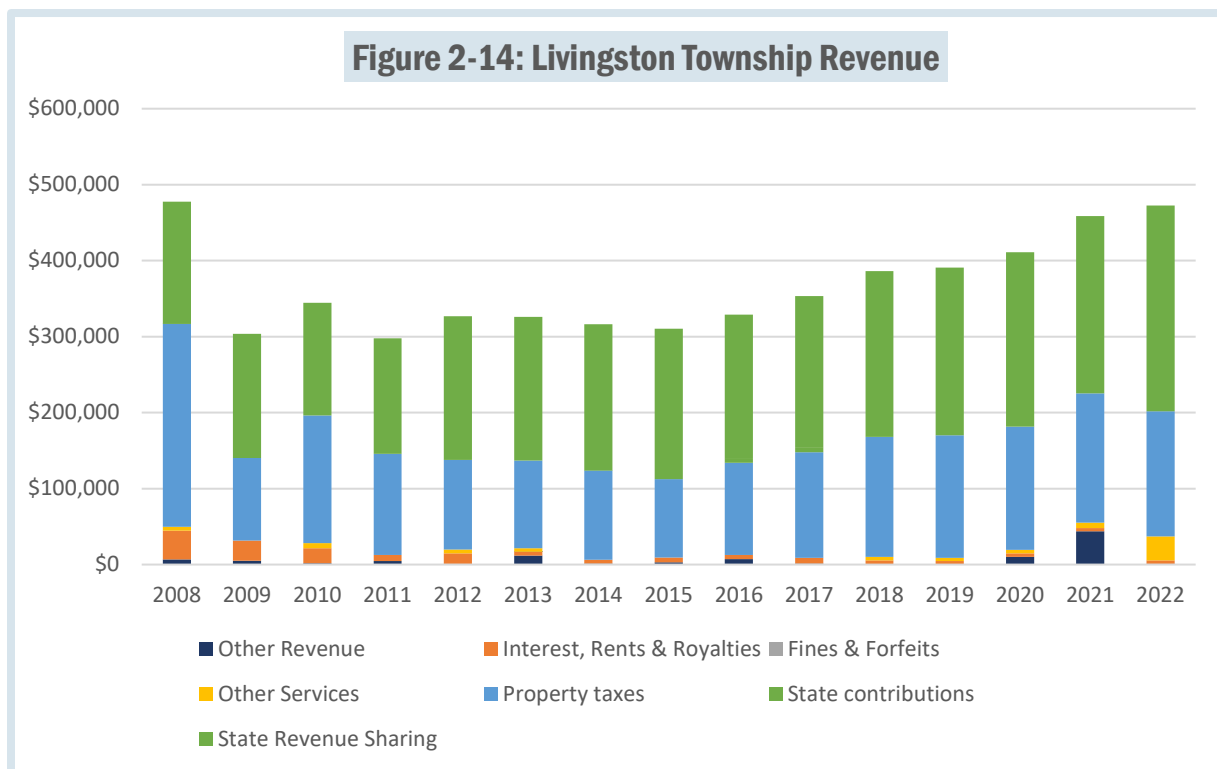
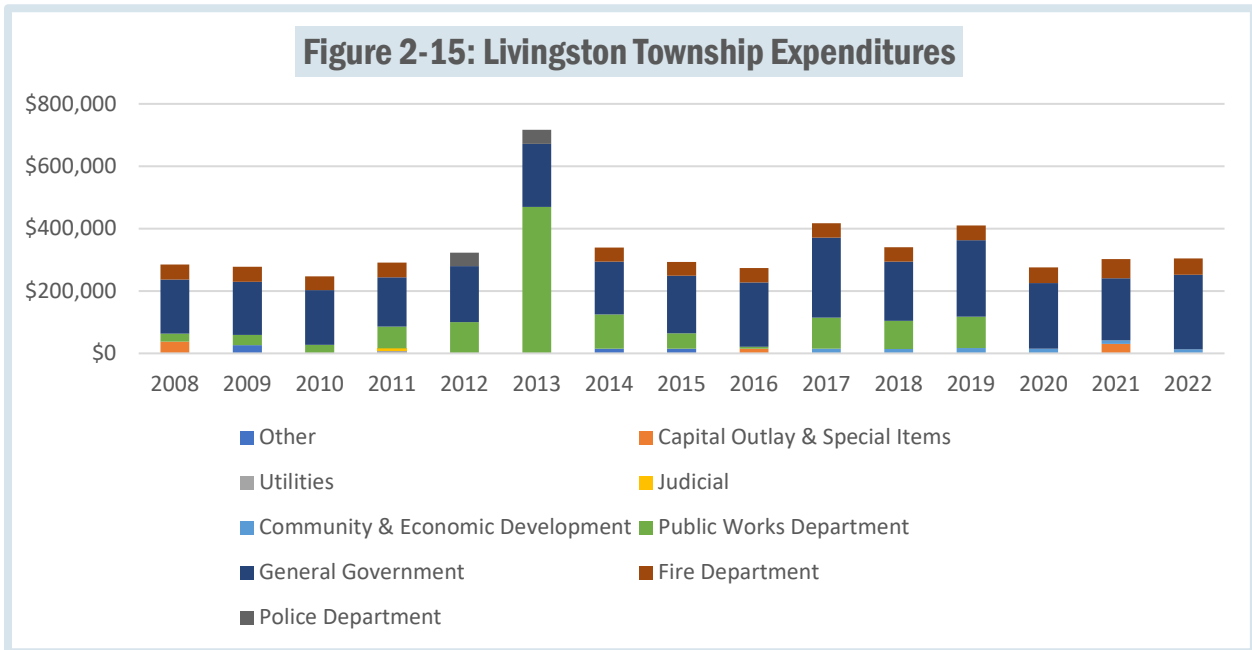




Figure 2-15 shows where expenses are incurred. The category where the most funds are generally

expended general government. However, a large spike occurred in public works in 2013.



Most units maintain a positive fund balance, and it is a sign of fiscal distress if the fund balance is negative. Units typically find it beneficial to keep the fund balance from declining too greatly as this inhibits their ability to cope with unexpected circumstances in

either the revenue or expenditure stream. The actual variable constructed for this indicator is the general fund balance as a proportion of general fund revenue. Figure 2-16 shows the Township fund balance has remained well above the indicator trigger.

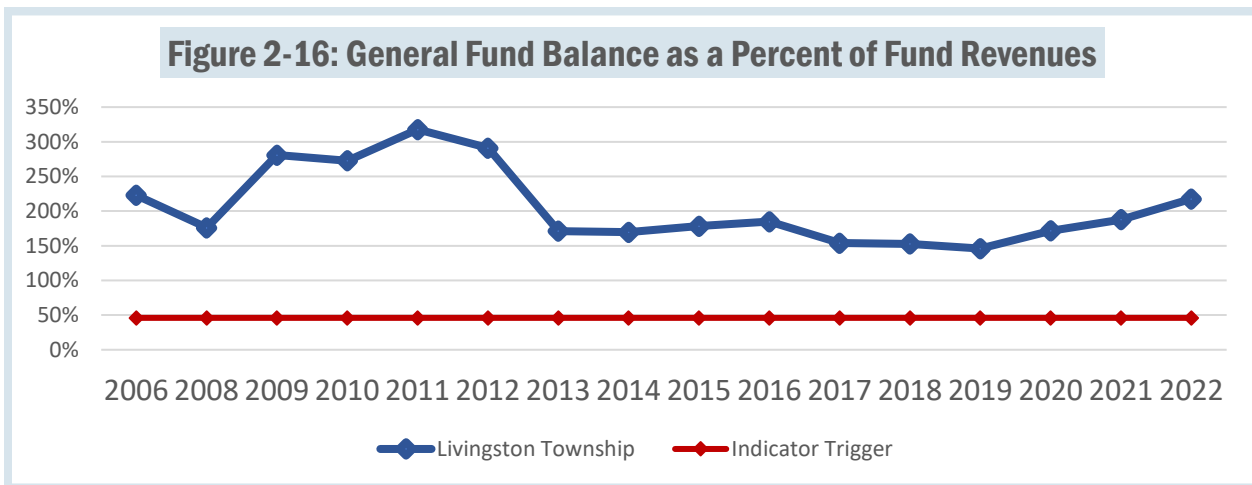
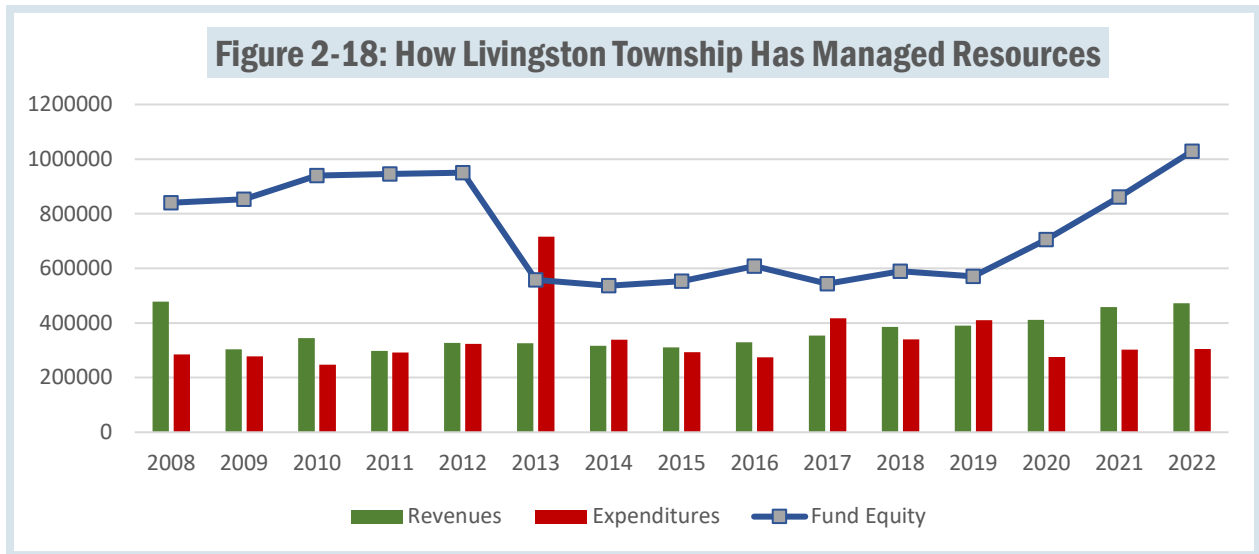
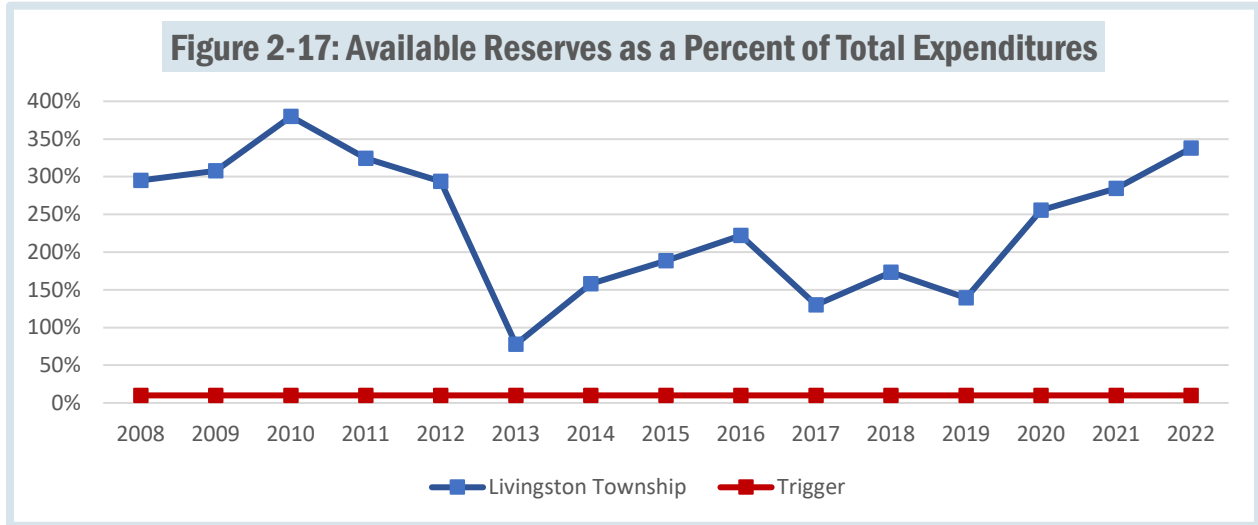


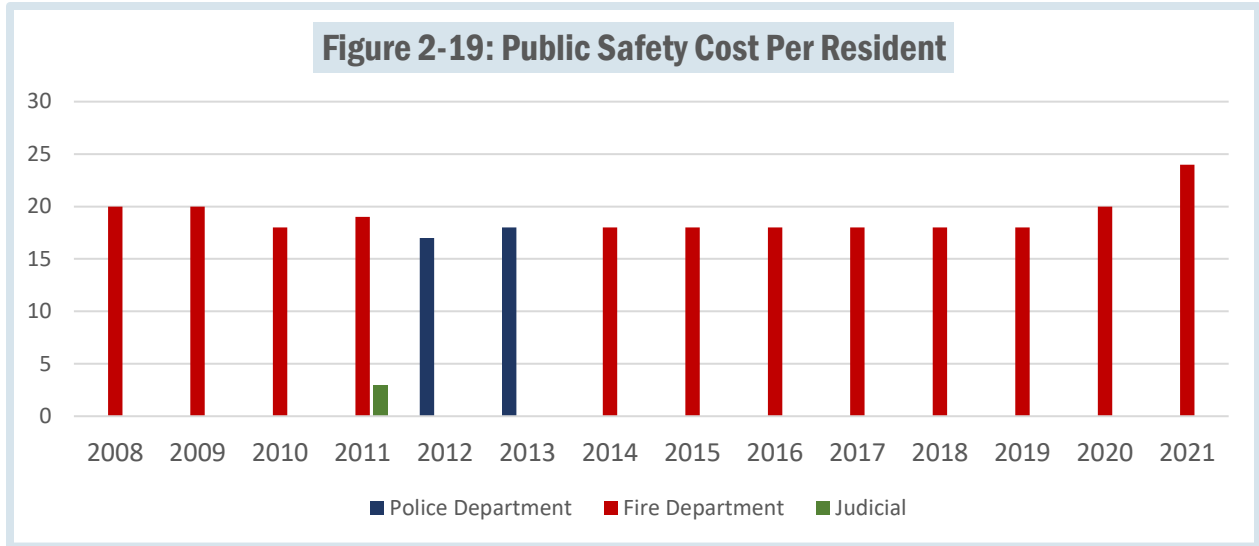
Figure 2-17 shows the Township's available reserves as a percent of total expenditures

(total equity minus any designated and reserved funds divided by total annual

expenditures). The Township has consistently stayed above the indicator trigger with a slight dip in 2013. **Figure 2-18** shows how the Township has managed resources. Revenue and expenditures have closely matched each other throughout the years with a spike in

expenditures in 2013. Fund equity dipped in 2013, then remained steady for six years, and is now on an upward swing. **Figure 2-19** shows public safety spending by the Township. Spending for the fire department is the highest public safety cost.





CHAPTER

3

---

# NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

---



Livingston Township Master Plan

The greatest attraction for the residents and visitors of Northern Michigan is the area's natural environment and the rural character. Hunting, fishing, cross-country skiing, downhill skiing, golfing, snowmobiling, off-road trail riding, mushroom hunting, birding, wildlife viewing, and scenic driving are outdoor-based recreational activities which bring thousands of visitors to Northern Michigan every year. Because of the abundance of outdoor recreation available, the natural environment of the area is a major economic base and income generator.

## Climate

Climate data obtained from the Michigan Climatological Resources Program (station located in Gaylord) indicates the County's climate is humid continental and is not strongly influenced by the climate moderation typical of areas nearer the Great Lakes. Given the prevailing westerly winds coupled with higher elevations, Gaylord experiences heavy snowfall amounts and is in the heart of northern Michigan's "snow belt". Winter months characteristically have cloudy skies and frequent snow flurries. The average seasonal snowfall is 140.3 inches with 102 days per season receiving an inch or more of snowfall. The greatest daily snowfall of 16.8 inches was recorded on December 23, 2022; the greatest seasonal total of 207.5 inches was recorded during the 1996-97 season.

Temperature data show the County to have had the

## Topography

The terrain of Livingston Township is more extreme in relief than most other sections of the County. Elevation ranges from 1,400 feet above sea level in the northwestern portion of the Township, to 1,000 feet above sea level along the Sturgeon River in the northeastern areas of the community. The majority of the Township has a slope of zero percent to ten percent, although there are sections, particularly in the southeastern part of the Township, where slopes of ten percent or more exist. **Figure 3.1**

At the same time, the environment places constraints upon human activities. Certain sensitive parts of the natural landscape cannot be altered without creating problems that are not easily rectified. Wetlands filling and soil erosion, resulting from the clearing of land for construction, are two examples. It is essential then, that any future development respect the characteristics of the natural environment. This is important in preserving the attractiveness of this part of the State, preventing potential problems related to undue alteration of the land, and maximizing the economic benefits of the tourist and recreation industry.

following extremes: the highest recorded temperature of 101°F and the lowest recorded of 37°F below zero. On average, 93 percent of the days between November to March are 32°F or below with 19 days a year experiencing below zero temperatures. The average date of the last freezing temperature in the spring is May 26 while the average date of the first freezing temperature in the fall is September 20. The freeze-free period, or growing season, averages 117 days annually.

Precipitation is well distributed throughout the year with the growing season, April to September, receiving an average of 18 inches which is 56 percent of the total annual average. The total annual precipitation water equivalent is approximately 32 inches.

shows areas with steeply sloping terrain. These more dramatic topographic features of Livingston Township not only contribute to the attractiveness of the community, but also create a more fragile environment that needs to be protected from over use or improper use. The scenic vistas and variety in Livingston Township's landscape are some of the major reasons people are attracted to the Township. Possibly the most important goal the Township could strive for is the realization of the

importance of the area's variable topography and the need to protect and wisely use this natural

## Soils

Soils often define the use suitability of various sites. The suitability of a site for recreation, housing, industry, commerce, agriculture, and other uses is dependent upon the characteristics of the soil, especially where individual septic fields are involved. The permeability of soil helps determine the degree to which groundwater may be polluted. Topographical features are closely allied with soil types and their characteristics. Various soil classifications have dominant slope categories and the greater the slope, the more susceptible a soil type is to erosion and side hill seepage, especially from on-site sewage. Vegetation-altering activities such as building construction, agriculture, certain forestry operations, and road construction, can result in erosion on these sites.

There are five major soil associations in Livingston Township. These general associations are applicable only to large areas. Any site intended for specific use should be analyzed for impacts upon the soil on that particular site. The Otsego County Soil Survey may be referenced for site specific development.

A small portion of the southeastern part of the Township is composed of soils that have several possible management problems for field cropping, such as droughtiness, soil blowing, and low natural fertility. Problems involved with residential development may include pollution of groundwater by effluent and difficulty in maintaining vegetative cover without irrigation. The eastern portion of the Township is composed of soils which are level to undulating, well-drained, sandy, and gravelly. These

attribute.

soils may create droughtiness and soil blowing problems for farmers as well. Possible groundwater pollution from effluent and difficulty in maintaining vegetative cover without irrigation are concerns for residential development.

The majority of the Township contains soils that are nearly level to undulating, well-drained, sandy, and gravelly, which tend to be fertile and able to retain moisture. These soils may create droughtiness and soil blowing problems related to agriculture, while pollution of groundwater from effluent and difficulty in maintaining vegetation without irrigation are possible problems resulting from improper land use activities.

Soils adjacent to the Sturgeon River are primarily poorly drained sandy soils and mucks having low natural fertility. These soils experience possible problems of wetness, soil blowing, frost hazard, and low natural fertility when used for field cropping. Residential development on these soils may experience unstable foundations, uneven settling, and high water tables. **Figure 3.1** illustrates soils with hydric characteristics, as well as steeply sloped soils.

Soils primarily suitable for agriculture and forestry are mapped as **Figure 3.2**. Prime timberland soils for Livingston Township are noted in the northwest portion, the central region, and the east-central area. Prime agricultural soils are not as extensive as prime timber land soils; scattered small pockets are shown on the map.

**Figure 3.1**  
**Livingston Township**  
**Soil Constraints Map**

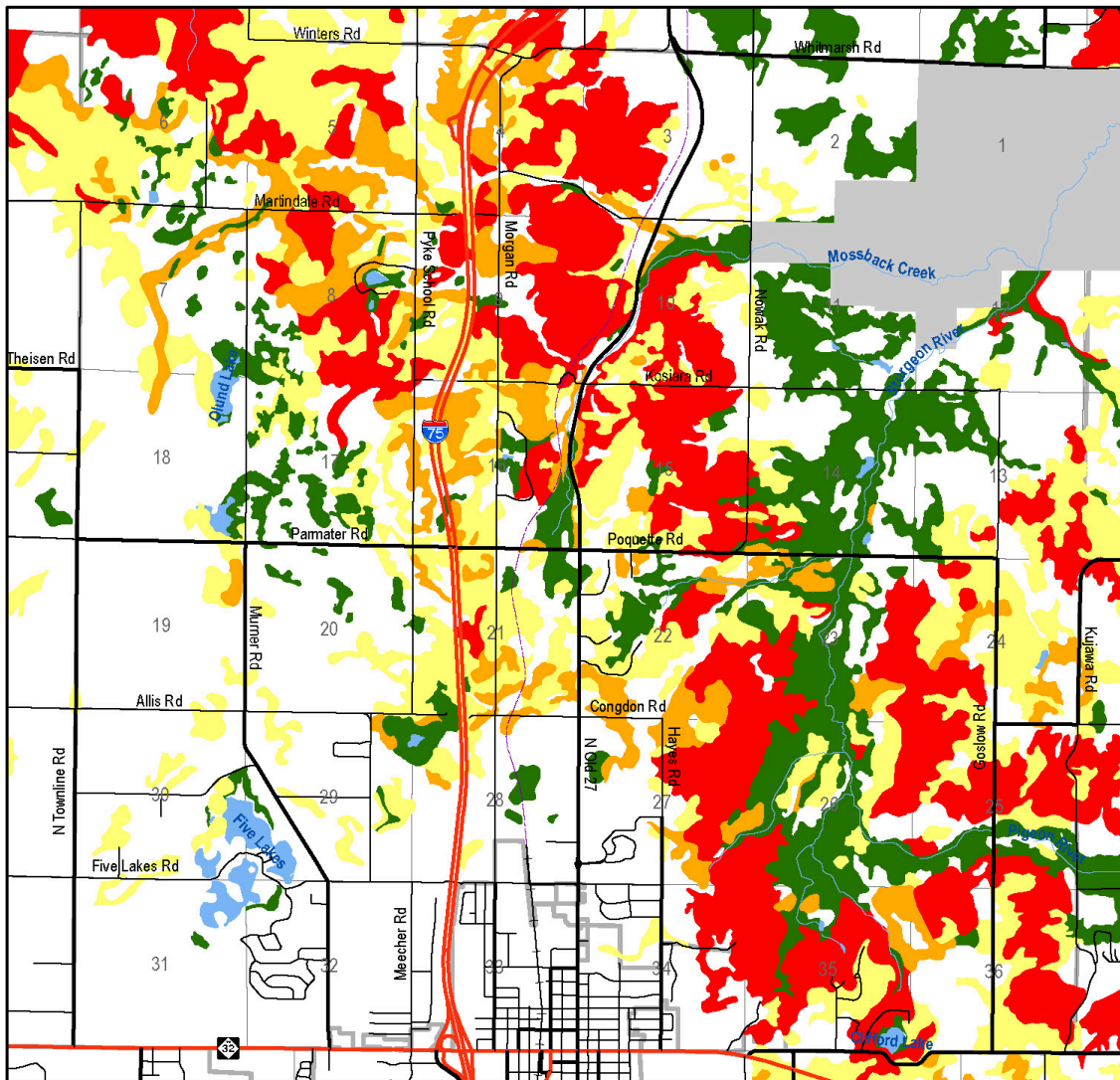


**Map Legend**

- State Highway
- Primary Road
- Local Road
- Rivers
- Lakes
- Sections







**Hydric Soils & Steep Slopes**

- Moderately Sloping (5 - 9%)
- Strongly Sloping (9 - 15%)
- Steeply Sloping (15 - 30%)
- Hydric
- Undefined



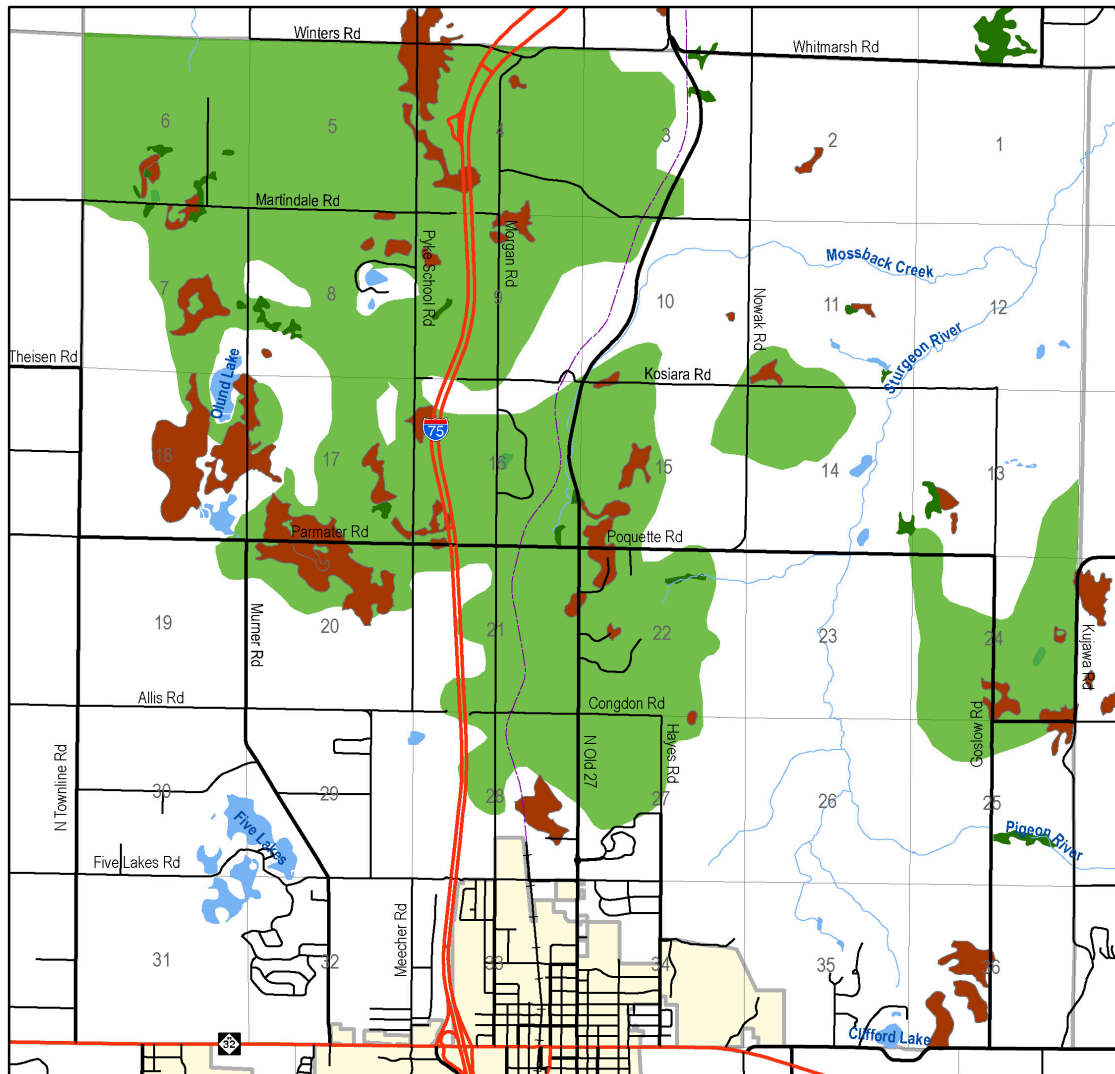
**Figure 3.2**  
**Livingston Township**  
**Prime Forest & Agricultural Soils**

**Map Legend**

-  State Highway
-  Rivers
-  Primary Road
-  Lakes
-  Local Road
-  Sections

**Prime Forest & Agricultural Soils**

-  Prime Farmland
-  Prime Farmland if Drained
-  Prime Forest Lands





## Vegetation

In addition to contributing to the scenic qualities of the Township, the existing vegetation substantially aids in protecting the surface environment of the area. Without an adequate amount of forest, brush, or grass cover, soil erosion or sedimentation would become prevalent. If there were a decrease in the amount of natural ground cover, wildlife in the Township would begin to diminish. Furthermore, the absence of a natural sound barrier would increase noise pollution generated from industry and automobile traffic.

The variety of forest types in Livingston Township contributes to the attractiveness of the community. Along with aesthetics, forests provide habitat for wildlife, protect water quality, and provide forest products. Forest types in Livingston Township include Northern Hardwoods (sugar maple, American beech, red maple, white ash, basswood, and yellow birch); Pine (red, jack and white pine); Lowland Conifers (northern white cedar, balsam fir,

black spruce, white spruce and tamarack), Lowland Hardwoods (black ash, willow, elm, and balsam poplar); and Aspen-Birch. The prevalent type is Northern Hardwoods, which is concentrated in a wide band that runs from the southeast to the northwest corners of the Township. Pine plantations are concentrated in the southwest quadrant of the Township. Lowland conifers and lowland hardwoods are most common within the Sturgeon River Valley. See **Figure 3.3**.

In order to protect wildlife, soils, and aesthetic values in the area, the promotion of orderly and wise development of forest resources should be encouraged. With educational and technical programs this can be achieved. It would benefit the Township to ensure that its residents, particularly owners of larger parcels of forest land, are aware of constructive forestry practices. Such practices will help to maintain and improve the environmental qualities of the community.

## Wildlife

Closely associated with the amount and type of vegetation common to Livingston Township and its surrounding area, the community has a wide variety of natural wildlife. As the human population of the Township increases, the areas available for natural wildlife habitat become more confined. The clearing of trees and brush, the filling of wetlands, and erosion of cleared grassland all contribute to the lessening of the variety of forage on which wildlife survives. In order to accommodate an optimum balance between human and animal populations (whereby infringement of one upon the other is minimized) a more detailed study should be made of the forage and habitat characteristics of the various animal species in the Township. Measures should be taken to minimize the encroachment of residential activity upon these habitats.

As previously mentioned, forestry management and harvesting activities affect the overall quality of the

environment, including the capacity of the land to accommodate wildlife species. Controlled cutting of timber enables younger trees to survive and mature and low-lying vegetation to grow, supporting wildlife more adequately. In addition, proper tree harvesting increases watershed supplies, since more snow and rainwater gradually run into streams and lakes. Such water then becomes part of the water supply used by wildlife as well as humans.

Small game in the Township includes birds and mammals, such as grouse, woodcock, turkey, cottontail rabbits, snowshoe hare, squirrel, raccoon, fox, and coyote. Waterfowl include ducks and geese of various species. Chickadees, pine siskin, finches, grosbeaks, sparrows, robins, blue jays, warblers, and various other bird species reside in or migrate through the Township.

**Figure 3.3**

**Livingston Township  
Forests & Wetlands**

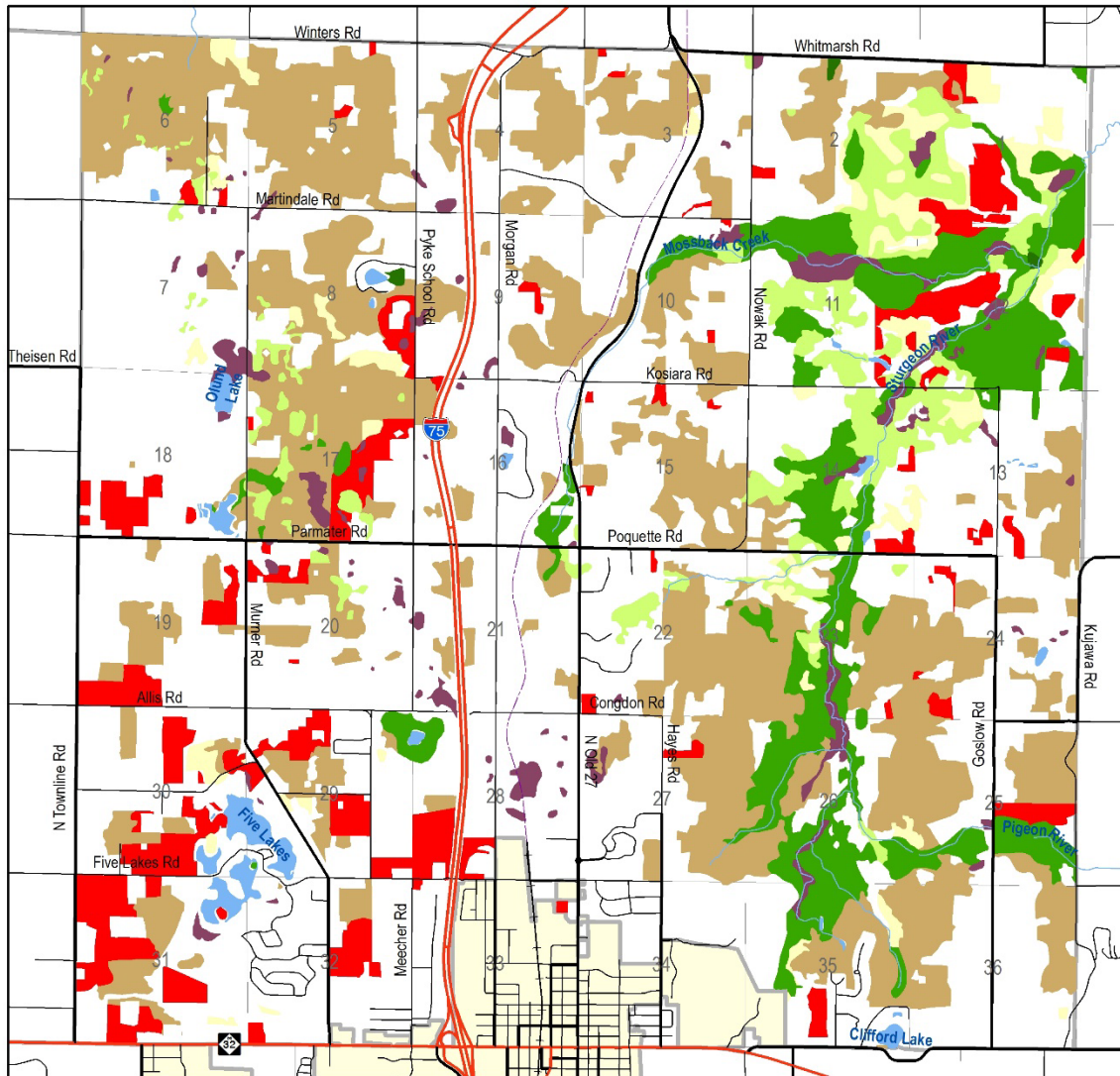


**Map Legend**

- State Highway
- Primary Road
- Local Road
- Rivers
- Lakes
- Sections
- Township Boundary

**Forests & Wetlands**

- Northern Hardwoods
- Aspen-Birch
- Lowland Hardwoods
- Pine
- Lowland Conifers
- Wooded Wetland
- Nonforested Wetland



Finally, it should be mentioned that in 2001, a select committee of the Pigeon River County Advisory Council identified part of northeast Livingston Township as an important wildlife corridor and buffer lands for the Pigeon River County State Forest. Known as the Pigeon River Habitat Initiative (PRHI), this multi-organization effort seeks to protect and augment the natural landscape-level habitat within and surrounding the Pigeon River State Forest. In addition to landowner technical assistance and incentive programs, Huron Pines, a natural resource conservation and education organization, conducted an analysis of community planning and zoning. The 2010 report investigates the level of resource protection afforded by each community's master plan and zoning ordinance. Furthermore, the plan recommends the following: 1) incorporate "Pigeon River Country Area" language into master plans, 2) consistent zoning

## Water Resources

Otsego County is the headwaters of six major river systems: the Au Sable, Black, Manistee, Pigeon, Sturgeon, and Boyne. The Black, Pigeon, and Sturgeon rivers are also a part of a larger system, the Cheboygan River Watershed.

As noted in **Figure 3.4**, Livingston Township is

## Oil and Gas Development

Over the last thirty years, there has been considerable activity in drilling natural gas wells in the Township. **Figure 3.5** is a map showing the location of well drilling activity. There are 313

elements across all units of government in the PRHI project area, and 3) use a collaborative approach to acquire conservation easements and engage with large landowners and units of government to offer support and expert advice regarding forest management and wetland protection/restoration.

All facets of the natural environment of Livingston Township - soils, climate, topography, vegetation, and wildlife - are important as separate entities. When combined they interact in a manner that creates a balance which defines the natural community character. This character needs to be understood and measures taken to minimize any negative impact that human development may create. Livingston Township's environment should be an important consideration in any future decision-making affecting any part of the community.

located within the headwaters of three major rivers, the Sturgeon, Pigeon, and Au Sable. According to Michigan Framework GIS data sets, there are 179 acres of surface water found in many lakes and small ponds. The same source identifies 16 miles of streams and small creeks within the township.

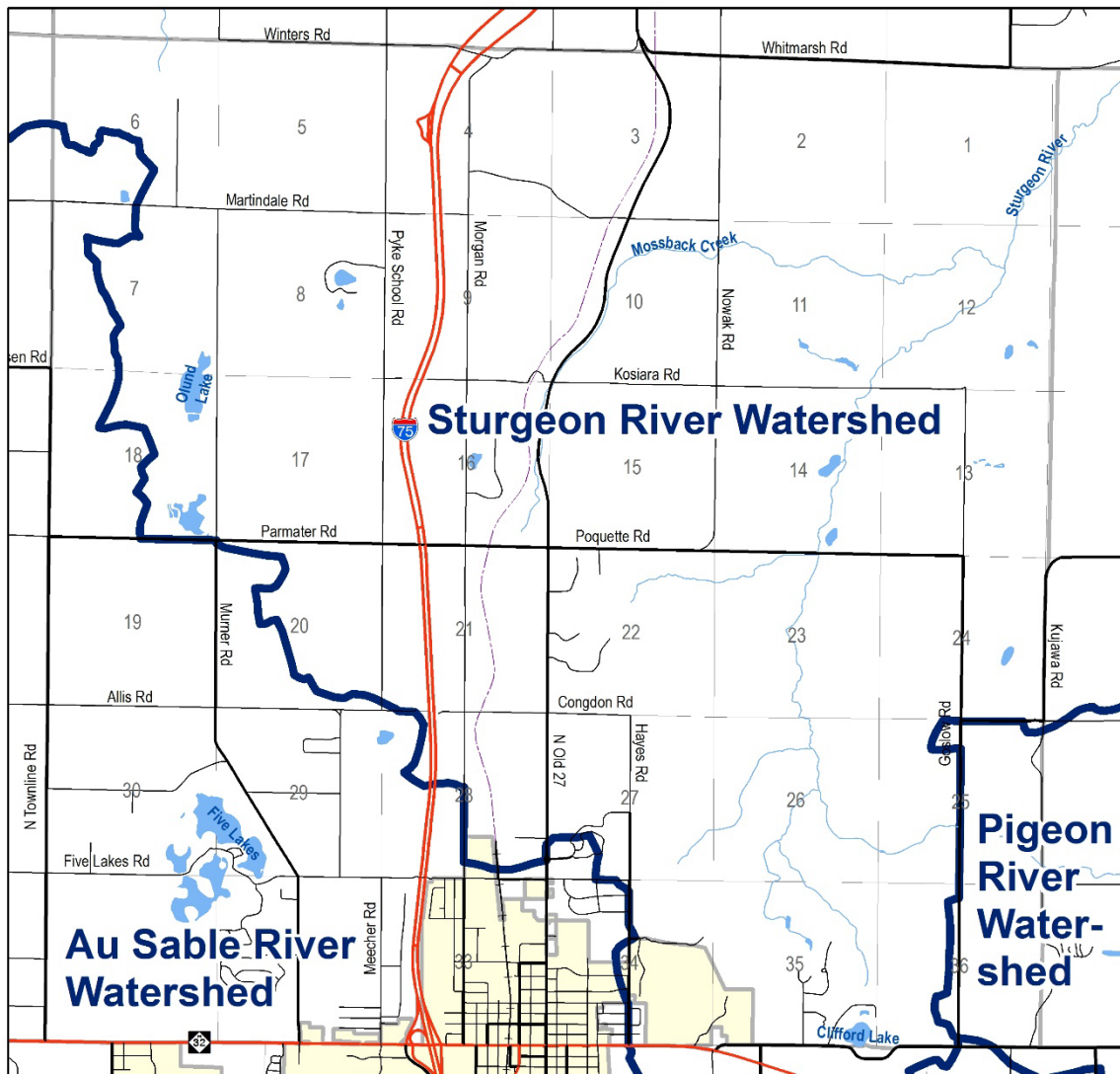
permitted gas and oil wells, with 295 producing wells. **Table 3.1** shows the status of gas wells in the Township.

Figure 3.4

Livingston Township  
Water Resources

Map Legend

- State Highway
- Primary Road
- Local Road
- - - North Central State Trail
- Rivers
- Lakes
- Major Watersheds
- Sections



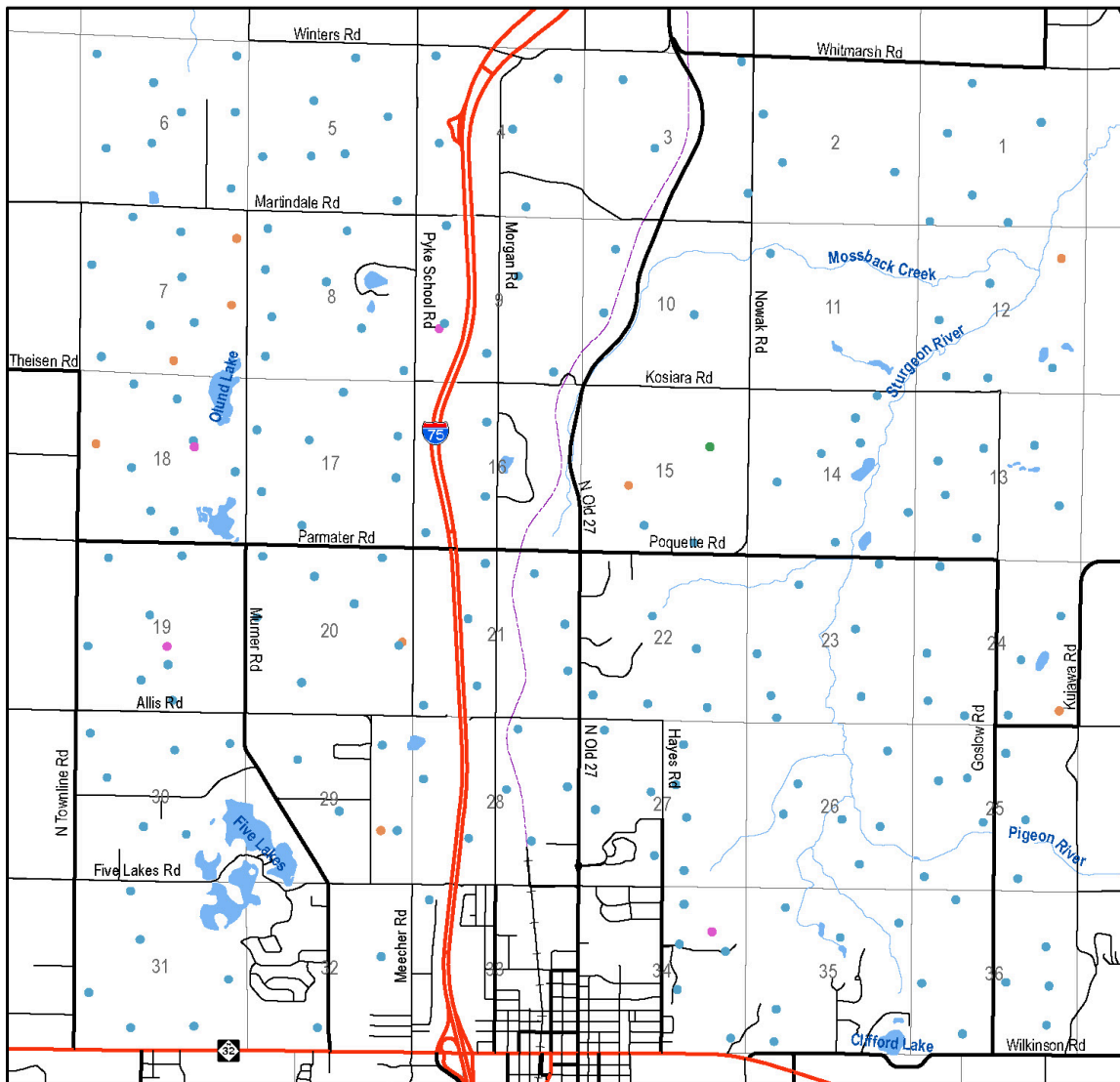
**Figure 3.5**

**Livingston Township  
Oil & Gas Development**



**Map Legend**

- State Highway
  - Primary Road
  - Local Road
  - North Central State Trail
  - + + Detroit & Mackinaw Railway
  - ~ Rivers
  - Lakes
  - Sections
- 
- Well Status**
- Active
  - Plugging Approved
  - Producing
  - Shut\_In



<b>Table 3.1 Livingston Township Oil and Gas Well Information</b>	
<b>Oil and Gas Well Status</b>	<b>Number</b>
Active	6
Drilling Complete	
Plugged Back	
Plugging Approved (Properly plugged and site restored)	10
Plugging Completed (Plugged but site needs restoration and approval)	
Producing	295
Permitted Well - not yet drilled	
Shut In	2
Suspended	
Temporarily Abandoned	
Terminated Permit	
Well Complete	

*Source: Michigan EGLE, August 2023*

CHAPTER

4

# COMMUNITY SERVICES & FACILITIES



Livingston Township Master Plan

One of the primary contributors to the quality of life in a community is the type and variety of services available to both local residents and visitors to the area. In many cases, a smaller community does not have the financial resources to provide all or even most of the services that would normally be considered essential in an urban area. The more populated the community, the greater the variety of public, semi-public, and private services are made available to residents.

## Township Government

It is a fact of our system of government that policies adopted by decision-makers at the Federal, State, or local levels are the primary catalysts for the general shape of a community. Although national and state programs are not specifically designed to deal with local concerns, they do indirectly influence actions taken by both local leaders and private investors. Fiscal policies are a good example of this influence. Local government, through the powers given to it via state enabling legislation, has the capacity to determine its own land use patterns through various development controls, such as zoning and subdivision regulations.

It is true that private enterprise, in particular the real estate market, may be directly involved with development. However, the pattern and type of development are in most cases guided by the zoning ordinances, sewer and utility placement, and fiscal policies of the local government. Livingston Township is a non-incorporated, general law township. It also is limited in its powers to guide its own development, as it is

## Transportation

An important measure of the vitality of a community is its transportation system, which also helps define its physical pattern of development. The Township's road network has been constructed and maintained by the State and the County. Specifically, M 32, and I 75 are under the State's jurisdiction, while all other roads in the

This chapter of the Master Plan will identify the types and extent of services now available to residents and businesses in Livingston Township. Even though these services may be sufficient for the needs of the current population, future development may increase the demand to upgrade or expand the services and facilities the Township needs to maintain a satisfactory living environment in the future.

dependent upon Otsego County for zoning administration, road construction and maintenance, police and ambulance services, and health and welfare services. Livingston Township does not maintain a full-time administrative staff.

The Township Board is composed of five members consisting of, one Supervisor, one Clerk, one Treasurer, and two Trustees. This body has the responsibility of overseeing the general welfare of the Township, including the participation of board members on panels and committees.

The Township Planning Commission was established in 1973. In accordance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act of 2008, the Township reestablished the planning commission by ordinance in October of 2009. In accordance with the township ordinance, the planning commission has all powers authorized by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act of 2008, as amended.

Township are primary and secondary roads. The Otsego County Road Commission clears those roads in the winter which are normally used as access by residents. Livingston Township works closely with the Otsego County Road Commission for the purpose of road maintenance. The Township provides money from its general fund



for road projects.

Circulation and transportation are important to the development of any community. The proximity of Livingston Township to major transportation routes, such as I 75 and M 32, can be an asset by increasing the normal rate of growth. On the other hand, it may be a liability for the same reason, particularly if accelerated development is detrimental to the social and physical welfare of the community and its residents.

As the City of Gaylord develops and expands, the population of Livingston Township can be expected to grow. Both communities will likely experience further development in the areas adjacent to existing Federal and State circulation routes. The City of Gaylord's growth areas are adjacent to I 75 and M-32 and these areas will likely see more pronounced growth. But, Livingston Township, because of its proximity to Gaylord, will share in at least part of the future development pressures. Figure 5.1 shows the general highway network surrounding and running through the Township.

The potential for commercial development within the Township is enhanced by major transportation routes. Commercial locations along Old 27 North and along the north side M-32 West can become logical extensions of the City. The Otsego County Master Plan provides the structure for supporting new development which centers on urban areas. The plan recommends coordination between the County, City of Gaylord, and Bagley and Livingston Township for land use planning, zoning, and capital improvement planning.

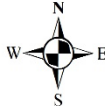
State thoroughfares (M-32, I-75, and Old 27 North) are maintained and plowed by State equipment and employees. The remainder of the roads within Livingston Township consist of local collector streets and minor thoroughfares, which are maintained and plowed by the County Road Commission. Each spring Township officials and

the Otsego County Road Commission conduct a drive-around on the roads in the Township to examine the condition and discuss road maintenance activities. Livingston Township provides funding for road repairs and upgrades from its general fund.

Public transportation via bus is provided throughout the County on request to the Otsego County Bus System. The Lake State Railway runs parallel to Old 27 North and terminates in the southern portion of the Township. The termination at the southern end of the Township limits any further industrial development dependent upon rail service. Freight transportation via rail has been available on the Lake State Railway running from Gaylord to Bay City. The abandoned railroad right-of-way from Gaylord north to Cheboygan and onto Mackinaw City has been converted to a year-round multi-use nonmotorized recreational trail called North Central State Trail. Wheeled motorized vehicles are not permitted on the trail.

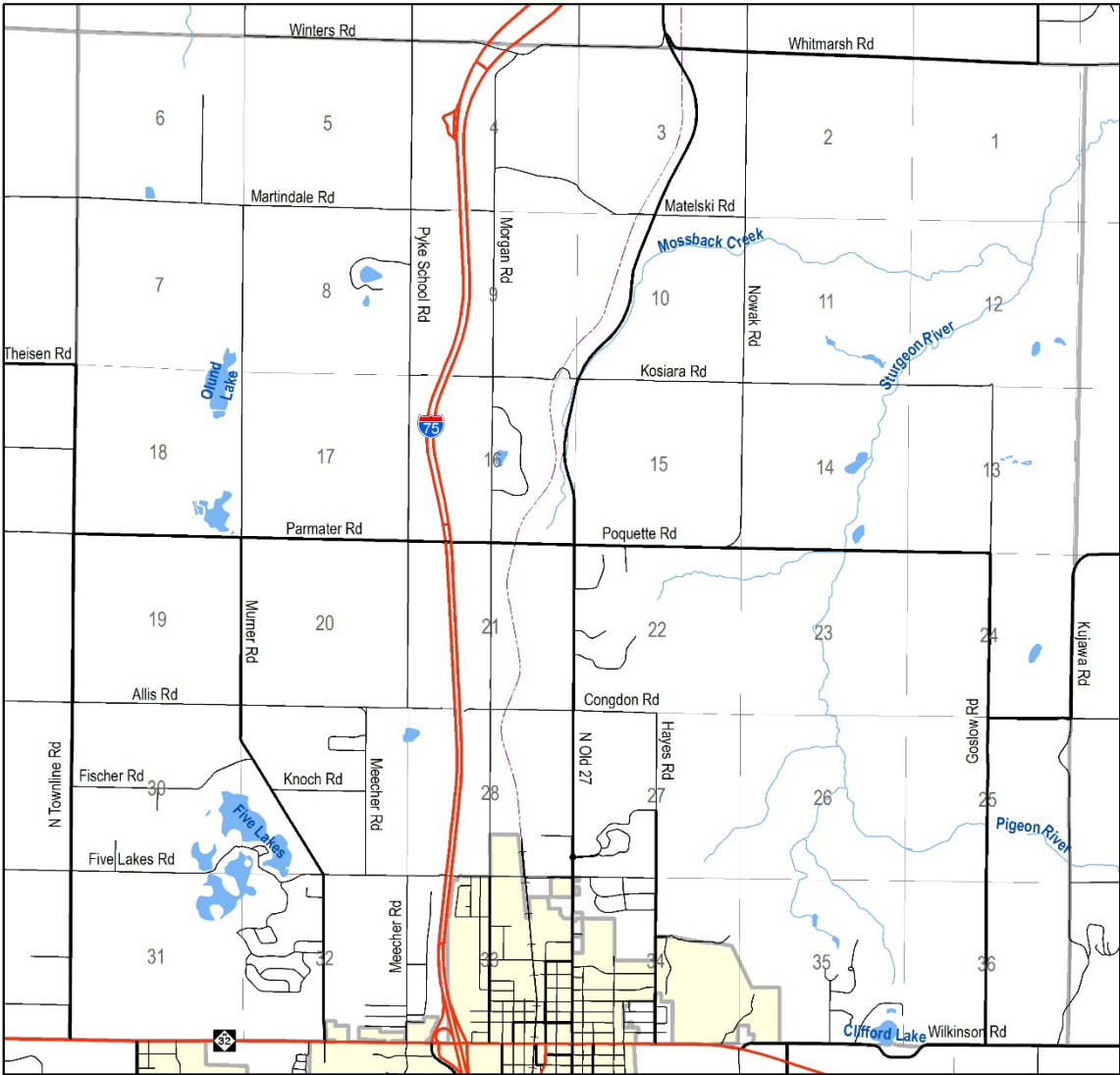
The Gaylord Regional Airport is a General Aviation airport with a 6,578 foot by 150-foot asphalt primary runway and 4,200 foot by 75-foot asphalt secondary runway. The approaches include ILS, VOR, and NDB. Jet fuel and aviation gasoline are available. The airport is attended seven days a week from 6:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Nov 1 through May 1 and 7:30 am to 6:00 pm May 1 through Nov 1. Unattended on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years Day. Private, corporate, government, charter, and cargo planes receive full service at the airport. It is the base operations center for North Country Aviation, Northern Michigan Jet Services, and has component units of Martinaire, FedEx, and UPS, and most recently Guardian Flight Medical Transport. Customer service, a conference room, rental cars, and local taxi service are also available.

**Figure 5.1**  
**Livingston Township**  
**Road Map**



**Map Legend**

- State Highway
- Primary Road
- Local Road
- North Central State Trail
- Detroit & Mackinaw Railway
- Rivers
- Lakes
- Sections
- Township Boundary
- City of Gaylord



Regional commercial air service is available at Pellston Regional Airport in Emmet County, Cherry Capital Airport in Traverse City, and Alpena County Regional Airport located west of the City

of Alpena. Commercial air service at these facilities connects travelers to larger international airports.

## Communications

Many of the activities, opinions, and ideas expressed during daily events and circumstances are the result of various forms of communication. The variety and quality of the different communication media available to the residents of Livingston Township contributes to the area's quality of life. Television, radio, and newsprint

help form attitudes and opinions on various subjects, introduce new products through advertising, and provide the entertainment to which we are accustomed. The internet, with social media and other online content, is becoming a dominant form of communication.

## Telephone

Landline telephone service is provided in the Township by Frontier and Spectrum. A number of cellular providers offer services throughout the area. Cellular services have seen a great deal of

expansion in recent years. However, there are still areas of the township where coverage is limited. Voice Over IP (VoIP) phone service is also available through many internet service providers.

## Internet Access

Access to fast, reliable, and affordable high-speed internet service is critical in nearly every aspect of life. From virtual learning, telehealth, remote working, job opportunities, and communication, to government services, access to the internet is critical for every resident, business, institution, and community in Michigan. Broadband internet

service has been expanding and is readily available in the more populated areas of the Township. In less populated areas, internet access options can be more limited. Multiple private business, State, and Federal initiatives are underway that will greatly improve broadband access within the Township in the coming years.

## Radio, Television, and Newspapers

Social media and online streaming services are becoming increasingly popular as sources for news, information, and entertainment. The growth of these services has had an impact on the reach of traditional sources such as radio, TV, and newspapers. However, for those without reliable internet service, these traditional sources are a valuable asset.

and WTCM. Two Christian radio stations serve the area. Online streaming services have also enabled the ability to listen to radio stations from around the world. The following television stations can serve the Township via over-the-air broadcast, through cable or satellite, and even some streaming services: WPBN (NBC Traverse City); WTOM (NBC Cheboygan); WWTV (CBS Cadillac); WWUP (CBS Sault Ste. Marie); WGTU (ABC Traverse City); WGTQ (ABC Sault Ste. Marie); and WCMU (PBS Mt. Pleasant).

Local FM radio stations available to residents include: WKHQ, WMJZ, WPHN, WJML, WCMU,

Several newspapers are offered in the immediate area, including Detroit News/Free Press, Bay City Times, Traverse City Record Eagle, Wall Street

Journal, and U.S.A. Today. Local publications include the Gaylord Herald Times and the Weekly Choice.

### Energy Supplies

Livingston Township is fortunate enough to have access to a variety of energy sources, including natural gas, LP gas, electricity, fuel oil, and wood. Wind and solar energy get some site-level use. The variety of fuels available to the Township enhances the chances of locating a variety of activities in the area. Commercial and residential land uses can be developed in a more uniform and cohesive fashion if there is a planned distribution of energy supplies. That is, the timed and sequential expansion of utility lines can aid in the determination of when, where, and how large future development will be.

Natural gas is supplied to the Livingston Township area by DTE Energy. This utility serves the eight-county Northeastern Michigan Region via two main transmission lines paralleling U.S. 23 on the east and 175 on the west. The line runs through Livingston Township, enabling the residents of

the community a greater variety in the choice of heating and cooking fuel than others may have that reside in areas further removed from this main line. In addition, industries look favorably upon sites offering a variety of energy supplies, especially natural gas. Propane fuel is also available from distributors in Gaylord and surrounding areas. Many seasonal and recreational homes in the Township use LP gas for heating. Few homes utilize fuel oil for heating anymore. Outdoor wood-burning boilers have become much more prevalent in recent years.

Consumers Energy and Great Lakes Energy provide Livingston Township and surrounding areas with electrical service. Otsego County adopted a wind turbine ordinance in 2011. The ordinance regulates the placement, size and configuration of wind turbines, which are categorized into small, medium and large sizes.

### Water

Except for a very limited area, there is no public water system within the Township. The availability of groundwater and the low density of the area has in the past precluded the need for a distribution system. However, if the Township should increase in density to the point where seepage into groundwater from a variety of sources creates pollution problems, a public water system may have to be considered.

With this in mind, the Township retained Granger Engineering, Inc. of Gaylord in 1983 to prepare a water system study. The five service areas included in the study covered the more populous subdivided areas north of Gaylord. Additionally, in late 1984 a test well was drilled at the northwest corner of McLouth and Hayes Roads, just south

of the Alpine Center.

The water quality test results from this well were within the standards for municipal water supplies. In terms of capacity, the well was anticipated to pump 375 gallons per minute or greater. While the well shaft was partially cased, the pump and distribution system were not installed, due in part to system construction costs. To offset high water system development costs, Livingston Township investigated possible shared utilities with Bagley Township. To that end, a joint water and sewer authority was organized between the two municipalities. The water system feasibility study was revised and updated in 1987 to reflect the service needs of both communities.

In 1987, Bagley Township reached an agreement with the City of Gaylord to provide water service to a portion of that township. As a result, plans for joint service between Bagley and Livingston have not been carried out, and the water and sewer authority has been dissolved. Future municipal water supply for Livingston Township may depend either on the Township deciding to reform a water and sewer authority with Bagley Township or controlling development such that these systems would not be needed in the future. Unless the City of Gaylord revises its position that the provision of sewer and water services can only be accomplished under an Act 425 agreement, the Township should not consider further discussions with the City. The Citizen Survey indicated that 76.2 percent of respondents were not interested in any further annexations to the City for the provision of sewer and water services.

In 1995, when Otsego Club (formerly Hidden Valley) was developing a planned unit development, attention was again focused on developing the Township's well site for providing water to the Otsego Club development. Aquifer

testing was again performed on the well during this effort. In addition, conditional approval was received from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and the Michigan Department of Health to place the existing well into service and construct an additional production well. However, the Township well was never used. An Act 425 agreement was reached providing City water and sewer service to the Otsego Club.

In 1999 Wade-Trim, Inc. prepared an additional study on the feasibility of supplying water and fire protection services to the core commercial area along Old 27, north of McLouth Road utilizing the Township well site as the source. Again in 2003 Wade-Trim conducted an additional study on the feasibility of developing the Township well site and extending the water main to the two large parcels located along Hayes Road. The study reviewed several development options based on immediate and future needs. The study also presented financing options, expectant demands on the system, fire protection needs, procedures for developing the system, and operation and maintenance.

## Sewer and Septic Systems

At present, there is no public sanitary sewer system in Livingston Township. Residents rely on private septic systems. This solution works well in many areas of the Township. However, in areas of concentrated residential development and private water wells, pollution is a real risk. Perhaps the most challenging area in this regard is the Five Lakes area, where high water tables

and wet soils around the lake make siting private systems difficult. This situation illustrates the direct relationship between public utilities and future growth potential. Additional growth in these areas may require developers to provide package wastewater treatment systems and include restrictive deed covenants for the operation and maintenance of them.

## Solid Waste Disposal

Livingston Township does not presently offer solid waste management or municipal waste disposal service. Residents and business owners rely on private waste haulers, who must dispose of the rubbish in a licensed landfill. The primary private waste haulers that pick up solid waste in

the Township are Waste Management, Inc., PAC Sanitation, and GFL Environmental. Solid waste collected in the Township is hauled to the licensed Waste Management landfill facility, located in northern Crawford County. The Township also sponsors an annual household clean-up day held

in June each year, allowing residents to dispose

Northeast Michigan Council of Governments (NEMCOG) is the designated solid waste management planning agency for Otsego County. Operating in this role, NEMCOG prepared the County's Solid Waste Management Plan as required by P.A. 641 of the State of Michigan.

### Public Safety

A critical function of a local government is the protection of health, safety, and welfare of its citizens. The majority of townships in Michigan, especially the more rural townships, are unable to provide their own police and fire protection.

### Law Enforcement

The Otsego County Sheriff's Department patrols Livingston Township as well as all other unincorporated sections of the County. The County office and jail are located at 124 South Court Street in Gaylord and have a complement of one sheriff, one undersheriff, a jail administrator, ten deputies, ten correction officers, two seasonal Marine/ORV deputies, a work camp corrections officer, work camp supervisor, and several administrative and records assistants. As the County increases in population, it can be expected that personnel, facilities, and equipment will have to be expanded to provide quality public safety

### Fire Protection

Livingston Township is located in the Otsego County Fire Department Fire District. This district encompasses the following communities: City of Gaylord, Livingston Township, Bagley Township, Dover Township, Hayes Township, and West ½ of Chester Township.

The fire station is located in the City of Gaylord.

of large items at no charge.

New legislation was signed into law in December 2022 that will require solid waste plans to transition to a new Materials Management Plan. A Materials Management Plan focuses less on disposal, and more on the proper collection, recovery, processing, and disposal of materials.

Rather, it is somewhat standard for townships to contract with their respective counties to obtain police and join a coalition of townships for volunteer fire protection. Such is the case for Livingston Township.

programs.

The City of Gaylord has its own police department which patrols the incorporated portions of the city. Since nearly 20 percent of the County's population resides in Gaylord, the existence of the Gaylord Police Department substantially aids the Sheriff's Department in providing services that concentrate in the remainder of the County. In addition, the Michigan State Police maintain a post in Gaylord. This operation also contributes to the quality and quantity of police protection available to the County.

The department is an independent paid volunteer fire department administered by a fire board, comprised of two members from each government unit it serves. There are forty members on the fire department who respond to calls 24 hours a day. Fire calls are dispatched through Otsego County 911, with each member receiving the call by pager.

All units are equipped with 2-way high band radios and some have a 800 MHZ radio. Each firefighter on an emergency scene has a handheld high band radio for communications.

Otsego County Fire Department has a mutual aid contract with the other four fire departments in Otsego County, as well as departments in Antrim, Montmorency and Crawford County.

### Ambulance Service

The Otsego County Emergency Medical Service provides emergency service to all sections of the County. The organization is staffed with full-time paramedics, EMT's, and EMT specialists. Ambulance service available to the area includes a mobile intensive care unit with air ambulance provided by North Flight. The organization is

As the District continues to increase in population, the number of fire calls per year can be expected to increase. As the expanding population puts more pressure on existing personnel and facilities, it can be expected that additional facilities and staff will be required. Through maintaining membership in this fire district, Livingston Township can contribute to the operation and expansion of adequate fire protection, at a reasonable cost.

incorporated as a non-profit corporation, and the service provided to the community is highly regarded. The service is fully supported by user fees, which are used to purchase new equipment as needed. Once equipment is purchased, ownership of the equipment is turned over to the County.

### Health Services

Healthcare services are an important element of the community facilities available to County residents. Otsego Memorial Hospital provides a wide range of medical services including emergency and extended care facilities, surgery, intensive care units, medical laboratory services,

and a walk-in clinic. Additional health-related services are provided by Northwest Community Health, Otsego County Department of Human Services, Northern Michigan Substance Abuse Services, and several other health-related agencies.

### Community Facilities and Organizations

Because of its close proximity to Gaylord, Livingston Township residents can easily avail themselves of the numerous facilities and activities located in and around the City of Gaylord. The following organizations are active in the area: American Red Cross, American Association of University Women, Boy Scouts of America, Eagles Club, Elks Club, Gaylord Little League, Gaylord Masonic Lodge, Girl Scouts of America, Jaycees, Kiwanis Club, Knights of Columbus, Lions Club, Optimists Club, Otsego County Fair Association, Otsego County Ministerial Association, Rotary, Senior Citizens

(Otsego County Commission on Aging), Otsego Memorial Hospital Auxiliary, Retired Senior Volunteer Program, Northland Sportsman Club, Otsego County Hockey Association, Zonta Club, and the American Cancer Society. Note, that other organizations may exist.

Local churches and the Community Center located in Gaylord have facilities available for meetings. Several private clubs have facilities available for meetings, although not all are open to the general public. The Livingston Township Hall, located on Old 27 North, has facilities

available for public and private functions.

## Educational Facilities and Programs

The quality of the present and future of Livingston Township is affected by the type and number of educational facilities available to its residents. The teaching of employable skills as well as more formal secondary education adds to the capabilities of the local labor force.

Livingston Township is within two separate public school districts - Gaylord Community Schools and Vanderbilt Area School. The northeastern five sections of the Township (Sections 1, 2, 3, 11, and 12) are in the Vanderbilt School District, and the remainder is in the Gaylord Community Schools. Several private schools also serve the area.

The University Center Gaylord is a higher education collaborative designed to facilitate and deliver a complete range of higher education services and training to the citizens of rural, northern Michigan. The University Center is a "communiversity" partnership of accredited

colleges and universities, industry, public schools, and citizens where no two or four-year entity exists. It is viewed as the major catalyst in driving positive economic development and quality of life in our region through higher education and training for high-skilled wage and salaried positions, and for lifelong learning. University partners at the center include Davenport University, Eastern Michigan University, Kirtland Community College M-TEC, Lake Superior State University, Madonna University, Michigan State University, and Spring Arbor University.

The M-TEC at Kirtland-Gaylord is a state-of-the-art facility offering technical education in a unique, flexible, student-friendly environment. The M-TEC site is the home of Kirtland's construction and industrial trades programs, as well as cardiac sonography and practical nursing.



CHAPTER

5

# EXISTING LAND USE



Livingston Township Master Plan

Existing Land Use Statistics

Prior to determining future land use recommendations and developing a future land use map, a community must have an accurate assessment of existing land uses. This chapter presents information on both types and locations of existing land uses. The map of existing land use, shown in Figure 5-1, illustrates the distribution of

land uses within the township. Table 5-1 breaks down the percent of the township in each land use category. The existing land use map was derived from an analysis of parcel data from the Otsego County Equalization Department, tax classifications, and aerial photo interpretation by the Northeast Michigan Council of Governments.

Table 5-1: Livingston Township Existing Land Use		
Category	Acres	% of Township
Residential - Improved	5,718	26.9%
Residential - Vacant	5,254	24.7%
Agricultural - Improved	3,963	18.6%
Agricultural - Vacant	3,707	17.4%
Commercial - Improved	468	2.2%
Commercial - Vacant	370	1.7%
Industrial & Utility - Improved	80	0.4%
Industrial & Utility - Vacant	119	0.6%
Township-Owned, City-Owned or County-Owned	265	1.2%
State of Michigan	62	0.3%
Commercial Forest	456	2.1%
Water	264	1.2%
Transportation Corridors	543	2.6%
TOTAL	21,269	100%

Source: Otsego County Equalization Department 2023 and NEMCOG

Residential Uses

As can be seen from Table 5-1, the amount of land being used for residential purposes is over 51 percent of the Township. Nearly 27 percent of the township is improved residential while a large portion of the township, over 24 percent of the land, is classified as vacant residential. This means that nearly one-quarter of all of the land in the township is available for residential

development but no residential structure currently exists on the land. The location and pattern of residential development within the township are shown in Figure 5-1. Residential uses are found throughout the township with smaller lot residential typically being located in the southern half and close to the City of Gaylord.

## Agricultural Uses

Agricultural uses are distributed throughout the township and account for 36 percent of the land in the township. Improved agricultural include

those parcels which have structures on them while vacant agricultural parcels do not include structures.

## Commercial Uses

Commercial uses comprise only 3.9 percent of the land in the township. 468 acres are improved while 370 are vacant commercial. Large commercial lots are found in the south-central portion of the township in addition to lots in the

extreme southeast and in the southwest portion. As expected, the commercial areas are located around the City of Gaylord. It should be noted that churches are also contained within this category.

## Industrial and Utility Uses

Industrial uses make up one percent of the township. A transformer station makes up 74 acres of the improved industrial while the utility

transmission corridor makes up the vacant portion of this land use category.

## Township, City, and County Road Commission Land

Locally-owned land comprises 1.2 percent of the land in the township. Livingston Township owns approximately 50 acres of land while the Otsego

County Road Commission owns 42 acres, Otsego County owns 173 acres, and the City of Gaylord owns 1.2 acres.

## State of Michigan Land

While most of the townships in Otsego County contain a large amount of State of Michigan land,

Livingston Township only contains 62 acres.

## Commercial Forest

Commercial forest land totals 2.1 percent of the township which is located in the northwestern portion of the township. Commercial forest land

is private land that is managed for long-term timber production.

## Water

Lakes comprise 1.2 percent of the township, the largest of which is the Five Lakes area west of the

interstate (I-75).


## Transportation Corridors

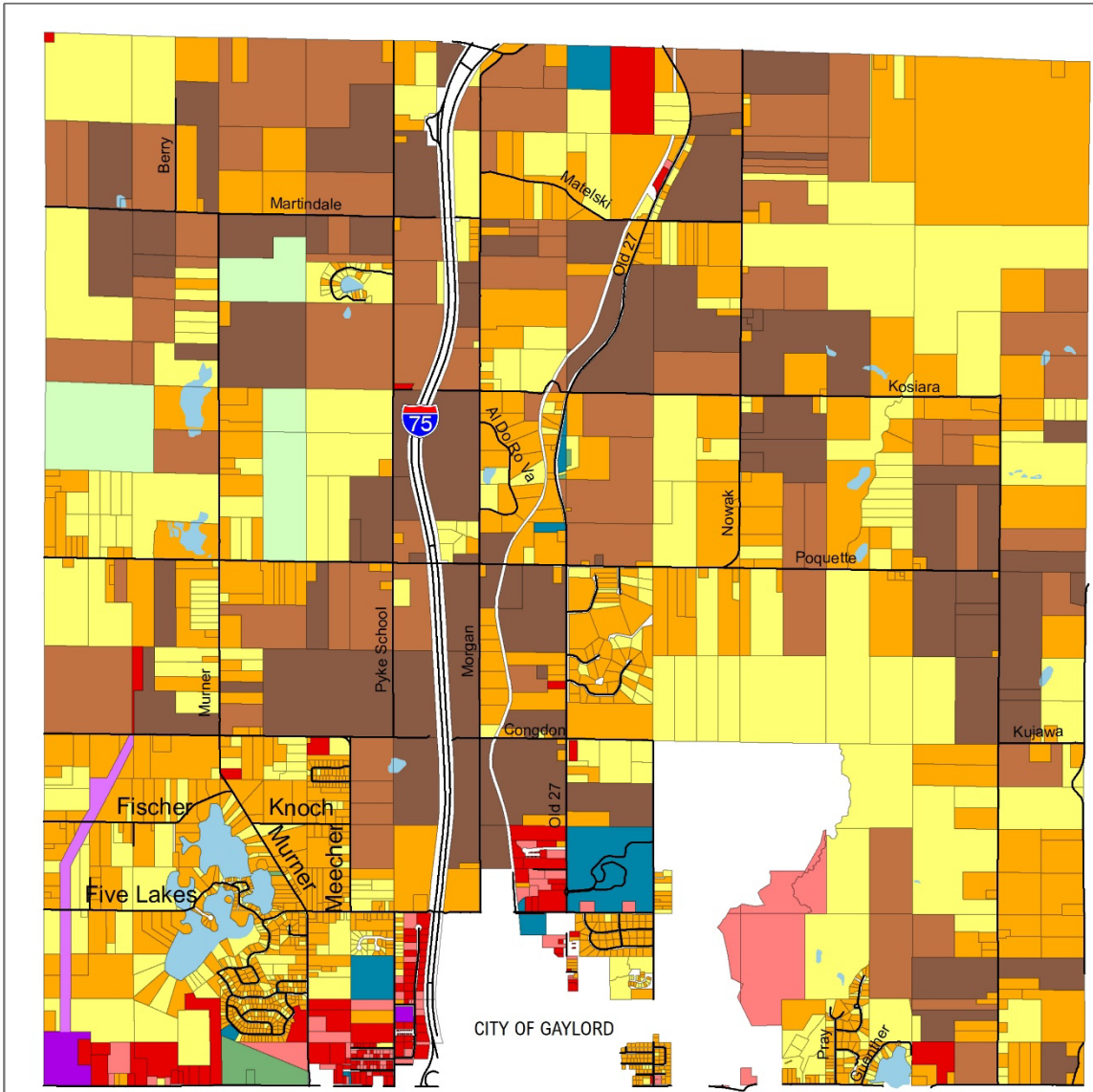
The remainder of the township (2.6 percent) consists of various transportation corridors. The only transportation corridors which are counted in this category are those for which separate parcels have been described and included in the

Equalization data. This includes mainly areas of I-75 as well as some subdivision road parcels. Also included in this category is the area of the North Central State Trail which traverses north-south along the rail corridor.

Figure 5-1

## Livingston Township Master Plan Existing Land Use

- |   |                         |   |                           |
|---|-------------------------|---|---------------------------|
|  | Agricultural - Improved |  | Residential - Improved    |
|  | Agricultural - Vacant   |  | Residential - Vacant      |
|  | Commercial - Improved   |  | Commercial Forest         |
|  | Commercial Vacant       |  | State of Michigan         |
|  | Industrial - Improved   |  | County, Township, or City |
|  | Industrial - Vacant     |  | Water                     |



Map by the Northeast Michigan Council of Governments  
Data provided courtesy of Otsego County Equalization Department

0 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles

CHAPTER

6

# GOALS & OBJECTIVES



Livingston Township Master Plan

## Introduction

Analysis has been made of the important features of the Township which give the community its identity. The proximity of Livingston Township to the City of Gaylord and neighboring townships offers opportunities for intergovernmental cooperation and coordination. The full realization of community identity and intergovernmental cooperation are the primary concepts that will guide future development goals for Livingston Township.

Both shortcomings as well as positive community features have already been identified. The following sections will utilize these characteristics in setting goals, objectives, and policies. Goals are very broad descriptions of the overall desirable characteristics the people of Livingston Township wish to attain within the planned period. **Goals indicate the general direction the Township wishes to take in its development.**

**Objectives are definitive statements that reflect and delineate the adopted goals.** They point out programs that will assist in making the more generalized goals a reality. **Policies are guidelines for action.** While all policies may not always be consistently applied, the decision-makers and

residents of Livingston Township should promote the active use of as many of these policy statements as possible. This can best be accomplished if knowledge, creativity, and most importantly, community involvement and interest are applied to promoting the optimum future for the Township.

The following is the overriding concept upon which Livingston Township intends to base its future:

*“Livingston Township desires to preserve its rural character, enhance its identity, and work with its neighboring communities to provide a satisfying quality of life for all its residents.”*

This has implications for physical, economic, and social development, all of which will be detailed in the following Goals, Objectives, and Policies statement. (Note: the numbers below **are** intended to reflect relative priorities.)

---

## Goals

1. Maintain the general rural character of the Township.
2. Protect, as much as possible, the existing natural environment, existing farmlands, forests, and scenic beauty.
3. Promote a desirable distribution and an orderly growth in population.
4. Promote programs and policies designed to develop and strengthen a sense or “community” within the Township.
5. Attain efficiency, strength, and autonomy in local government, while retaining constructive liaison with other units of government.
6. Allocate land uses in a manner which will ensure an independent identity for Livingston Township.
7. Maintain a viable local economy.

---

## Local Government

**Objective:**

Livingston Township should attempt to provide local government services that will maximize the opportunities of its residents while minimizing, as far as possible, the cost of these services.

**Policies:**

1. Recommend revisions of the Otsego County Zoning Ordinance when and where needed to conform to the land use element of this plan for Livingston Township.
2. Promote communication between the Township and its residents which will increase citizen interest and involvement in local public affairs.
3. Promote water and sewer systems to be provided by developers, in specifically designated and limited locations within the Township where the District Health Department deems those systems necessary and where such infrastructure contributes to Township goals.
4. Provide levels of service in specifically designated and limited locations that will serve the residents and insure the viability and autonomy of the Township.
5. Implement and enforce standards for residential and commercial development which will result in economical provision of public services.
6. Create local, health, welfare, and service programs, either independently, or in conjunction with other units of local government that will fulfill those needs not satisfied by County, State, or Federal Government, or by the private sector.

---

## Transportation

**Objective 1:**

The primary goal of an adequate transportation system is to provide accessibility. Therefore, it is an objective of the Township to provide roads and major thoroughfares that will serve the needs of local as well as through traffic.

**Policies:**

1. Provide road systems able to accommodate existing and future traffic needs.
2. Efficiently limit the amount of street area required by residential developments to optimize the quantity of land available for residential, forestry, agricultural, and recreational uses.
3. Coordinate the timing and location of commercial land use with existing and proposed streets to minimize construction cost, traffic congestion, and land use conflicts.
4. Design adequate and efficient off street parking and circulation systems in commercial areas.

### **Objective 2:**

A complete transportation system includes trails for recreational use.

### **Policies:**

1. Cooperate with State and local efforts to designate recreational vehicle trails in nearby areas accessible to Township residents.
2. Within the Township, encourage private entities to provide hiking and cross-country ski trails.
3. Consider the use of funds from the Livingston Township Improvement Fund for the development of non-motorized recreational trails in the Township.

---

## Public Facilities

### **Objective:**

The ability to achieve an identity is determined not only by commercial and industrial activities but also by the placement of public facilities within the Township. Livingston Township's objective is to provide public facilities required to meet the needs of its residents.

### **Policies:**

1. Develop public facilities and utilities within limited geographic areas to keep costs down.
2. Work in conjunction with other units of government to ensure the placement of facilities which are beyond the capacity of the Township alone to provide.

---

## Health and Welfare

### **Objective:**

A community is composed of individuals with a variety of backgrounds and needs. It is, therefore, an objective of Livingston Township to provide those services which will fulfill, as far as possible, the needs of the individual.

### **Policies:**

1. Work in close association with Otsego County Sheriff, fire, and health agencies to ensure the best possible health and welfare programs for the Township.
2. Utilize the Township's public facilities to administer citizen education programs dealing with public health and safety.



---

## Utilities

**Objective:**

The placement of water, sewer, electric, and gas utilities not only affects the quality and quantity of services available to the Township but also defines the pattern of commercial and residential development in the area. It is an objective of the Township to minimize reliance on public sewer and water infrastructure in the Township and move to require developers to provide and maintain those facilities. The Township will continue to provide oversight and franchises to electric and gas utilities.

**Policies:**

1. Analyze the social, economic, and physical effects of the placement of proposed facilities.
2. Require residential developers to provide utilities that adequately serve the future needs of the residents of the development without promoting over-development or leapfrog development.
3. Require commercial activities to fund utilities that adequately meet on-site needs without promoting uncontrolled growth.
4. Support innovative land use control techniques to promote sequential and timed development according to the capacity and desire of the Township to provide required public utilities.

---

## Residential

**Objective:**

Support efforts to provide a range of housing types for all residents in the Township.

**Policies:**

1. Residential development should be designed in accordance with the capacities and limitations of the natural environment.
2. Base residential development on the physical and environmental constraints identified in the plan, while maintaining the overall rural character of the Township.
3. Leapfrog residential development wholly detached from the Gaylord urban core should be discouraged.

---

## Commercial

**Objective:**

Limit future commercial growth to areas currently identified in the Master Plan for commercial development in conformance with the wishes of the residents of Livingston Township. Resist any efforts to further convert existing agricultural, forestry, and residentially zoned properties to commercial zoning.

**Policies:**

1. Severely limit the conversion of agricultural, forests, and residentially zoned properties to commercial property to those areas identified in this plan.
2. Concentrate large-scale commercial activities in areas of the Township adjacent to the Gaylord urban core.
3. Carefully develop commercial activities that will reinforce Livingston Township's high-quality rural atmosphere.

---

## Industrial

**Objective:**

Industrial activities are one element of a diverse and viable community. However, it is important to retain the Township's character and environment through limiting potential pollution problems. Therefore, it is an objective of Livingston Township to promote the establishment of clean, nonpolluting industries in Otsego County by supporting the use of the available properties in the Gaylord Air Industrial Park and areas zoned industrial under the Otsego County Zoning Ordinance.

**Policies:**

1. Direct any potential industrial development wishing to locate in Livingston Township to the existing industrial park and areas zoned industrial in the County Zoning Ordinance.
2. Work with the County to develop reasonable procedures and standards for mineral extraction within the Township.

---

## Recreation Open Space

**Objective 1:**

Recreation and tourism are important to the economy of Northern Michigan. The abundance of vegetation, wildlife, lakes, streams, and the availability of recreation facilities such as golf and skiing are the primary attractions for visitors from Southern Michigan and other states. Those who migrate to this portion of the State and those currently living in Otsego County value the rural atmosphere. It is an objective of Livingston Township to maintain, as much as possible, the rural nature of the community.

**Policies:**

1. Determine through analysis of environmental factors, the optimum distribution of open space areas.
2. Support State and County land use control mechanisms to insure open space preservation.
3. Promote the incorporation of open space and recreational uses for residential developments within the Township.
4. Discourage any residential developments which do not incorporate open space and recreation areas.

**Objective 2:**

The "quality of life" of a community can be measured by a variety of standards. One of the most important is the adequate distribution of recreation facilities. One of Livingston Township's objectives, therefore, is to provide an adequate quantity and quality of recreation facilities.

**Policies:**

1. Utilize available funding sources to fund recreation-oriented projects as identified in the Livingston Township Recreation Plan.
2. Consider the practicality of maintaining a Township park or other recreational facilities.
3. Promote recreation areas and facilities in planned residential development.
4. Initiate community-oriented activities such as arts and crafts programs for residents of all ages.

---

## Agriculture

### **Objective:**

Agricultural land has become an increasingly scarce and consequently valuable commodity in our society. Although some soils in the Township are of lower quality than in other areas of Northern Michigan, they are capable of producing a variety of crops. In several cases, full-time farming activities occur in the Township. Agriculture helps maintain the general rural nature of the Township as it promotes ample distribution of open space lands. In Livingston Township, the agricultural landscape is an important part of the area's scenic beauty. An objective of the Township is to maintain those sections of the community currently utilized for agriculture production.

### **Policies:**

1. Conserve those areas currently used for agriculture as well as those with potential for agricultural use.
2. Promote the preservation of farmland through application of State legislation such as P.A. 116 and appropriate local land use controls.
3. Support local education programs that stress the importance of agriculture.

---

## Environmental Preservation / Forestlands

### **Objective:**

The attractiveness of the Township is dependent primarily upon the natural amenities available to the residents and visitors to the area. Consequently, it is an objective of the Township to coordinate physical development in a way that preserves as much of the existing natural environment as possible.

### **Policies:**

1. Provide input to the County through modifications to the Otsego County Zoning Ordinance and Otsego County Master Plan to provide for the preservation of scenic areas and corridors, agricultural lands, and forests.
2. Direct development with the intent to preserve the natural amenities of the Township.
3. Promote the preservation of open space and forest land through the application of State legislation such as the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Act (Public Act 116).
4. Promote the preservation of open space and forest land through the application of State legislation such as the Commercial Forest Act and Qualified Forest Act.
5. Pursue the use of purchase of development rights by the Township or County or encourage agencies, such as land conservancies, to purchase development rights in important Agricultural, Forestlands, and Environmental Preservation areas.
6. Manage the Township-owned 40 acres west of Murner Road for timber production and undeveloped outdoor recreation.

CHAPTER

7

---

# FUTURE LAND USE

---



Livingston Township Master Plan

### Introduction

The Planning Commission conducted a review of the Township’s 2018 future land use recommendations. The review entailed an analysis of several factors including existing land use patterns, social and economic characteristics, environmental conditions, available community services and facilities, existing land division patterns, property ownership, existing zoning, and community goals and objectives. The planning commission reached out to the community by conducting an online survey and a printed survey mailing. Further guidance was obtained from the Township Board and NEMCOG.

The recommended future land use plan identifies locations for eight different land use categories: environmental conservation, forestlands, agricultural, residential, commercial, resort, institutional/governmental, and industrial/extractive. These land use categories were designated as a method of implementing the land use objectives and policies of Chapter 6. **Figure 7.1**, Future Land Use Map, illustrates the intended future land uses by category. It is the intention that Livingston Township be guided by this map as it undertakes its duty to recommend future land use to Otsego County.

### Environmental Conservation

A large area with fragile environmental characteristics was identified during the planning process. The area, shown as dark green in **Figure 7.1**, is located in the eastern portion of the Township where wetlands are adjacent to Mossback Creek and Sturgeon River. The National Wetlands Inventory classifies the area as lowland forests. This area should be protected from the potential of dense development by adequate restrictions. This future land use plan does not restrict privately owned parcels from all

development. Rather, the intent is to restrict the density of development, because hydric soils are not always suitable for the construction of building foundations and septic systems.

Hunting, fishing, and similar recreational uses are suggested in this area. Forestry harvesting should be limited to winter months when the ground is frozen to protect the soil, and appropriate measures should be taken to prevent erosion into adjacent waterways.

### Forestlands

Forestlands is the land use category which is the next most restrictive after Environmental Conservation. Forestlands are primarily wooded or forested. They can also be non-forested but with a strong land use influence from nearby forested land. Certain areas of the Township have soils which are capable of producing timber at a rate meeting the National Standards for Prime Timberlands. Much of these identified lands are included in the Forestlands category.

depicts upland and lowland forests and associated non-forest uplands. The overriding concept for this Master Plan includes the desire “to preserve its rural character”. Furthermore, the top two Goals of the Township are to “1. Maintain the general rural character of the Township” and “2. Protect, as much as possible, the existing natural environment, existing farmlands, forests, and scenic beauty”. The future land use plan, therefore, recommends the preservation of the character of these areas as much as possible. This category covers a number of large areas scattered throughout the Township. They are shown as light green in **Figure 7.1**.

Forested land is a significant cover type in the Township. **Figure 5.1**, Existing Land Use Map,

The forestland category includes areas to be used primarily for timber harvesting, wildlife habitat, hunting, and certain forest-related outdoor recreational activities. Intensive recreational uses such as shooting ranges, driving ranges, campgrounds, recreational resorts, and commercial hunting or game reserves may be allowed where compatible with adjacent land uses. Veterinary clinics, kennels, and animal grooming facilities may also be permitted where compatible

## Agricultural

The primary use within the agricultural category is farming of various types and direct farm-related businesses. The category includes active and fallow farmland. Livingston Township has productive agricultural areas located on good farm soils. The future land use plan recommends keeping these areas in farm use where soils are suitable. Prime agricultural soils are mapped in Chapter 3. Agricultural lands are also important for their aesthetic values, and the preservation of open space is a major goal of this plan. As in the previous categories, the overriding concept for the Livingston Township Master Plan includes the desire “to preserve its rural character”. Furthermore, the top two Goals of the Township are to “1. Maintain the general rural character of the Township” and “2. Protect, as much as possible, the existing natural environment, existing farmlands, forests, and scenic beauty”.

Agriculture includes crop and livestock production,

## Residential

The two most important policy statements for residential development identified in Chapter 6 include the following: 1) Residential development should be designed in accordance with the capacities and limitations of the natural environment, and 2) Base residential development on the physical and environmental constraints identified in the plan while maintaining the overall rural character of the Township. The residential land use category, primarily designed to accommodate

with adjacent land uses. Residential development is to be limited in density in a way that does not impinge on the overall rural character of the category or destroy significant portions of the forestland. The protection of forested land, wetlands, and non-forested open space is critical to preserving the rural character of the Township. The fragmentation of large parcels is discouraged; clustering of development is preferred to maintain open space.

plant nurseries, orchards, vineyards, Christmas tree production, and other land-based growing activities. The category also includes buildings necessary to conduct agricultural activities. Most related activities, such as processing facilities, are considered compatible in this land use category. Veterinary clinics, kennels, and animal grooming facilities may be permitted where compatible with adjacent land uses. Residential development within this category should be limited in density to preserve the overall rural character and prevent the fragmentation of farmland. The Future Land Use Map, **Figure 7.1**, shows the agricultural category as light yellow in color.

Intensive agricultural uses, such as animal feedlots and forest processing operations, should be allowed only after special consideration. The mining of gravel or sand should be allowed where the resource exists; however, reclamation of these areas is vital when production ceases.

single-family dwellings on a range of lot sizes, is shown as light gold on the Future Land Use Map.

The residential category is intended to preserve existing residential development where land has already been subdivided into smaller lots and to expand specific areas for future residential growth. In addition to areas identified for residential development on the Future Land Use Map, this document recognizes that rural residential

development has occurred, and will continue to occur, in certain locations within the forestlands and agricultural categories of the Township. However, this plan recommends that residential development in the forestlands and agricultural areas should be kept at a very low density.

The clustering of residential development and the provision of common open space is encouraged where soil conditions are suitable for building foundations and septic systems. Community, institutional, or recreational uses are permitted in these areas if designed to be compatible with the residential setting. Home-operated businesses are also permitted in these areas provided the residential character of the neighborhood is preserved.

Where residential areas are adjacent to lakes or

### Commercial

The primary commercial objectives of Chapter 6 are to limit future commercial growth in conformance with the wishes of Township residents and to resist any efforts to further convert existing agricultural, forestry, and residential properties to commercial uses. Areas designated for commercial development are partially developed for commercial purposes at the present time. These areas are shown in red on the Future Land Use Map and include: properties adjacent to Old-27 in Section 33 and 34, the south ½ of Section 28 between Old-27 and the railroad except for an industrial property, the portion of Section 33 west of I-75, the south ½ of the southeast ¼ of Section 32 except for an industrial property, the northeast ¼ of the

### Resort

Resort is a category of land use established to provide for the unique economic opportunities of commercial endeavors like golf courses and ski areas. Land within this category may be developed for recreational activities needing considerable acreage and which are outdoor-based. In addition to the recreation facilities themselves, related

streams, special waterfront protection requirements are encouraged. Less dense development, waterfront setbacks, preservation of natural vegetation, erosion prevention, and limitation on water access by back lot owners are suggested methods of protecting the community's water resources from degradation.

Because of the comparatively dramatic relief of the Township's topography, there is and will be in the future, a tendency to construct homes on hillsides. The reason for doing so is the extra value of a home with a view. It is recommended that homes proposed for construction in comparatively steeply sloped areas, especially locations where the slope is ten percent or more, be closely monitored and stipulations made to safeguard any erosion or runoff from such activities. Steeply sloped areas are mapped on **Figure 3.1** in Chapter 3.

southeast ¼ of Section 32, portion of the south ¼ of Section 31, and small area in the south portion of Section 3.

Recommended uses for commercial category on the Future Land Use Map include: retail stores, business and personal services, professional offices, food service, lodging facilities, and similar uses. For the area in Section 33 west of I-75, light manufacturing or warehousing uses are recommended. Any commercial uses adjacent to residential areas should provide a landscape buffer to protect the integrity of the residential neighborhood.

development, such as housing, dining, and retailing are consistent with the intent of this category.

Chapter 6, Recreation-Open Space, mentions "recreation facilities such as golf and skiing" as "primary attractions for visitors from Southern Michigan and other states".



## Institutional/Governmental

Although institutional and governmental uses are recommended in several other land use categories, the Future Land Use Map identifies certain larger sites. Livingston Township recognizes that these facilities provide a wealth of services to its residents. Therefore, this plan supports the continuation and expansion of these facilities if needed. Shown as rust color in **Figure 7.1**, they are

Otsego County Fairgrounds on the west side of Old-27 in Section 33, Gaylord High School and Alpine Center on the east side of Old-27 in Section 27, DNR and EGLE buildings on the north side of M-32 in the southwest corner of Section 32, and the 40-acre Township-owned parcel in Section 32. Livingston Township Hall, located in Section 16 along Old-27, is also included in this category.

## Industrial/Extractive

Industrial areas are those where wholesale activities, warehouses, manufacturing, mechanical repair shops, and other medium to heavy commercial activities are permitted. Extractive activities are sand and gravel surface mining.

Under the industrial objectives in Chapter 6, industrial activities are to be directed to the Gaylord Industrial Park. Other than several existing











industrial sites, no further industrial locations are recommended in the Township. Extraction activities often need to occur in other land use categories where the resource exists. However, the overriding theme of preservation of rural character, the promotion of a satisfying quality of life, and the maintenance of a viable local economy need to direct extractive activities. Existing industrial and extractive sites are shown in purple in **Figure 7.1**.

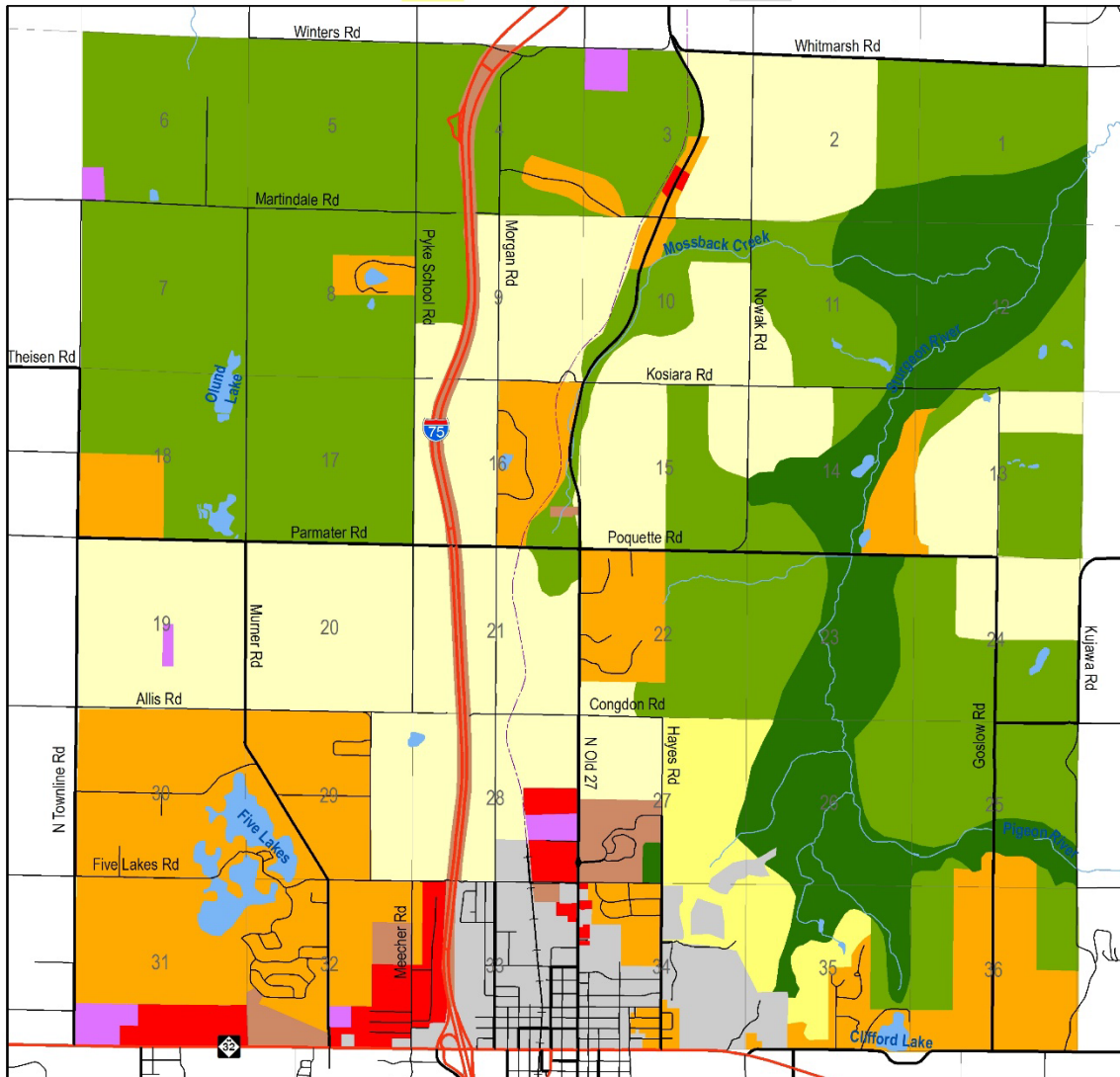
**Figure 7.1**  
**Livingston Township**  
**Future Land Use Map**

**Map Legend**

-  State Highway
-  Primary Road
-  Local Road
-  Rivers
-  Lakes
-  Sections

**Future Land Use**

-  Residential
-  Commercial
-  Industrial-Extractive
-  Institutional-Governmental
-  Resort
-  Agricultural
-  Forestlands
-  Environmental Conservation
-  Water
-  City of Gaylord



CHAPTER

8

---

**ADOPTION &  
IMPLEMENTATION**

---



Livingston Township Master Plan

## Plan Coordination and Review

As required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (P.A. 33 of 2008, as amended) notification of intent to update the Livingston Township Master Plan was sent to all communities and other entities to request cooperation and comment. A copy of the notice letter and entities notified can be found at the end of this chapter.

After the draft plan was completed by the Livingston Township Planning Commission, a

draft was transmitted to the Township Board for approval to distribute the plan for review and comment. The draft plan was transmitted to entities notified at the initiation of the plan update. After the required comment period, public hearing and plan adoption the final plan was transmitted to all required entities. A copy of all relevant information can be found at the end of this chapter.

## Public Hearing

A public hearing on the proposed Master Plan for Livingston Township was held on January 16, 2024. A notice of the public hearing was published in a local newspaper on December 29, 2023. A copy of the public hearing notice is reproduced at the end of this chapter.

The purpose of the public hearing was to present

the proposed master plan and to accept comments from the public. The public hearing began with a brief explanation of the planning process and plan development by NEMCOG planning staff. During the hearing, maps of existing land use, resource maps, and proposed future land use recommendations were presented.

## Plan Adoption

The Livingston Township Planning Commission formally adopted the master plan on January 16, 2024. The Livingston Township Board passed a

resolution of concurrence for the master plan on January 22, 2024.

## Plan Implementation

The Master Plan was developed to provide a vision of the community's future. It will serve as a tool for decision-making on future development proposals. The plan will also act as a guide for future public investment and service decisions, such as the local budget, grant applications, road maintenance and development, community group activities, tax incentive decisions, and administration of utilities and services.

According to the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, master planning is the legal foundation of a zoning ordinance. Section 203 of the Act states: " The 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 insure 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, 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 zoning ordinance shall be made with reasonable consideration to the character of

each district, its peculiar suitability for particular uses, the conservation of property values and natural resources, and the general and appropriate trend and character of land, building, and population development."

### **Grants and Capital Improvement Plan**

The Master Plan can also be used as a guide for future public investment and service decisions, such as the local budget, grant applications, and administration of utilities and services. Many communities prioritized and budgeted for capital improvement projects, (such as infrastructure improvements, park improvements, and roads). A Capital Improvements Program (CIP) typically

looks five years into the future to establish a schedule for all anticipated capital improvement projects in the community. A CIP includes cost estimates and sources for financing for each project. It can therefore serve as both a budgetary and policy document to aid in the implementation of a community's master plan.

### **Zoning**

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (P.A. 33 of 2008, as amended) requires that a master plan serve as the basis for the zoning plan. The zoning plan identifies the current zoning districts and their purposes as well as recommendations for changes or consolidation of districts and some general provision changes to these districts. These matters are regulated by the specific terms in a zoning ordinance.

ordinances' general provisions section should consider, but not be limited to: waterfront greenbelts, waterfront setbacks, private roads and driveways, landscaping and screening, parking and loading standards, stormwater management, access management, home-based businesses, groundwater protection, outdoor lighting, and signs and billboards. The Township should consider adding Articles for site plan review, uses subject to special approval (conditional uses), supplemental site development standards, administration and enforcement, and zoning board of appeals. Amendments to supplemental site development standards provisions should consider, but not be limited to: bed and breakfast facilities, gasoline-service stations, motel, hotels, Planned Unit Development, open space developments, sexually-orientated businesses, telecommunications towers, wind turbine generators, car wash facilities, nursing homes-assisted care facilities, and storage facilities.

The zoning ordinance is the primary tool for implementing the Livingston Township Master Plan. This plan recommends the County zoning ordinance be reviewed to ensure the ordinances are consistent with the goals and the future land use plan. At that same time, the zoning ordinance should be reviewed to ensure it conforms to current State regulations. Amendments will include redefining zoning districts and district boundaries, changing minimum lot sizes, and considering permitted uses and special uses in zoning districts. Amendments to zoning

### **Plan Adoption Documentation**

The following are the resolutions of adoption from the Livingston Township Planning Commission and Township Board. Other documentation such

as public notices, meeting minutes, and legal transmittals are on file at the Livingston Township Hall.