

2025 Master Plan



BERGLAND TOWNSHIP
Ontonagon County, Michigan

Adopted by:
Bergland Township Planning Commission May 20, 2025
Bergland Township Board: June 19, 2025

Bergland Township Board of Trustees

Resolution Approving the Bergland Township Master Plan

WHEREAS, a new Bergland Township Master Plan was needed to guide the future development of the Township, and

WHEREAS, the Bergland Township Planning Commission followed the Master Plan update process required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008, and the Master Plan includes the text and maps required by the Act, and

WHEREAS, the preparation of the Master Plan provided opportunities for public input and followed public notification requirements for a Master Plan, and

WHEREAS, a public hearing was held on May 20, 2025, by the Planning Commission on the draft Master Plan.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Bergland Township Board hereby adopts the Master Plan.

This Resolution was approved upon a motion by Terald Wuorenmaa, supported by

John Berglund

, at a regular meeting on June 19, 2025.

Lois Schmidt
Township Clerk

Joe Kien
Township Supervisor

Bergland Township Planning Commission

Resolution Approving the Bergland Township Master Plan

WHEREAS, a new Bergland Township Master Plan was needed to guide the future development of the Township, and

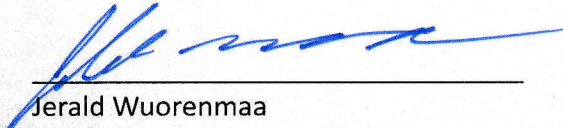
WHEREAS, the Bergland Township Planning Commission followed the Master Plan process required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008, and the Master Plan includes the text and maps required by the Act, and

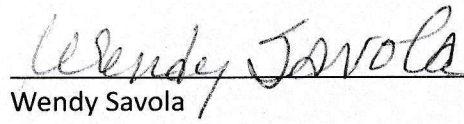
WHEREAS, the preparation of the Master Plan provided opportunities for public input and followed all public notification requirements for a Master Plan, and

WHEREAS, a public hearing was held on May 20, 2025 on the draft Master Plan.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Bergland Township Planning Commission hereby adopts the Master Plan and recommends its approval by the Bergland Township Board.

With commissioners Chaput, Fruik, Savola, and Wuorenmaa present, this Resolution was approved upon a motion by Wuorenmaa, supported by Chaput, at the regular meeting on May 20, 2025.



Jerald Wuorenmaa
Secretary

Wendy Savola
Chair

We would like to thank the many citizens of Bergland Township who participated in the development of this Master Plan!

Funding for this project was provided through the Housing Readiness Incentive Grant Program of the Michigan State Housing Development Authority and the Bergland Township Board



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Acknowledgments

Township Board

Jack Otlewis, Supervisor
Christy Franklin, Clerk
Shawna Lundwall, Treasurer
John Berglund, Jr.
Jerald Wuorenmaa

Planning Commission

Wendy Savola, Chair
Lorraine Fruik, Vice-Chair
Erik Lundwall, Secretary
Tom Chaput
Jerald Wuorenmaa, Board Representative

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Community Survey Summary

Introduction

1

Bergland Township, is located in the western Upper Peninsula of Michigan, in Ontonagon County. It is one of eleven townships in Ontonagon County.

The Township is bordered by Carp Lake Township on the north and part of the west side of the Township, and Matchwood Township on the east. In the adjacent Gogebic County, Wakefield Township also borders the west and Marenisco Township to the south.

A distinguishing feature of Bergland Township is Lake Gogebic. At 13,380 acres, Lake Gogebic is the largest inland lake in the Upper Peninsula and the sixth largest inland lake in Michigan. The lake has 34.4 miles of shoreline, with approximately 16 miles of shoreline in Bergland Township.

Bergland Township includes the unincorporated communities of Bergland and Merriweather. It also includes the resort and residential area along the shores of Lake Gogebic.

Bergland Township and Ontonagon County have seen a decline in population for more than three decades as the result of the loss of major employers including the White Pine Copper Mine, the Stone Container Mill in Ontonagon, and most recently, the closing of a State of Michigan correctional facility near Marenisco. The Township is located in the Ewen-Trout Creek School District, but students may also attend other schools in the area.

While summer and winter tourism benefit the Township, there is a great need for sustainable economic development in the region.

Although Bergland Township has engaged in community planning and zoning for many years, this new Master Plan will provide policy guidance and help set priorities for the Township in the coming decade and beyond. The Master Plan recognizes that this is accomplished through understanding the desires of the community, appropriate planning, and the implementation and enforcement of reasonable zoning and development regulations which are necessary to protect the unique human and natural resources of the community.

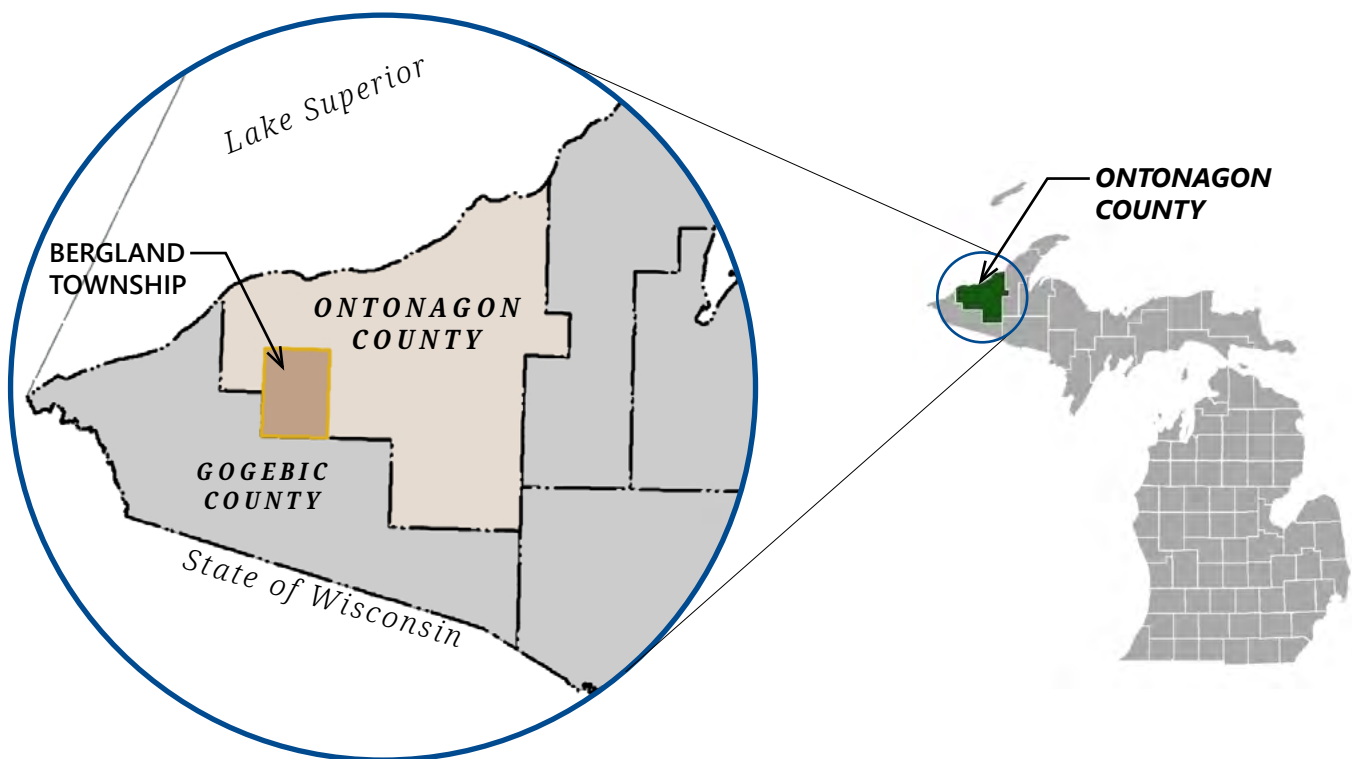


Figure 1.0 Vicinity Map

The challenge is to manage changes in a manner that protects and improves quality of life in the township. As the term implies, planning is intended to anticipate problems and develop solutions, as well as identify opportunity and take advantage of them.

AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE

The purpose of the Master Plan is to guide the future of Bergland Township and help the community develop sustainably through a realistic and well-thought-out approach. The Master Plan has been prepared under authority of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, P.A. 33 of 2008, as amended. The Master Plan is an important tool for a number of reasons:

- The Master Plan provides the legal basis for zoning, subdivision of land, and other local land use regulations.
- The gathering and analysis of community information and data enables community leaders to holistically understand unique challenges and opportunities.
- By involving citizens and stakeholders in the planning process, the Plan serves as the supported community vision, including goals and strategies for achieving the shared vision.
- The Master Plan can help the community develop a sustainable economy.



Figure 1.1 - View From the Gogebic Ridge Trail

- The Master Plan can serve as a catalyst for desired changes by engaging community action.
- The Plan can help to generate regional collaboration with neighboring communities.

The purpose of the master plan is to guide future development towards the economic and efficient use of land; promote the public health, safety, and general welfare; help guide the preservation and appropriate use of natural resources of Bergland Township; provide for adequate transportation systems, public utilities, and recreation; and ensure efficient expenditure of public funds.

The Plan adoption is subject to a public hearing and approval by resolution of the Bergland Township Planning Commission and Township Board. (Township Board approval is optional but highly recommended.)

Implementation of the plan is an on-going process, requiring the monitoring of changes in the community as well as the progress towards achieving the plan's goals. The Master Plan should be reviewed every five years and a determination made whether it needs updating or a new plan adopted.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Involving Township residents in this Master Plan process was a priority! The Bergland Township Planning Commission provided several opportunities to participate in the Master Plan, including a community survey, a Community Open House Planning Workshop, and an official public hearing on the Master Plan. Chapter 3 describes the results of the community engagement efforts.

GOALS & STRATEGIES

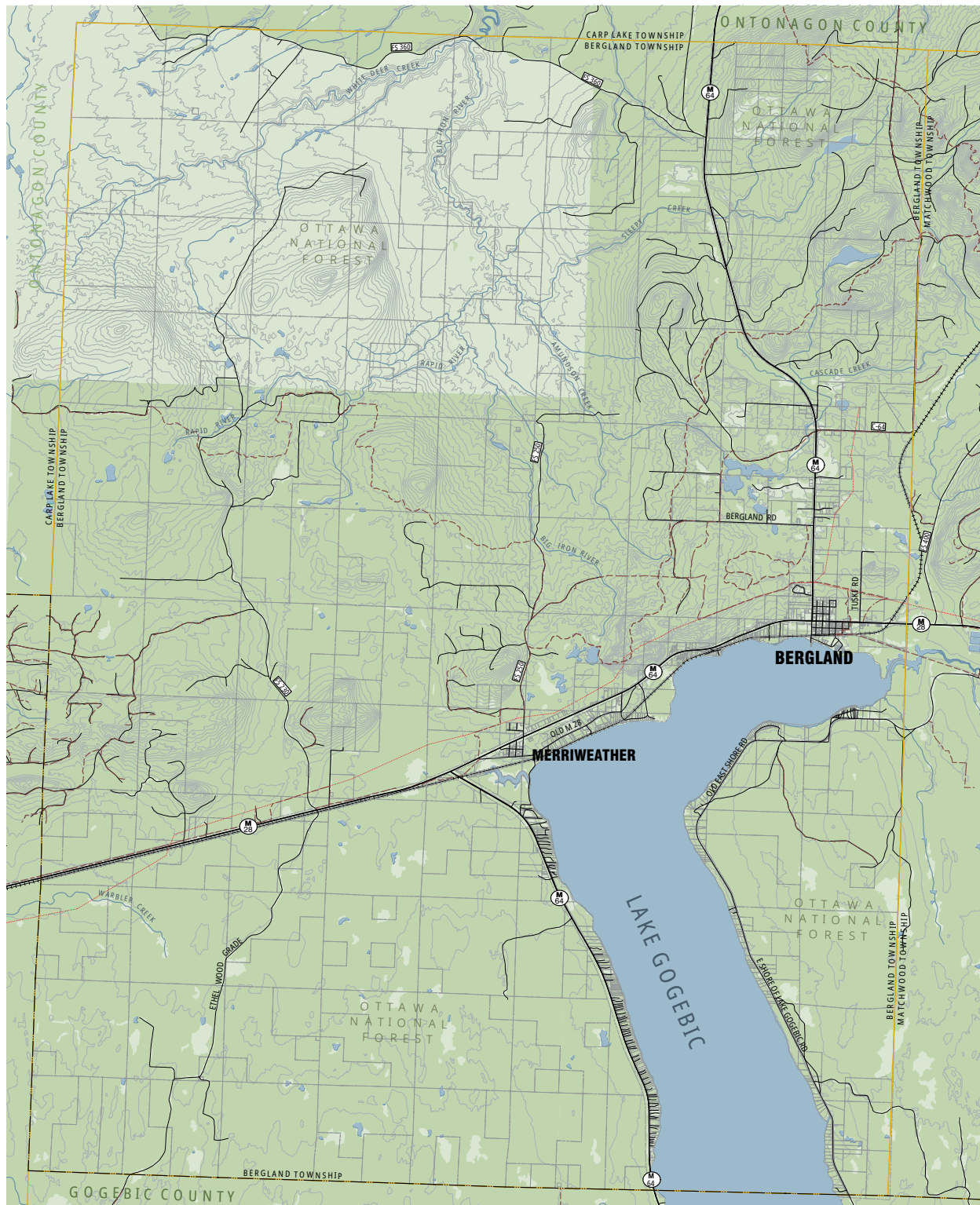
Throughout this document are listed **Goals and Strategies** that describe a course of action. These are a tool for future decision-making and help to define the character, values, and priorities of the Bergland Township community.

Goals are broad statements that describe a desired outcome, where we want to be. Goals are often long-term in scope.

Strategies are a program, action, or practice that supports one or more policy statements. Strategies address at a high level, the “who, what, when, where, and how” of reaching a goal. A strategy may include multiple sub-strategies.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Plan concludes with a Chapter that provides strategic activities and initiatives to implement the Master Plan.



legend

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| PARCEL BOUNDARIES | TRAILS (USGS) |
| TOWNSHIP BOUNDARY (USGS) | RAIL (USGS) |
| WATER BODIES (USGS) | WOODLAND COVER (USGS) |
| MAJOR STREETS (USGS) | OTTAWA NATIONAL FOREST (USGS) |
| MINOR STREETS (USGS) | 20FT CONTOURS (USGS) |
| UTILITY LINES (USGS) | |



mapping based on:
 Parcel Data provided by Ontonagon County,
<https://gis-michigan.opendata.arcgis.com/>, and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)
 Topo TNM Style data, USGS Topo Map Vector Data, 7.5 x 7.5 minute
 Shapefile Data for Aldridge Creek, Bergland, Bergland NE, and Merrriweather,
 Michigan. Topo TNM Style Template Disclaimer: Initial styling of this Map
 Template was provided by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). The USGS does
 not endorse any products created from the template.

Figure 1.2 Existing Conditions



Community Description & 2 Profile



HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In 1837 Michigan achieved statehood. At that time, the Ojibwa Indians occupied the region, fur trade was the only commerce. Lake Gogebic was an important transportation hub for Indians, trappers, and settlers with the Merriweather area used as a summer camp ground by the Chippewa Indians. There are still artifacts in the area from that time.

Through the LaPointe Treaty on October 4, 1842, the Upper Peninsula and northern Wisconsin were purchased from the Ojibwa for the sum of \$875,000.00. The purchase opened the area to exploration and copper mining. The copper resources of the area had been noted as early as the 1600's. Industrialized mining began in Ontonagon County with the Minnesota Mine near present day Rockland in 1848, the C.C.Cushman Mine in 1849 (renamed Victoria in 1858), followed shortly by the Norwich Mine in 1850. Over the ensuing years in excess of 100 mines were opened in the area with several along the northern Gogebic Lake region.

The first area road, Agogebic Road, connected the Norwich Mine with the NE corner of Lake Gogebic. Another early road was known as the Military Road, and ran from Fort Howard, Wisconsin (1863 - 1872) to Copper Harbor, and was connected to Rockland. U.S. Highway 45 and Michigan Highway M-26 now follows this general route.

Copper mining boomed from 1861-1865 during the Civil War. The end of the war saw copper prices drop drastically causing a great majority of the early mines to close. The White Pine Mine began its first workings as late as 1876.

In 1881 the Diamond Match Company was formed and began milling in the Matchwood area east of Bergland in 1883. The Diamond Match Company Road from Norwich south to 10 Mile Creek then southwest to the Wakefield Mine at southeast Lake Gogebic was opened in 1884. This is the same year that the railroad line from Watersmeet built the Gogebic Station five miles south of Lake Gogebic with Stagecoach Road heading north to the Gogebic (or White House) Hotel on Lake Gogebic. The Charlie and Bryan O'Rourke Stage Line traveled the route from Ontonagon to Lake Gogebic and in 1885 the Gogebic Hotel began offering pleasure cruises and transportation on the lake with the steamer the "Brandt".

Railways opened the north shore of the lake to settlement. In 1894 catastrophic fires across the region accelerated logging operations in the burned areas. Burned timber was still usable if harvested quickly before insects ruined it. Over the next few years The Diamond Match Company continued operations, but as timber became scarce they quickly turned their interests to forestland in California. They soon abandoned the area leaving large quantities of logs in the Ontonagon River selling these to other parties for transport and milling. In 1905, they sold most if not all of their Michigan lands.

In 1888 the DSS&A Railway Company completed their Western Extension which ran along the north shore of Lake Gogebic. A small water tank station dubbed eventually named Lake Gogebic Station. The town had a post office with the 1900 census listing 65 residents. One of the industries was cutting quality ice from Lake Gogebic and shipping it by rail to Ewen. Lake Gogebic at that time covered just 12,800 acres.

In addition to logging, ice making and a resort, the only other industry in Lake Gogebic Station and surrounding area was a barrel head factory in 1920. Another settlement was developed, known as Merriweather, complete with a church (1901), hotel, eatery, store, and school. A school was built in Merriweather.

In 1902, Gunlek A. Bergland platted the town of Bergland. By early 1903 the foundations of the town were in place. Bergland boasted a railroad depot with telegraph service, G.A. Bergland 's Hardwood Lumber Mill, 2 hotels, a restaurant, a saloon, and the Matchwood Township Hall as well as various homes. In 1910, the town completed 9 town wells, and concrete sidewalks were introduced. Telephone lines were installed as early as 1911 although phones were not readily available to home owners until the 1950's.

The dam on Lake Gogebic was built in 1905 to facilitate more regular water levels for the operation of pneumatic power for the Victoria Mine. This caused many changes and difficulties for Bergland and property owners all around the lake. There have been many disputes over water levels over the ensuing years but lake levels are now maintained rather closely. Lake Gogebic currently covers approximately 13,400 acres.

School was originally held in the Shamrock Hotel. In 1904 Bergland's first dedicated school was completed. The original school was built on lots 3,5,7,9 & 11 of block 6 of the Bergland Plat. The school burned in 1911 and was rebuilt the following year. That schoolhouse lasted until it, too, burned in 1938. The Bergland High School was built on Block 3 of the Weidman Edition of the Bergland Plat in 1926. In the early 1980's Bergland hit on hard times and funding was no longer available for school operations. In 1984 grades 7-12 were sent to the Wakefield schools while grades k-6 stayed in Bergland. An annexation vote with the Ewen-Trout Creek (ETC) school district was held in 1985 upon which grades 7-12 went to the Ewen school. All grades were sent to the ETC school in 1998 after the new school was built. The Bergland school was sold shortly thereafter.

The first residential homes to be built in the village were started in 1917. The Village of Merriweather became platted in 1924 being named after an early land and mine owner, Algernon Merriweather, who had purchased the land in 1859. The village started out as a lumbering town with the townspeople working in the woods and nearby sawmills. Later it became a residential town for the copper miners who worked at the nearby White Pine Copper Mine in White Pine, MI. Centrally located in the Village of Merriweather the town hall was built by the townspeople in 1947 and used for weddings, dances, and town meetings. A well was put in (approximately 1920) with the well water being used by the townspeople and horses for many years. The townspeople built the basketball court for the youth of the area. The handicap railings and ramp were installed later by the Township with the building being used as a voting precinct and meeting hall until 2008.

Bergland Township was formed from the Western ½ of Matchwood Township on March 12, 1912. This change was made, in large part, so that people wouldn't have to travel so far to participate in government affairs, such as voting. Roads at that time were still very rough and at times impassable.

Eleven platted areas have been recorded in the Township with an addition to the Bergland Plat.

The fire of 1922 destroyed most of Block 1 (the main business district) of Bergland. The town quickly rebuilt. In the 1930's several churches were built and over the coming years businesses abounded and thrived. Logging, agriculture and tourism formed the basis of the area's economy for all of Bergland Township's early years. The Bergland Mill was sold and renamed twice until it closed its doors in 1958, and the Bennett & Braun Mill was located in the township as well. In 1954 the White Pine Copper Mine had gone into full production and the dynamics of the area began to change. Telephones became commonly available to homes in 1953. Natural gas was installed in 1960 with the Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline crossing through Bergland Township in 1967. The first sewer project was completed in the town of Bergland in 1970.

A new sewer project extending service from Bergland through Merriweather and to the Ontonagon County Park was completed in 2012.



Figure 2.0 - Lake Gogebic Station, 1910

Roads became far more important as the population increased. In 1950 the “worst road in Upper Michigan” between Tula and Wakefield underwent a major rebuild, becoming one of the area’s best sections of road. In 1960 the road to White Pine (Highway 64 North) was relocated and hard surfaced for the first time. In the late 1970’s or early ‘80’s the Ontonagon County portion of East Shore Road was completed; the entire road was paved.

Businesses continued to thrive and the whole area grew. The White Pine Copper Mine at one time employed 3,000 workers, closing for good in the 1990’s. Though the refinery continued to operate after the mine closed, the economic base suffered a terrible blow. Businesses began to fail and close their doors.

CLIMATE

The climate of Bergland Township is greatly influenced by Lake Superior. The Township experiences a moderate climate with warm summers and cold winters. In the summer months, temperatures average in the mid-seventies and reach up to the mid-eighties during the peak of the season. Winters are typically very cold, with temperatures averaging in the mid-twenties but dropping well below zero at night. Snowfall is common during winter months and can range from light dustings to many inches of accumulation.

The average high temperature in January is 21F degrees, with an average low temperature of 2F degrees. The average high temperature in July is 78F degrees, with an average low temperature of 52F degrees.

Annual total precipitation in the township averages 37 inches.

While winter temperatures are somewhat moderated by Lake Superior, lake effect snowfall totals are impressive. The average total



Figure 2.1 - Bergland Main Street, 1910



Figure 2.2 - Early Bergland Plat

snowfall is 180 inches.

TOPOGRAPHY

The geological features of the township are significant and provide unusual topographical and habitat characteristics. Both upland and lowlands make for strikingly high rocky upland forest ridges with sharp elevations up to 1,772 feet at Bergland Hill, found in the Trap Hills area north of the Bergland community.

GROUND AND SURFACE WATER WATERSHEDS

Lake Gogebic is a dominant feature of the Township and is the largest inland lake in the Upper Peninsula.

Watersheds in Bergland Township flow to the north and include the following:

- White Deer Creek-Big Iron River Watershed
- Anderson Creek-Big Iron River Watershed
- Merriweather Creek Watershed
- Lake Gogebic-West Branch Ontonagon River Watershed
- Cascade Creek Watershed
- West Branch Big Iron River Watershed
- Cherry Creek Watershed

WETLANDS

Wetlands provide a buffer between aquatic and upland areas and are wide spread throughout the township. Wetlands are generally not developable but are extremely important in providing habitat for local and migrating wildlife. They support the wider ecology of the many freshwater inland lakes in the township.

SOILS AND GEOLOGY

South of M-28, Bergland Hills is a gently rolling clay till plain spreading eastward from Lake Gogebic to Bruce Crossing and beyond. This clay till plain is characterized by deeply incised drainage-ways.

The rock formations of the Bergland Hills are the Porcupine Volcanics, the Copper Harbor Conglomerate, and the Portage Lake Lava Series. Basalt and rhyolite flows interbedded with conglomerate layers compose the Portage Lake Lava Series. These hills are notable for the native copper deposits that were the source of former mining operations in Mass City, Greenland, Rockland, Victoria, and Norwich.

Sedimentary rocks make up the geology in the less elevated areas of the county and are generally covered by various depths of glacial deposits. East and south of Lake Gogebic, beneath clayey glacial till, is an extensive area of Jacobsville Sandstone, which is red and brown acidic sandstone with layers of shale and conglomerate. This rock formation is the youngest in the county and belongs to the early and middle Cambrian Period.

A major fault—the Keweenaw Fault—separates the Jacobsville Sandstone from the igneous rocks on the Bergland Hills to the north.

Many soil types are present in Bergland Township, as the result of volcanic activity, glacial deposits and outwash, lake sediments and organic material deposits. The soils and geology of Bergland Township directly impacts site and land use suitability and limitations. On-site wastewater systems are severely limited by shallow bedrock that is present throughout most of the northern part of the Township. In other areas, clay soils, wetlands and wet soils also limit development.

Source: Soil Survey on Ontonagon County, US Natural Resource Conservation Service, 2010

COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS SUMMARY

POPULATION

Bergland’s population is made up of year-round residents and seasonal residents who make the Township their primary home. Another group are people who only reside in the Township during the summer months but make their primary home somewhere else. Many families have a long history of summers spent on Lake Gogebic and this still continues from generation to generation today.

The population of Bergland Township has been decline since the closing of the White Pine Mine in 1997. The mine was located about 13 miles away from the community of Bergland. The entire region suffered as those unemployed left the area to work in other mining operations and related industries.

Historical Population

Year	Population
2000	548
2010	467
2020	435
2024	445

Source: US Census Bureau

Bergland proper - what is known as the “townsite” - is a Census Designated Place with a population of 141 as of 2020. **About half of its population is over 65 years of age.** This compares to 18% for the State of Michigan, and about 37% in Ontonagon County overall.

Just **6.7% of township residents are 20 years of age or younger** with only 2% under 10 years of age. People 20-50 years old comprise 15% of the population. **The overall median age of the township is 69 years of age.**



Figure 2.3 - Lake Gogebic

Age Distribution

Age	%
0-9	0%
10-19	12%
20-29	4%
30-39	0%
40-49	1%
50-59	16%
60-69	45%
70-79	16%
80+	6%

Source: US Census Bureau

The population is **54% female**. Race is **84% white**.

There are 226 households in the Township. Of those households, **60% are married**.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

High school graduate or higher is **95.7%**

Bachelor degree or higher is **18.2%** (15% overall in Ontonagon County).

INCOME

Per capita: **\$32,340**

(About 10% higher than the amount in Ontonagon County and 80% of the State of MI)

Median Household Income: **\$43,636**

(About 90% of the amount of Ontonagon County and two-thirds of the amount of State of MI)

POVERTY

20.9% persons below poverty line

(Ontonagon County: 13.7%, State of Michigan: 13.1%)

Children (under 18) **living in poverty: 100%**

Seniors (65+) **living in poverty: 30%**

Source of data:

US Census Bureau, 2020

2018-2022 ACS Five-Year Estimates



Community Engagement & Participation

3



The Bergland Township Master Plan was developed in a transparent and public planning process. This Chapter provides an overview of the planning process, community engagement, and participation.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Outlined below is a summary of the planning process:

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The Plan contains a summary of important information about Bergland Township, current conditions, trends, issues and opportunities. This information was analyzed and summarized in order to provide an overview and gain understanding about the community.

PREVIOUS PLANNING DOCUMENT REVIEW

The following documents were reviewed and relevant information incorporated into the Master Plan:

- Bergland Township Comprehensive Plan 2021
- Bergland Township Recreation Plan, 2025-2029
- Bergland Township Recreation Survey, 2021
- Bergland Township Capital Improvements Plan 2025-2030
- Bergland Township Zoning Ordinance 2019

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

It is important for a Master Plan to provide opportunities for community engagement, so that the Plan responds to community needs and desires. The Bergland Township Planning Commission offered several opportunities for people to become involved and express their ideas and opinions, including a Community Survey, Community Open House Workshop, and discussion and review of drafts at Planning Commission public meetings.

THE COMMUNITY SURVEY

A Community Survey was created by the Planning Commission to gauge community attitudes about a variety of topics and issues. A total of 99 persons completed the survey. A number of the questions included opportunities to comment, which makes for very interesting reading.

A complete copy of the survey results is included in the Master Plan Appendix, and is summarized as follows:

DEMOGRAPHICS

Only 12% said they have children under the age of 18 at home. 43% said they are 65+ years of age. Nearly 91% said they are over the age of 45.

About half of survey respondents said they are year-round residents, 20% said they are seasonal residents, 48% said they own property in the Township.

When asked about their place of residence in the Township, 43% of survey respondents said they live on Lake Gogebic, nearly 42% said they live in Bergland, and 9% said they live in Merriweather.

When asked why they live in Bergland, 33% said they were born here and 37% said they have a personal connection to the community. 61% said they live here for the natural resources, and 23% said they selected the overall community character as a reason.

When asked if they are employed, 41% said they are employed full-time. 46% said they are retired.

AGE

- 12% Children under age 18 at home
- 91% over the age of 45
- 43% are 65 year or older

WHERE PEOPLE LIVE

- 43% On Lake Gogebic
- 42% Bergland
- 9% Merriweather

WORKFORCE

- 41 % Employed Full Time
- 46% Retired

Employment locations are spread among the Bergland area (10%), Ironwood-to-Wakefield area (23%), and elsewhere in Ontonagon-Gogebic Counties (24%). Somewhat surprising is that of those responding to this question (38 responses), 50% said they are home office/remote workers.

Survey respondents were asked to identify their top 4 priorities for the Master Plan. The top 4 answers were:

- Street/Road quality-61%
- Blight elimination-40%
- Redevelopment of vacant properties-39%
- Providing for small-scale commercial development for community needs-39%

In response to the question about more residential development in the Township, 34% neither agree or disagree, 8% disagree, and 57% agree.

Those who agree with more residential development, most selected the rehabilitation of existing housing, new single-family development, and senior living over other options.

Overall, people were split between being satisfied and not satisfied with current housing appearance

When asked if improving housing is important, almost 30% neither agree or disagree. 66% agree and 3% disagree.

When asked about supporting tax or other incentives to encourage housing development, 25% would disapprove, 43% would approve, and 31% neither approved or disapproved.

Survey respondents were asked about challenges facing the Township. The following were the top challenges:

- Blighted properties-60%
- Lack of employees-52%
- Lack of new housing-42%
- Prevalence/increase of Short-term Rentals -28%

RECREATION

Survey respondents were asked to identify Township recreation sites they have used in the previous year. The top sites were:

- Bergland Beach/Waterfront Park-71%
- DNR Bergland Boat Launch/Dock-70%
- Area Motorized Trails-50%
- Bergland Township Campground-48%
- Other Lake Gogebic Campgrounds-46%

The survey asked what recreation improvements they would like:

Restoration of sand beach-63%

More trails and Trail Connections-52%

Campground expansion-35%

TOP 4 PRIORITIES

- **61% Streets/Road Quality**
- **40% Blight Elimination**
- **39% Redevelopment of Vacant Properties**
- **39% Providing for Small Scale Commercial**

CHALLENGES

- **60% Blighted Properties**
- **52% Lack of Employees**
- **42% Lack of New Housing**
- **28% Prevalence/ Increase of Short Term Rentals**

TOP RECREATION SITES

- **71% Bergland Beach/Waterfront Park**
- **70% DNR Bergland Boat Launch/Dock**
- **50% Area Motorized Trails**
- **48% Bergland Township Campground**
- **46% Other Lake Gogebic Campgrounds**



Figure 3.0 - Trap Hills, Gogebic Ridge Trail

The survey asked if winter was a positive or negative attribute

Positive-88%

Negative-12%

There were many comments about the winter season. People who love the winter named snow, recreation, tourism economics, solitude, beauty, and fishing as positive attributes..

Some people don't like the length of winter, cold, snow, hardship, darkness, driving, accessibility, and isolation.

The survey asked what challenges they experience in winter. While the Township cannot control the weather, understanding community challenges can help shape opportunities to improve the Township for year-round living. Challenges included:

- Limited indoor recreation/fitness-66%
- Snow removal-44%
- Social isolation-42%
- Lack of safe walking -42%

Survey respondents were asked for their ideas to make winter better, and there were 31 comments and ideas. Here are a few of those comments:

- Winter Festival on the ice
- More business opportunities
- Community fitness center
- Social gathering events
- Work to balance a residential community with a tourist/seasonal visitor atmosphere

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Survey respondents were asked to rate the quality and their satisfaction with community and regional services. Generally, respondents are satisfied with most local and regional public services.

Services that were identified as poor include:

- Streets
- Sidewalks
- Emergency medical service
- Cultural facilities and programs

In addition, there were 24 additional comments and suggestions, many of which were positive and good ideas.

The Master Plan Community Survey provides a snapshot of attitudes about why people live in the Township, their perception about a variety of topics, including housing, tourism, community and regional services, growth, and development.

WINTER IDEAS

- **Winter Festival on the ice**
- **More Business Opportunities**
- **Community Fitness Center**
- **Social Gathering Spaces**
- **Balance Residents with tourist & seasonal atmosphere**

SUPPORT FOR:

TOWNSHIP-SPONSORED TRASH COLLECTION

YES

62%

NO

38%

TOWNSHIP-SPONSORED RECYCLING PROGRAM

YES

60%

NO

40%

TOWNSHIP-SPONSORED JUNK DISPOSAL DAY

YES

88%

NO

12%

MASTER PLAN OPEN HOUSE

The Planning Commission hosted an Open House event on September 17, 2024, to provide another opportunity for public input on the Master Plan. Approximately 15 persons attended the event. Participants were able to meet the Planning Commissioners to discuss the Master Plan, their concerns and ideas.

Participants were also asked to identify their “Rants”, “Raves” and “Ideas” on posters. Participants could also write notes on Township maps.

RAVES

- **Lake Gogebic**
- **Need to Compliment the Planning Commission**

RANTS

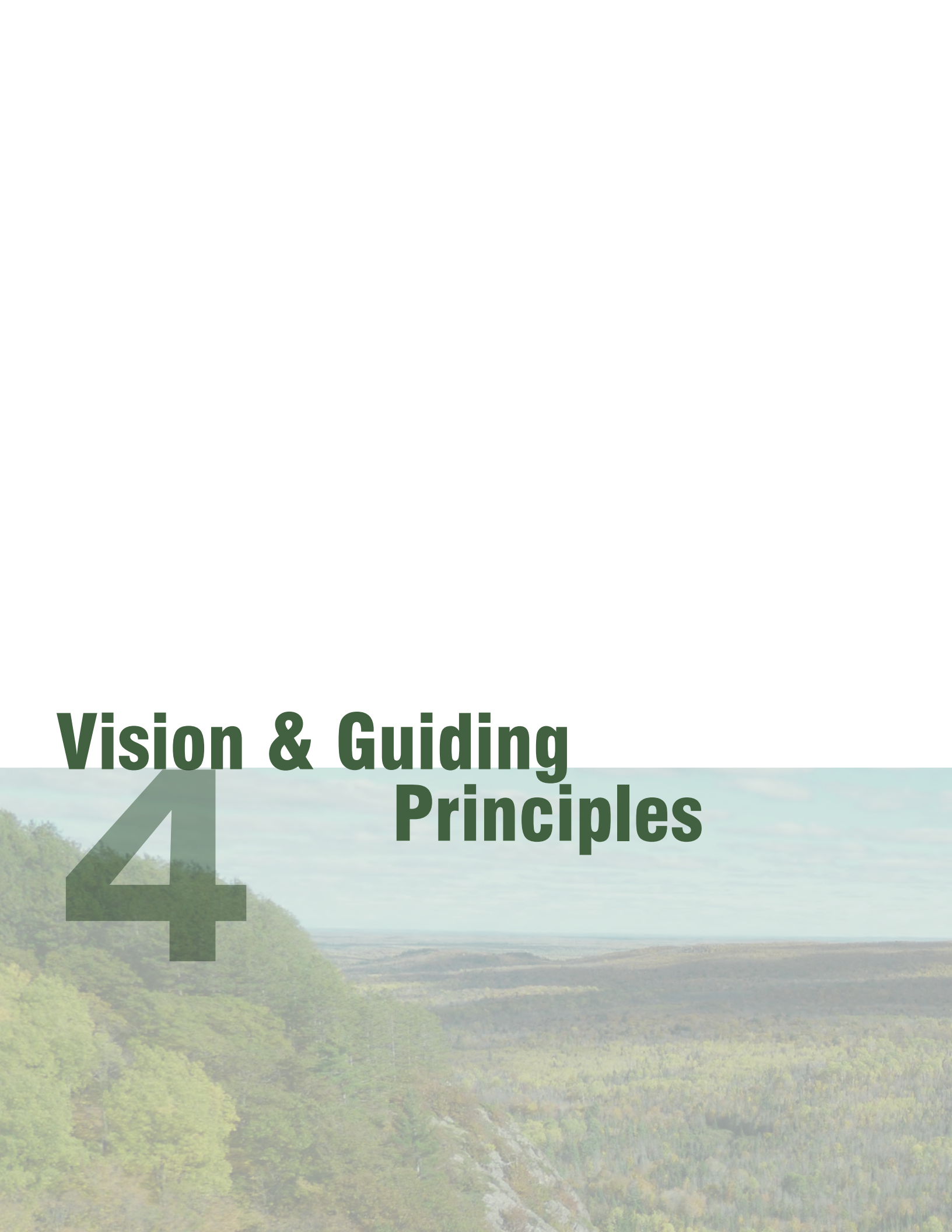
- **Nobody wants to be involved**
- **Need campground sign on the highway**
- **Mowing on hill in front of old school**

IDEAS

- **Need streets fixed bad!**
- **Need Campground Improvements (map note)**



Figure 3.1 - Open House



Vision & Guiding 4 Principles

Bergland Township Master Plan values toward growth and development is reflected in their Vision, Guiding Principles, Goals, and Strategies. Following is a summary of the Vision and Guiding Principles

VISION

Bergland Township is a community that preserves, protects, and enhances the natural resources of the Township for future generations, while using these resources as an opportunity for sustainable economic development, meeting the needs of our citizens, and providing cost-effective services to the community.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following are our guiding principles:

- Listen to our citizens and work for their health, safety, welfare, and comfort in the community
- Continually assess and improve the township infrastructure including streets, sidewalks, sewer, and water systems.
- Creatively and efficiently use funds to advance Bergland Township.
- Provide the best possible services to the Township residents
- Focus on addressing economic development, and the enhancement of business and recreation opportunities

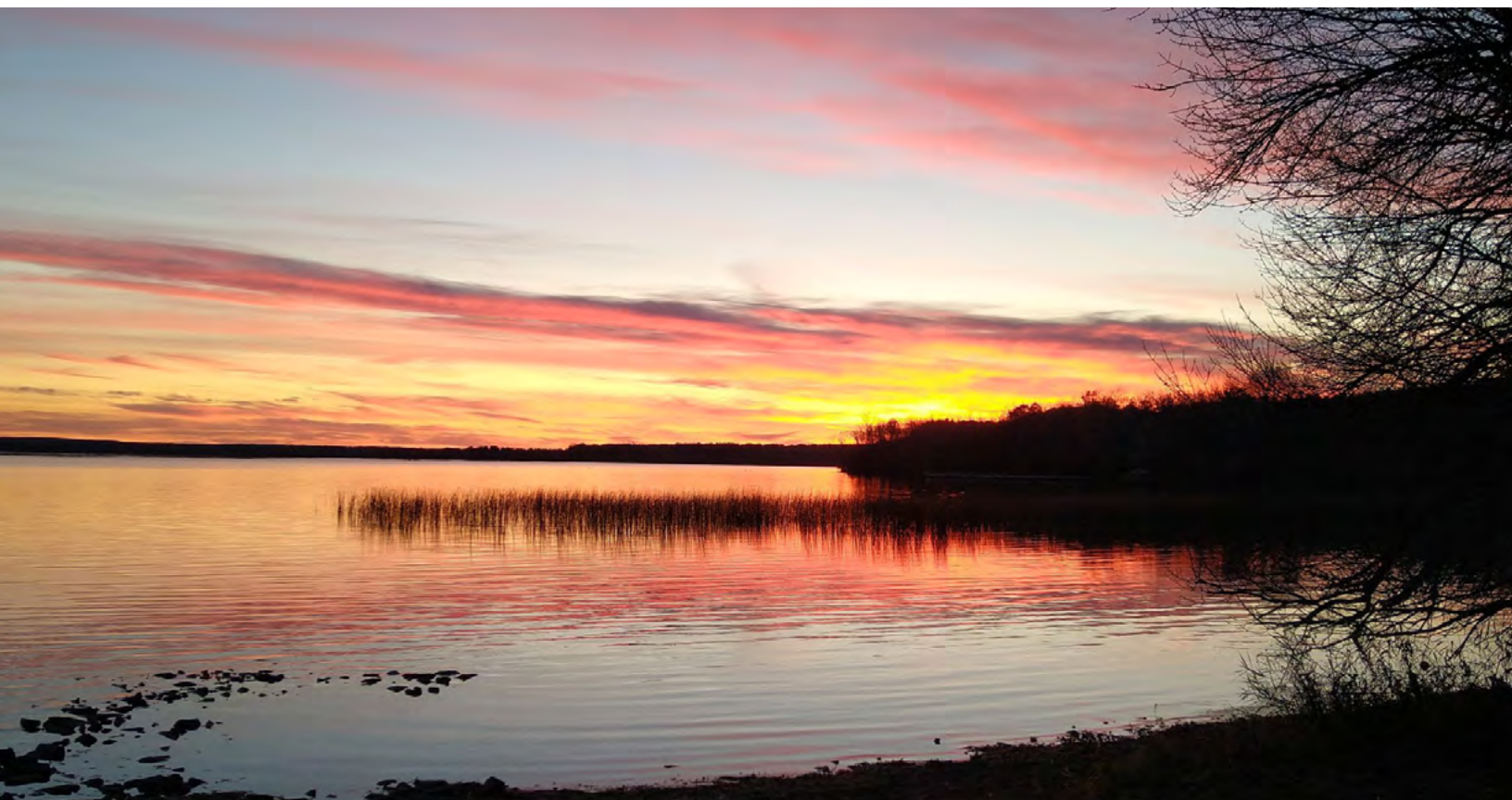


Figure 4.0 - Lake Gogebic

Housing

5





A shortage of affordable/attainable housing has become an important issue across the United States, and this is true in Ontonagon County and the western Upper Peninsula as well. The reasons for this are complex, and there are no easy solutions to the problem. Bergland Township has very limited control over the local housing shortage, but this Chapter will describe the Township’s housing characteristics and provide several strategies to address housing needs.

Single-family, owner-occupied homes dominate the housing supply in Bergland Township. There are only a few multi-family housing units.

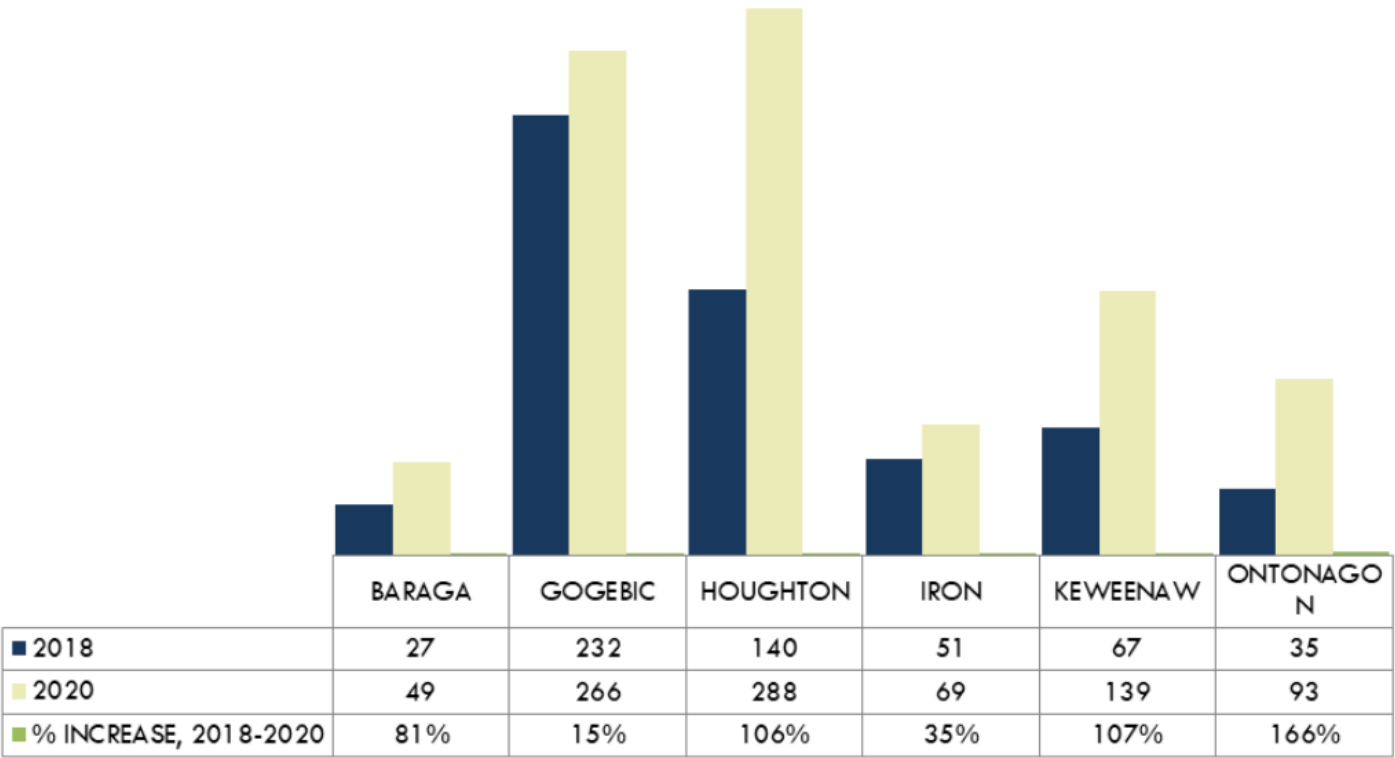
The urbanized areas of the Bergland and Merriweather town sites are characterized by older, single-family homes on small platted lots which were developed early in the history of the area. The availability of community water and sewer service has made this feasible, as the mostly small lots would be difficult to develop with on-site services.

Housing throughout the rest of the township is characterized as rural single-family residential, with homes on lots and tracts generally more than one acre in size. Most of the rural housing in Bergland Township is located along the shore of Lake Gogebic and north of Bergland along M-64.

Community pride is evidenced by the general appearance of homes and neighborhoods in Bergland Township.

SHORT-TERM RENTALS

Changes in travel patterns have driven an increased demand for short-term rentals, nationwide and in the region.



Source: Granicus, 2020

Figure 5.0 - Short Term Rental Comparison

In recent years, Ontonagon County and Bergland Township have experienced a dramatic increase in the number of short-term rentals (STR), with a 166% increase in STR between 2018 and 2020. Historically, STRs have existed in the Township; with owners typically renting out their seasonal lake homes to friends and family. The growth of this industry in the last few years is attributed to the on-line booking platforms, such as AirBnb and VRBO. In addition, the depressed value of housing in the Township due to economic conditions makes available units especially attractive to investors for vacation rentals.

Short-term rentals do increase a community's bed base for tourism. They also benefit taxing jurisdictions through non-homestead taxes. At the same time, STRs also result in fewer homes for sale, fewer long-term rentals available for people who live and work in the community, and can create community conflicts over the intrusion of commercial lodging activity into residential neighborhoods. In a small community like Bergland Township, long-term effects could include loss of year-round population, fewer families with children, fewer community volunteers for boards and commissions, fire departments, first responders and other community efforts that require manpower and volunteers.

Bergland Township has enacted regulations for STRs that include a license fee, inspection, and water testing.

Land available for construction of homes in Bergland Township has become very limited. Almost all platted residential lots in Bergland, Merriweather, and the Lake Gogebic waterfront are developed. Land availability is further constrained by private timber resource lands and the Ottawa National Forest public land.

Housing is needed in Bergland and Ontonagon County for seasonal and year-round workers. The Township's water and sewer systems provides the ability to serve a higher density housing option that could fill this need.

In addition, there may be a need for other housing options that would serve current Township residents who, due to age, may want to downsize, desire housing with less maintenance, and who would enjoy remaining in the community if an option were available. Older residents may want to sell their larger home, especially in the current "hot" seller's market, but cannot find suitable housing that fits their needs.

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Summary

BERGLAND TOWNSHIP HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS SUMMARY, 2020

Total Housing Units: **481**

- Single Family: 93%
- Multi-family: 5%
- Mobile homes: 2%

Occupied Housing Units: **53%***

**reflects the seasonal nature of housing in Bergland Township on Lake Gogebic*

94% of occupied units are owner-occupied

Lived in same housing unit before 1990: 36%

Median value: **\$222,400**
(Ontonagon County-\$89,700)

Breakdown of Housing Values

- Value under \$100,000: 33%
- Value of \$100K to 200K: 10%
- Value more than \$200K: 57%
- Value more than \$500K: 4%

Source: 2018-2022 ACS Five-Year Estimates

Remote workers (persons who are able to work from home via Internet) has, in recent years, attracted new year-round residents to the Township. When asked where people work in the community survey, 50% (19 of 38 persons who answered this question) indicated they work remotely in a home office.

The community has a lot to offer people who want a more rural, recreation-oriented lifestyle, and some have relocated to the area for those reasons. High-quality broadband availability is a key locational factor to bringing the remote workforce to Bergland Township. Recently, fiber-based high-speed Internet has become available to many Township residents.

HOUSING TYPES

This graphic illustrates a variety of housing types beyond the single-family homes found in Bergland Township, including what is called “missing middle housing”. Missing middle housing units were common in neighborhoods nationally built before 1940, but were replaced by a more suburban housing development pattern after World War II. Typically, they have a walkable context, smaller foot print buildings, lower perceived density, a “sense of community” by design, and are more affordable to both consumers and builders. Several of the missing middle housing formats shown here may be suitable for infill sites in the Bergland townsite identified for redevelopment and new greenfield development on the Future Land Use Map, providing more choices for current and prospective residents.

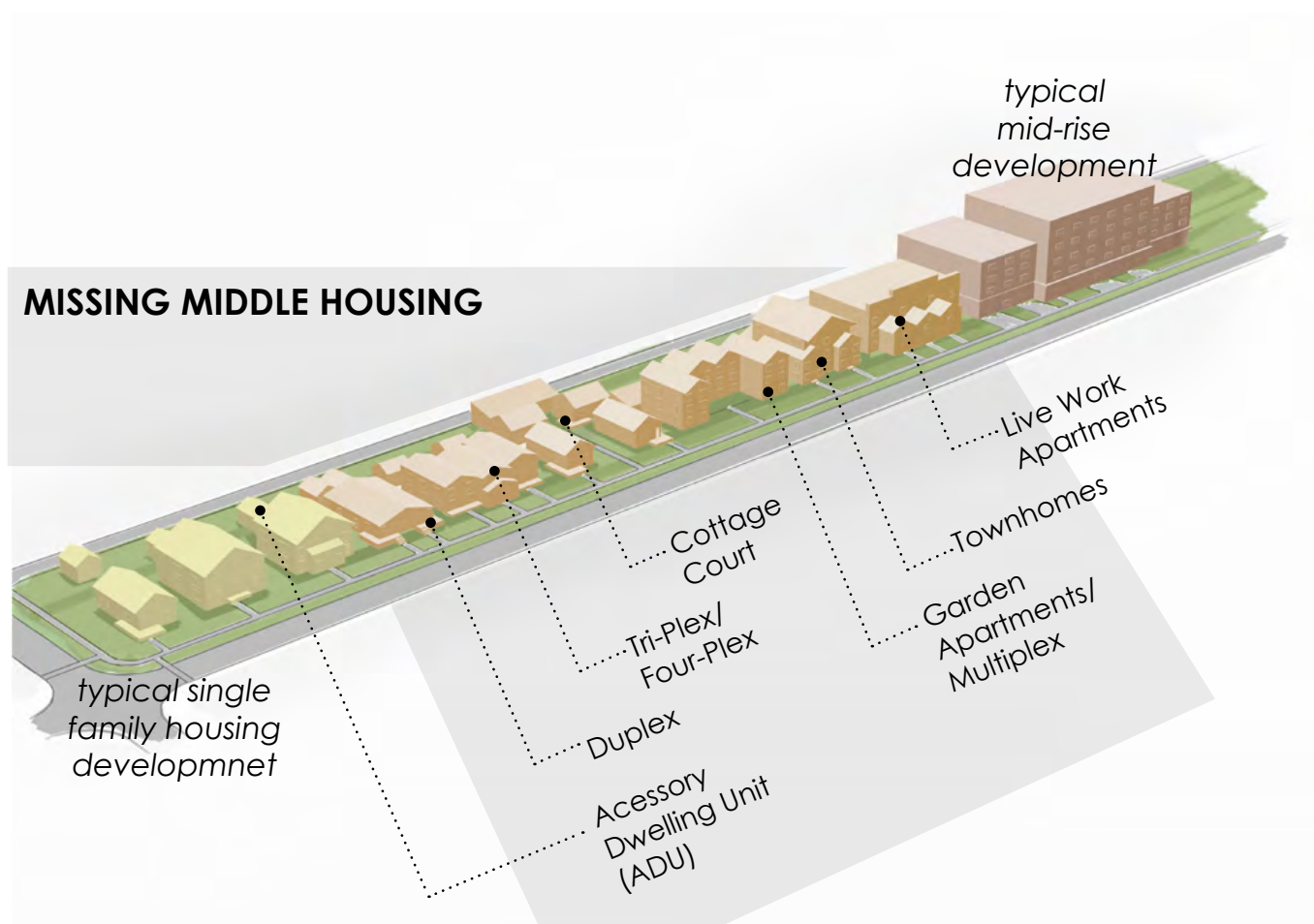


Figure 5.1 Missing Middle Housing

HOUSING REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY

The former Bergland School building and property has been neglected to the point that it is unlikely feasible to re-use the building due to water and structural damage. While this is an unfortunate situation for the community, as the structure has become severely blighted, the site presents a great opportunity for redevelopment. The Township needs to continue to explore opportunities to work with the current property owner to implement a redevelopment project on this site.

In communities with a demonstrated housing need such as Bergland Township, a brownfield redevelopment authority now has the ability to use tax increment financing to reimburse developers with captured tax revenues for “housing development activities” and supporting infrastructure and site preparation. This is an expansion of eligible activities, which had previously been limited to more traditional brownfield activities such as baseline environmental assessments, due care and environmental response activities, demolition, lead/asbestos/mold abatement, and certain site preparation and infrastructure improvements.

“Eligible property” now includes a “housing property,” which is defined as “property on which at least one unit of residential housing is proposed to be constructed, rehabilitated, or otherwise designed to be used as a dwelling” and includes mixed-use developments.

Housing development activities means one or more of the following activities:

- Reimbursement provided to owners of rental housing for qualified rehabilitation*.
- Costs for public infrastructure and necessary safety improvements.
- Costs of demolition and renovation of existing buildings and site preparation, to the extent necessary to accommodate an income-qualified** purchaser or renter household.
- Temporary household relocation costs for an income-qualified household for a period not to exceed one year.
- Acquisition cost for blighted or obsolete rental units, to the extent the acquisition would promote rehabilitation or adaptive reuse of the blighted or obsolete rental unit to accommodate an income-qualified household.
- Reimbursement provided to a developer to fill a financing gap associated with the development of housing units priced for income-qualified households and to assist with costs related to infrastructure improvements and site preparation that are not a response activity and that are necessary for new housing development.

**Qualified rehabilitation” means rehabilitation of existing structures designed to be used as a dwelling necessary to make a housing unit suitable for sale or rent to an income-qualified household. The definition also includes bringing the structure into conformance with minimum local building code standards or improving the livability of units.*

***Income-qualified household means a person, a family, or unrelated persons living together, whose annual household income is not more than 120% of the area median income determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.*

Bergland Township intends to prioritize the redevelopment of this site, finding an experienced developer, and using all available tools.



Figure 5.2 Former Bergland School

HOUSING PROGRAMS

Summary

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM

The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program is the federal government's major program for assisting very low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market. Housing Choice Vouchers are administered by the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA).

***THE LOCAL PROGRAM CONTACT IS: DICKINSON HOUSING ASSISTANCE LLC,
906-774-4325***

HOUSING SUPPORT-GOGEBIC-ONTONAGON COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY

The Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), funded by MSHDA, is a program that provides funding for people who are either literally homeless (i.e. living on the streets, in a car, in a shelter or a safe haven) or could become homeless due to an imminent pending eviction.

The Rapid Rehousing Grant funding by MDHHS is a program that target homelessness with the goal of moving them into stable housing as quick as possible.

CONTACT: 906-667-0283.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

More housing and related assistance for lower-income families and individuals can be found at the link below:

[HTTPS://WWW.WUPPDR.ORG/HOUSING](https://www.wuppdr.org/housing)

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Goal 1 Address Housing Supply

STRATEGY 1.1

Explore opportunities to expand housing opportunities and consider alternate housing formats/types, such as duplex, tri-plex, and four-plex housing, on vacant lands where community water and sewer services are available.

STRATEGY 1.2

Continue to work with broadband providers to extend fiber optic infrastructure to the remaining businesses and residences that are not served.

STRATEGY 1.3

Monitor STR activity, and enact new appropriate STR standards and regulations through the Zoning Ordinance, and enforce the regulations.

STRATEGY 1.4

Consider opportunities to modify the Zoning Ordinance to encourage accessory housing units on larger residential properties for long-term workforce rentals.

STRATEGY 1.5

Identify blighted and obsolete properties that are suitable for redevelopment of single-family properties.

STRATEGY 1.6

Identify larger vacant sites that may be available and suitable for multi-family housing and ensure the new zoning ordinance allows this type of development

STRATEGY 1.7

Continue to work towards redevelopment of the former Bergland School site, by identifying and seeking grant opportunities, and utilizing tools such as Michigan's new brownfield tax increment financing for housing legislation.



Figure 5.1 Bergland Residences



Figure 5.2 Aerial View of Bergland Residences

A low-angle photograph of a forest with tall, thin trees and bright green foliage. A large, semi-transparent green number '6' is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Natural Features/Parks & 6 Rec Facilities/ Public Lands



Residents of Bergland Township have excellent opportunities for recreation. In fact, 61% of the community survey respondents cited the proximity to natural resources and recreation as a reason for living in the Township. Bergland Township maintains a Recreation Plan that identifies desired improvements to Township recreation facilities.

This chapter identifies and describes the Township’s natural features and recreation opportunities.

LAKE GOGEBIC

At the top of the list of recreational assets is Lake Gogebic, a 13,380-acre lake. Lake Gogebic is the largest inland lake in the Upper Peninsula and the sixth largest inland lake in Michigan. The lake has 34.4 miles of shoreline, with approximately 16 miles of shoreline in Bergland Township. Many Township residents are fortunate to live on this beautiful body of water. Lake Gogebic is a visitor destination, noted for its excellent walleye, smallmouth bass and jumbo perch fishing, attracting numerous visiting fisherman.

The water level of Lake Gogebic is maintained by a dam at the northeast end of the lake, which is the outlet for the West Branch of the Ontonagon River. The dam, which dates to 1906, is owned and maintained by the Upper Peninsula Power Company (UPPCO), to provide water flows to their hydroelectric power station at Victoria Dam downstream. The Federal Energy Regulatory Agency (FERC) governs, regulates and licenses the dam. The Lake Gogebic Improvement Association (LGIA) has been concerned in recent years about low water levels, caused by below-average annual precipitation, creating boating and docking challenges for property owners, and at the public parks and boat launches. The LGIA is now considered a stakeholder in communication with UPPCO and FERC on this issue.

BERGLAND TOWNSHIP RECREATION FACILITIES

BERGLAND TOWNSHIP PARK

Located on the north shoreline of Lake Gogebic, the 12.5-acre park is divided into separate sections. The “upper park” includes 7 wooded campsites (with mainly 20-amp electric hookups), a baseball field, tennis courts, horseshoe pits, picnic tables, two pavilions, a food stand with kitchen, and toilet and shower facilities. An additional 13 campsites are located just below the upper park. These sites are friendlier to RVs, with level gravel pads (reconfigured and improved in spring 2024) and 30-amp electric hookups.

Along the lakeshore, the “lower park” consists of a swimming area and beach with picnic tables, a pavilion, and a playground with a swing set, slide, and monkey bars. The playground was improved in 2023 with a new wood chip surface and edging, paid for primarily by a risk management grant from the township’s liability insurer.

Access to the lower park lacks an accessible trail and is limited to one access road. The trail from the lower to upper park has a steep slope, deep steps, uneven surface, and exposed tree roots. Improvement of this trail is one of many potential upgrades to the park, along with addition of two or three secluded campsites with no hookups, a new restroom/shower building, and possible expansion with full-hookup and pull-through sites at the upper park.



Figure 6.0 Boat Wash Station

Boating access to Lake Gogebic is adjacent to the Township Park at the DNR-owned “Bergland Dock” – one of five publicly owned boating access sites on the lake.

The community survey indicates that 48% of respondents used the campground and over 71% used the waterfront area and beach. Respondents also identified beach improvements (63%) and campground improvements/expansion (35%) as priorities.

The Township should consider retaining a qualified design firm to analyze the park properties and prepare a park master plan for the site. A master plan will identify layout options for improvements, site design standards, and cost estimates which will assist the Township with decision-making and grant opportunities for the park.



Source: Keweenaw Report

Figure 6.1 Bergland Dock

MERRIWEATHER PARK

Merriweather Park is a small (less than one acre) community recreation area located in the community of Merriweather. The park offers a basketball court, outhouse, and a covered pavilion picnic area that currently does not have a concrete pad. The pavilion is used primarily by residents in the immediate area, including for occasional community events. Residents are leading an effort to secure funding for roll-up canvas side covers. Limited roadside parking is available for park users.

REGIONAL RECREATIONAL SITES

There are additional recreational facilities within or are near Bergland Township that provide opportunities to residents and visitors. Regional recreational amenities includes the following:

BERGLAND DOCK

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) owns and maintains the Bergland Dock, located next to the Bergland Township Park on Lake Gogebic. The boating access site has a hard-surface ramp that can accommodate large watercraft. A courtesy pier was installed in 2016 to assist with launching and provides limited space for short-term mooring. An aggregate path connects the pier to the park’s lower pavilion. Other amenities include paved parking, a vault toilet, and a boat washing facility to help prevent spread of invasive species.

POLARIS E-UTV CHARGING STATION

The charging station can accommodate four vehicles with J1772 ports. It is intended primarily for E-UTV use in connection with the area trail network, but it is available free of charge to any electric vehicle. The charging station may be removed after Fall, 2025.

BERGLAND SKI TRAIL

The National Forest Service maintains the Bergland Ski Trail, open to cross country skiing and snowshoeing. The trailhead is located one mile north of Bergland near the corner of M-64 and Bergland Road. The 3.5 miles of ski trails are of varying difficulty through hardwood forests with pockets of hemlock trees. The trail is regularly groomed in the winter, weather permitting.

LAKE GOGEBIC STATE PARK

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources owns and operates a large campground, beach, playground, and trails on a 360-acre site

located on the west shore of Lake Gogebic. Amenities at this park include modern and rustic campsites, modern restrooms, a picnic area with fire pits and grills, a picnic shelter, sanitation station, a sandy beach, a paved boat launch, and the two-mile Lake Gogebic Forest Trail. The park offers activities such as fishing, paddling sports, boating, swimming, and hiking.

LAKE GOGEBIC COUNTY PARK

Gogebic County owns and operates a campground, boat launch, and playground on a 133-acre site located on Lake Gogebic's southwestern shore. Available facilities include 53 camping sites, a boat launch, swimming beach, restrooms, a play field, and playground equipment.

TRAP HILLS

Hiking trails with rustic camping and nature viewing options are available in the Trap Hills area of the Ottawa National Forest. The area is accessible by the Gogebic Ridge and North Country Trails, and offers hiking and backpacking. The Trap Hills are comprised of large tracts of undisturbed forest, rugged slopes and ridges, streams, waterfalls and ponds. This area is home to a wide range of rare and endangered species, including Eastern Timber Wolf, Peregrine Falcon, Fairy Bells, and Braun's Holly Fern.

ONTONAGON COUNTY PARK

Ontonagon County provides a large campground, beach, and playground on 84 acres, 44 acres are undeveloped. The park is located in the southwest corner of Ontonagon County in Bergland Township. This park is one of four public campgrounds on Lake Gogebic. It is the County's only developed recreation facility. The park is supervised by a host and maintained by County staff. It offers a swimming beach, boat ramp, fish cleaning shack, pavilion, playground, vault toilets, water hand-pump, and 43 campsites, most with 30-amp electric hookups.



Source: Michigan DNR

Figure 6.3 Lake of the Clouds at Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park

PORCUPINE MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS STATE PARK

At 60,000 acres, the Porcupine Mountain Wilderness State Park is the largest state park in Michigan and one of the largest old-growth, hardwood-hemlock forests east of the Mississippi River. "The Porkies" is a major attraction in the Great Lakes region. Most of the park is maintained as a wilderness area and is prohibited by law from any type of modern development. One section of wilderness is set aside as a study area, which may not be modified in any way. The Park also features more than 90 miles of hiking trails, a downhill ski hill, and 63 backcountry camping sites.

Some eastern areas of the park contain modern trails, roadways, and other facilities. Cabins, primitive "backcountry" campsites,

and rustic and modern campgrounds are available. The modern campground at Union Bay, accommodates recreational vehicles and has electrical hookups. The park overall provides a wide variety of developed and undeveloped recreational activities and facilities, from swimming, paddling, lake and stream fishing, biking, and metal detecting to a boat launch, a picnic shelter, and a concession stand.

NORTH COUNTRY NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL

The North Country National Scenic Trail (NCT) has 96 miles in Ontonagon County out of a total of 4,900 miles. The NCT is a continuous trail between North Dakota and Vermont, leading through a variety of terrain types and settings. The Ontonagon County segment of the NCT is maintained by volunteers of the NCT Association's Peter Wolfe Chapter east of M-64 and the Ni-Miikanaake Chapter west of M-64. The trail has become more popular with both long-distance and local hikers. The trail traverses most of the county's east-to-west length for non-motorized use only.



Source: Lake Gogebic Area Chamber of Commerce

Figure 6.4 ORV trails near Lake Gogebic

GOGEBIC RIDGE TRAIL

Located in the Ottawa National Forest off Forest Road 250, near Merriweather, this 8.6-mile trail was constructed by the Youth Conservation Corps in 1977. The trail leads east from the road towards Weary Lake, then goes north, crossing M-64. From there it leads east over Cookout Mountain, then to Sandhill Creek, and ending at its junction with the North Country Trail, providing a trail connection to Bergland.

ORV TRAILS

ORV trails in Bergland Township are administered by the DNR, and MI-TRALE performs most construction and maintenance of 255 miles of trails (including county road connector routes). All designated trails near Bergland Township and throughout Ontonagon County are full multi-use (both motorized and non-motorized) and allow for equestrian use. This trail network includes major routes such as the Pioneer or "P" Trail from Rockland to Bergland, the Bergland – Sidnaw Trail or "SB," the 40-mile Bill Nichols or "BN" trail from Greenland to Houghton, and the Land O'Lakes-Bruce Crossing or "LL" among others. The primary trail network runs across publicly owned land and DNR easements on private land. Trails are supplemented by several county road connectors, identified as "preferred routes", that allow ORV traffic with some county-level restrictions. Designated National Forest Roads also function as ORV routes. Although all ORV trails allow vehicles up to 65" with a state ORV sticker, some of the trails are closed to motorcycle usage. ORV trails are generally conducive to equestrian traffic. The DNR is primarily responsible for administration and law enforcement. Law enforcement is also provided by the Ontonagon County Sheriff's Department with DNR funding. MI-TRALE currently carries out most construction and maintenance.

SNOWMOBILE TRAILS

Due to the region's reputation for heavy snowfalls, its 350-mile network of trails is very popular. The snowmobile trail network is even more extensive than the ORV network; however, there is much overlap between the two networks, with trails designated for each type of traffic marked by unique signs. As a rule, all ORV trails allow snowmobiles, but the reverse is not true. Like ORVs, the primary trail network runs across publicly owned land and DNR easements on private land, and the DNR is primarily responsible for administration. Also, as with ORV routes, law enforcement is provided by the DNR and Sheriff's Department.



Source: Michigan DNR

Figure 6.5 Snowmobile Trail

OTTAWA NATIONAL FOREST

The one-million-acre Ottawa National Forest is located throughout the western half of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. The forest has five ranger districts and a nursery that serves the Upper Peninsula. Three Wilderness areas are part of the Ottawa National Forest: Sylvania Wilderness Area, McCormick Wilderness Area, and Sturgeon River Gorge Wilderness.

The area is known for its year-round recreation opportunities, including waterfall viewing, canoeing/kayaking, camping, hiking, UTV riding, fishing, mountain biking, and boating. The Wilderness areas as well as many of the more remote lakes offer a quiet solitude and escape. Fall hunting for small and big game is superb. Winter recreation enthusiasts delight in the Ottawa's location in the heart of "Big Snow Country." Winter opportunities include skiing, (cross country and downhill), snowboarding, snowmobiling, skijoring, snow shoeing and ice fishing.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Goal 1

Define an affordable and achievable recreation improvement program for the township that will provide for the needs, health, and wellness of residents and visitors and increase use and user satisfaction at township facilities.

STRATEGY 1.1

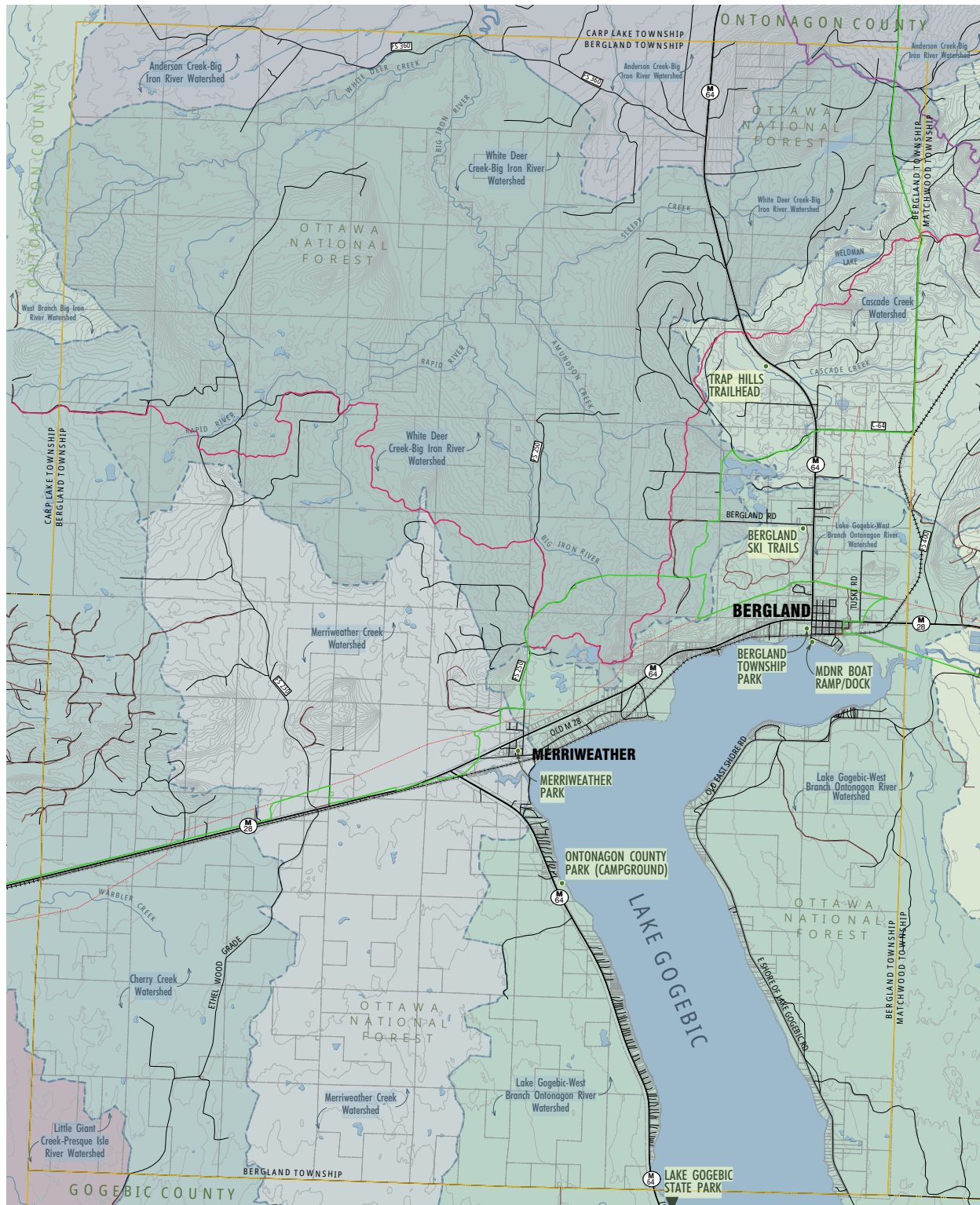
Contract with a qualified consultant to prepare a master plan for the Township Park on Lake Gogebic to guide future improvements and serve as the basis for grant funding.

STRATEGY 1.2

Implement the Recreation Plan "Action Plan" projects identified.

STRATEGY 1.3

Develop themed identification signage and a wayfinding system for Township and regional recreation facilities and trailheads.



Legend

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| PARCEL BOUNDARIES | MAJOR STREETS (USGS) | TRAILS (NATIONAL FOREST/OTHER) |
| TOWNSHIP BOUNDARY (USGS) | MINOR STREETS (USGS) | TRAILS (NORTH COUNTY TRAIL) |
| WATER BODIES (USGS) | UTILITY LINES (USGS) | TRAILS (SNOWMOBILE) |
| | RAIL (USGS) | TRAILS (GOGEBIC RIDGE TRAIL/MDNR) |
| | WOODLAND COVER (USGS) | RECREATION FACILITIES |
| | OTTAWA NATIONAL FOREST (USGS) | WATERSHED BOUNDARIES |
| | 20FT CONTOURS (USGS) | |



mapping based on:
Parcel Data provided by Ontonagon County,
<https://gis-michigan.opendata.arcgis.com/>, and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)
Topo TNM Style data, USGS Topo Map Vector Data, 7.5 x 7.5 minute
Shapfile Data for Aldridge Creek, Berghland, Berghland NE, and Merriweather,
Michigan, Topo TNM Style Template Disclaimer: Initial styling of this Map
Template was provided by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). The USGS does
not endorse any products created from the template.

Figure 6.6 Natural Features/Recreation Map

Natural Features/Parks & Rec Facilities/Public Lands



Township Infrastructure/ Public Facilities/ Safety & Emergency Services



This chapter describes Township infrastructure, public facilities, and services.

TOWNSHIP HALL

The Bergland Township Hall is located at 101 Pine Street in the platted area of Bergland. This building houses the township offices, the fire hall for the volunteer fire department and a community meeting room used by many in the community. This building was built in 1955 and was recently painted.

The community would benefit from building a new ADA compliant facility to house Township offices, meeting area, garage for fire equipment and to serve as a community center.

WATER SYSTEM

Bergland Township owns and operates a potable water system which consists of two wells, a storage tank, approximately 19,000 ft. of watermain, and associated hydrants and isolation valves.

The Bergland Township water system is locally supplied by two wells with a pump house at each well site. A 133,000-gallon steel standpipe water tank sits just to the west of the midpoint of the service area/wells. Well #3 is located near the shoreline of Lake Gogebic. Well #4 is located north of the service area and tank.



Figure 7.0 - Bergland Township Hall & Fire Department

Approximately 145 customers are served by this water system. The normal daily water usage is 25,000 to 30,000 gallons per day.

Repairs were made to the storage tank in 2022. The existing storage tank has the capability of over 4 days of storage at the average daily demand. No significant needs are foreseen over the next 20 years for the storage tank.

A 2023 DWSRF Study by Coleman Engineering identified a number of needed improvements. In order to abandon an east-west section of 6-inch watermain currently below the M-28 ROW, an additional east-west segment must be added. The proposed project includes the addition of an 8-inch watermain north of M-28 on Forest Ave. to alleviate the need for the existing 6-inch watermain beneath the M-28 ROW. The existing watermain running north-south on Maple St. is suspected to be 4-inch north of M-28, and would be replaced with an 8-inch line from south of M-28 to Forest Ave. Four additional crossings using 8-inch watermain with isolation valves outside of the M-28 ROW are proposed to provide the additional looping the distribution system needs during peak flows. The existing two crossings below M-28 are 6-inch diameter piping, and these two crossings would also be replaced with 8-inch watermain. To complete the east-west looping, a section of 8-inch watermain would be added north of the M-28 ROW from Birch St. to Willow St. The three additional crossings below M-28 using 8-inch watermain would occur in this proposed section. Additional hydrants would be added along the new piping segments, and the existing valves located below M-28 would be re-located to allow for future maintenance without excavating within the M-28 ROW. Several other valves and hydrants would be replaced.



Figure 7.1 Aerial View of Bergland, 2024

Other proposed work involves the replacement of approximately 30 lead/galvanized service laterals, replacing the pumps and level controls at Wells #3 & #4, and adding a generator plug at Well #3.

Based upon DWSRF guidance, Bergland Township is preliminarily rated as an “overburdened” community. The cost of the proposed project is \$2,480,000.

The Bergland Township Capital Improvement Plan 2025-2030 identifies funding and expenditures for water system improvements based upon the 2023 CWSRF study of the system.

SANITARY SEWER SYSTEM

Bergland Township installed a sanitary sewage collection and treatment system in the community of Bergland in 1972. The Bergland Sewer System consists of gravity sanitary sewer, a pump station (Lift Station #1), sanitary sewer force-main, and three wastewater stabilization lagoons.

In 2008 the collection system was expanded by the addition of the Merriweather pressure sewer collection system to alleviate non-compliant privately owned septic tank/subsurface wastewater infiltration systems.

The Bergland Township Sanitary Sewer System currently serves approximately 366 homes and businesses (163 in the Bergland System and 203 in the Merriweather System). The Bergland Sewer System consists of gravity sanitary sewer, a pump station (Lift Station #1, sanitary sewer force-main, and three wastewater stabilization lagoons.

With over 50 years of operation, some of the major components of the original 1972 system have reached their expected lifetime. A failure at the main lift station in October 2022 prompted an inspection by EGLE of the wastewater components. EGLE noted several deficiencies at the treatment lagoons which require corrective action, and previous Asset Management Programs have identified critical components of the system which require replacement.

An evaluation of the Bergland Sewer System was completed in 2023 under the CWSRF program. A recommended upgrade project was identified to replace several concrete structures and piping segments at the treatment lagoons, repairs to the lagoon side slopes, lagoon dredging, replacement of the main lift station with a submersible pump station, and several segments of the gravity sewer system. Based upon CWSRF guidance, Bergland Township is rated as an “overburdened” community. The cost of the proposed project is \$3,250,000.

The Bergland Township Capital Improvement Plan 2025-2030 identifies funding and expenditures for wastewater system improvements based upon the 2023 CWSRF study of the system.

ON-SITE WASTEWATER SYSTEMS

Although not a public facility, there is concern with on-site septic system performance potentially impacting Lake Gogebic. This issue exists with all properties on the lake in both Bergland and Marenisco Townships. Outside of Bergland and Merriweather, properties do not have access to municipal sewer and use on-site treatment systems. On-site septic systems built prior to 1976 did not have to meet state or local standards. Currently, on-site septic systems are not inspected to determine function. Discovery of failing or under-performing systems is determined through real estate sales if the loaning bank or purchaser requires an inspection, or a building code addition is added to a house, a complaint is lodged, or the owner self-determines. Many properties were built prior to standards, and there are camps and cabins on and off the lake that still use an outhouse, with unknown drainage flow or piped systems.

In recognition of this issue, the Lake Gogebic Area Sewer Authority (LGASA) was a joint group from Bergland and Marenisco Townships charged with evaluating further extensions to the Bergland Township sewer system along the west shore of Lake Gogebic. The project became cost prohibitive and was tabled in October of 2018, and it is not highly unlikely this project will be implemented.

STORMWATER

Bergland Township’s stormwater system is located in the residential area south of Highway M- 28. The system consists of 23 stormwater structures, 6 outfalls and approximately 3,000 feet of stormwater piping located within and along the roadways. The stormwater system is severely deteriorated and in need of reconstruction.

Storm sewers/catchments along M-28 are a separate system that MDOT is responsible for.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Bergland is served by a volunteer Fire Department. The equipment consists of one 1988 Water tanker and a 2000 Pumper truck, which are housed in the Township Hall in Bergland.

The four credentialed firefighters and more than 10 volunteer auxiliary members attend training sessions and monthly meetings. Age has become a concern as most of the members are at or nearing retirement age. Few younger applicants are available. The Fire Department belongs to a group with 15 other communities to provide mutual aid in fighting fires.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Police protection is provided by the Ontonagon County Sheriff Department, and the Michigan State Police. The Ontonagon County Sheriff is based in the Village of Ontonagon (29 miles) and the nearest Michigan State Police post is in Wakefield (20 miles).

Ambulance service is provided to the region by SONCO Ambulance, Inc., based in Bruce Crossing, and located 19.5 miles from the Bergland townsite. Advanced life support is from Aspirus MedEvac based in Ontonagon. The nearest hospital is Aspirus Ironwood. The Aspirus Ontonagon Hospital closed in 2024.

SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL AND RECYCLING

Solid waste disposal is available to individual residents and businesses on a subscription basis from Waste Management and Patriot Services. Recycling is not available. Dumpsters can be rented from Waste Management and Gogebic Range Solid Waste Management Authority.

ENERGY SERVICES

Electric service is provided by Xcel Energy.

Natural gas service for the Bergland townsite is provided by Xcel Energy Company. Where natural gas is not available, there are several providers of LP gas to serve rural customers.

COMMUNICATIONS

Telephone service is available via cellular networks, Spectrum (cable), and Michigan Broadband Services (fiber optic). AT&T provides traditional landline service to legacy customers but is not providing any new service.

Spectrum cable TV is available in the Bergland and Merriweather townsites. Other areas rely on satellite TV service available through other providers. High-speed fiber optic internet service is provided by the Michigan Broadband Services, available via recently laid fiber-optic cable in most developed areas of Bergland Township, including the townsites and west shore of Lake Gogebic. Starlink Internet or other satellite service is available for both remote and developed areas.

CEMETERIES

Bergland Township maintains two cemeteries. Lake View cemetery is located at the Junction of M-28 and M-64 in Bergland. The first recorded burial was in 1904. Forest Lawn cemetery is located approximately one mile north on M-64 and was established in the early 1970's. Township employees, along with supplemental hired help, mow and perform clean-up and maintenance. There are enough burial sites for approximately the next 40 years.

SENIOR CENTER

The Lake Gogebic Senior Citizens Club, Inc. (LGSCC, Inc.) is a 501c3, non-profit Corporation, established in 1971, which promotes and safeguards the independence and wellbeing of older adults from Ontonagon County. The Ontonagon County Commission on Aging (CoA), established in 1975, serves as a central planning body for Ontonagon County in matters concerning the needs of the aging population.

The Lake Gogebic Senior Center is a focal point for



Source: www.findsgrave.com

Figure 7.2 - Lake View Cemetery

various activities and events for Bergland Township. It serves as: the office for CoA/LGSCC, Inc., a meeting facility for various clubs (Lake Gogebic Recreation Club, Bergland/Matchwood Historical Society, cribbage card club, and the paint class). Morning coffee and snacks are available Monday through Friday. WI-Fi is accessible. Monthly blood pressure checks are offered through Horizon Home Health, a flu-shot clinic in the Fall through the Health Department, and other informational presentations.

The Senior Center is one of the oldest buildings in the Bergland townsite and as of early 2025 had become noticeably deteriorated and outdated; however, a State of Michigan Community Centers Grant will make significant renovations and upgrades possible beginning in 2025.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLANNING

The Bergland Township Planning Commission has prepared and approved a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) for the Township for the years 2025-2030. Capital Improvement Planning is the preparation and updating of a recommended schedule of public works and related equipment to be built or purchased during the planning period.

The purpose of a CIP are as follows:

- To develop a long range (six-year) program in which physical projects are planned, prioritized and implemented in an orderly manner
- To coordinate the capital related projects of the various Township departments, boards and commissions to ensure and appropriate distribution of capital improvement funds with regards to the needs of the Township and the fiscal ability of the Township to undertake the requested projects
- To assist the Township Supervisor and the Planning Commission in the determination of project requests and funding sources with regard to short and long-range plans
- To coordinate the demands and request for Capital Improvement funds with the planning needs of the Township so that an appropriate prioritized system can be programmed over increments of six years

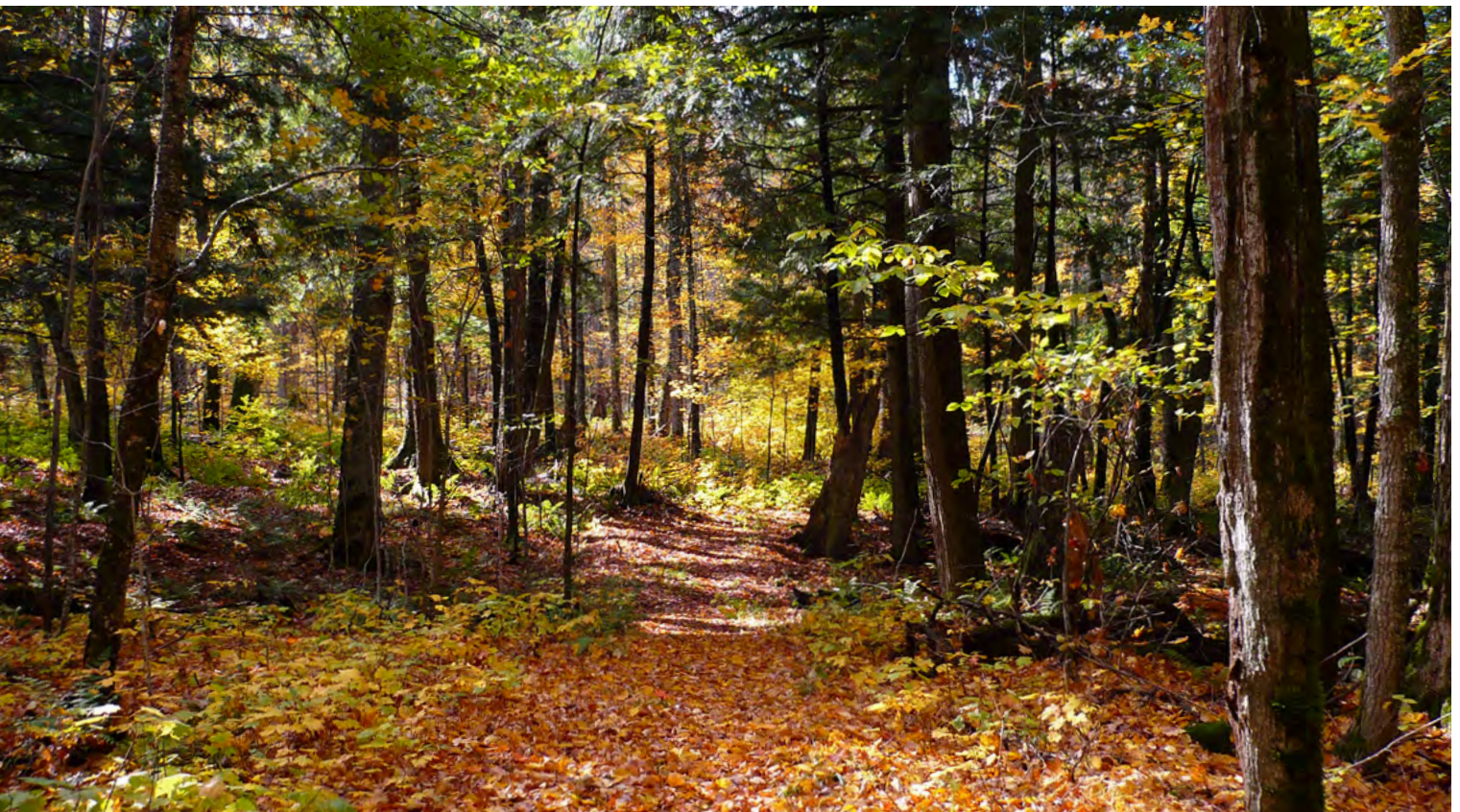


Figure 7.3 - Gogebic Ridge Trail

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Goal 1

Develop and maintain community infrastructure which serves residents and encourages business opportunities and growth

STRATEGY 1.1

Consider constructing a new Township Hall/Fire Hall/Community Center.

STRATEGY 1.2

Implement the water and sewer system improvement projects identified in recent studies.

STRATEGY 1.3

Annually review and update the Capital Improvement Plan.

STRATEGY 1.4

Promote the availability of broadband in the community as an asset to attract remote workers.

Goal 2

Ensure the Township has Emergency Management plans in place

STRATEGY 2.1

Evaluate which plans are appropriate and need to be in plan, i.e. Forest Fire, catastrophic blizzard or tornado, extended loss of electricity, contamination of water supply, and failure of sewage system.

STRATEGY 2.2

Increase efforts to recruit and train volunteer firefighters.

STRATEGY 2.3

Explore opportunities to improve emergency and urgent communications to Township residents.

Transportation

8





Local roads and streets draw the most attention from residents and visitors. All residents use roads, either as drivers of vehicles, or as passengers, or depend on them for the transport of good needed for daily life. People also use roads, sidewalks, and trails for active transportation and recreational activities such as walking, bicycling, rollerblading, etc. Unlike underground infrastructure such as water and sewer lines, which are equally vital to a community, roads are highly visible, and deteriorated roads and bridges are readily observed by all who travel them.

As a Michigan township, Bergland Township does not have responsibility for maintaining roads and streets. The Ontonagon County Road Commission levies a property tax and maintains all roads in the Township, and Bergland Township levies (beginning in 2025) additional millage to support improving roads in the Township.

Michigan Act 51 of 1951 requires that all counties, incorporated cities, and villages establish and maintain road systems under their jurisdiction, as distinct from state jurisdiction, as identified on the Ontonagon County Act 51 map. Although the Township is not directly responsible for local roads in the Bergland townsite, it is responsible for all storm sewers associated with roads other than M-28.

STATE TRUNKLINE HIGHWAYS

The state trunkline system includes state and federal highways that connect communities to other areas within the same county, state and other states. These roadways provide the highest level of traffic mobility for the traveling public. State and federal highways are designed by the prefixes "M" and "U.S." respectively.

There are two State Highways in the Township. M-28 runs east and west entering Bergland Township at the Matchwood Township line, and running west to the Gogebic County line. M-64 runs north and south entering the township on the west side of Lake Gogebic at the county line and exiting to the north at the Carp Lake Township line. It shares the same roadway for approximately four miles with Highway M-28 where they overlap just north of Lake Gogebic. M-28 and M-64 are maintained by the Ontonagon County Road Commission under contract to the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).

Act 51 requires that MDOT bear all maintenance costs consistent with department standards and specifications for all state highways including those within incorporated communities.

A mix of paved and gravel roadways exist throughout the area. Most residential roads are maintained by the County. The majority of unpaved roads are for access to forest lands. Often these are maintained by private companies or the Forest Service but barring gates or berms can usually be used by the general public.

PRIMARY ROAD SYSTEM:

A system of primary roads in each incorporated Township is approved by the state highway commission pursuant to P.A. 51. Primary Roads are selected by the County Road Commission on the basis of greatest general importance to the County. County roads may be added or deleted from the system subject to approval of the state highway commissioner.

There are 10.72 miles of Primary Roads in Bergland Township (East Shore Road).

LOCAL ROAD AND STREET SYSTEM:

Other local roads, exclusive of state trunklines, major county roads and certain forest roads make up the local street system. The process of approval, additions and deletions is the same as with other road system designations.

There are 26.78 miles of Local Roads in Bergland Township.

TRAFFIC VOLUMES

The Michigan Department of Transportation conducts annual vehicle counts on highways. The Average Daily Total (ADT) is used to identify traffic trends and needs for improvements. The 2024 ADT for highways running through the Bergland Township are as follows:

ADT COUNT

Segment	2024 ADT Count
M-28 East of Topaz	1,681
M-28 West of Topaz	2,062
M-28 West of M-64 intersection	1,837
M-64 South of Bergland townsite	784
M-64 South of M-28	409

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Planning for transportation improvements takes place at both the state and local level. The Michigan Department of Transportation maintains a statewide long-range transportation plan, and holds hearings around the state to gather input regarding residents' needs and desires. In addition to the long-range plan, MOOT prepares a five-year program for road improvements statewide. The various phases, such as right-of-way acquisition, design, and construction, are scheduled over a multi-year period so as to keep large projects on track.

Local planning efforts consist of the County Road Commission's annual prioritizing of road improvement projects, as well as small urban area task force meetings to plan projects for Category F funding. Some local planning efforts address specific issues, and may receive support from MDOT, as in the case of corridor studies and access management plans.

Bergland Township has an approved millage for road improvements within the Township and projected to have \$260,000 for planned road and storm sewer projects by 2028. A total of more than \$600,000 will be raised by 2034.

Access management refers to long-term planning for access to highway corridors, in order to preserve the long-term capacity of the roadway, improve safety, and maintain accessibility. Access management examines the spacing and location of driveways, access roads and intersections, and access management plans can recommend such measures as driveway consolidations, front or rear access roads, turn lanes, intersection realignments, addition or removal of traffic control devices, and other measures. Implementation can involve use of zoning and subdivision control ordinances, private road ordinances, standards for subdivision design, and use of local review boards in granting driveway permits.



Figure 8.0 M-28 Renovation

Access management plans are generally developed cooperatively by local units of government within a specific corridor area, with technical assistance from MDOT. Local committees enter into a Memorandum of Understanding to insure commitment to the planning process and implementation, and a consultant is usually retained to develop the actual plan by working closely with MDOT and the corridor group. At this time, these efforts are usually funded by MDOT. Currently there is not an Access Management Plan for Bergland Township, however, the principles and standards for access management should be considered during site plan review and other zoning decisions in the Township.

In 2024, MDOT greatly improved M-28 through the Bergland townsite, reducing the number of lanes, and replacing what was a 4-lane highway segment with a 3-lane (center turn lane) with wide shoulder configuration. This highway profile improves highway and pedestrian safety. Resurfacing of M-64 north of M-28 is planned in 2027.

NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES

In recent years, the construction of non-motorized facilities has increased in many areas in response to public interest. Walking and bicycling are among the top five individual exercise activities according to a national survey (walking is number one). Alternate modes of transportation are encouraged and made safer by facilities such as sidewalks, bike lanes and walking paths.

There are not sidewalks or pedestrian facilities along M-28. As part of the M-28 reconfiguration project, new ADA compliant corner sidewalks were constructed, even though there are not sidewalks on M-28. Crosswalk striping would be beneficial for pedestrians crossing M-28.

There are sidewalks in some areas of the Bergland townsite, but most are severely deteriorated. Where sidewalks are not present, the residential streets generally have light traffic that allows for safe walking and bicycling.

Winter, with its snow and cold temperatures, creates challenges for walking. The Township does not provide winter maintenance/snow plowing on sidewalks. Winter maintenance of higher pedestrian traffic areas would encourage more walking.



Figure 8.1 M-28 New Center Turn Lane

AIR SERVICE

The nearest airport providing commercial and charter passenger service is the Gogebic County Airport, a distance of about 32 miles. Denver Air Connection provides daily air service with connecting flights to Minneapolis-St. Paul (MSP) and Chicago (ORD).

RAIL SERVICE AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Bergland Township no longer has rail service. The On-Tran public transportation agency provides limited, demand-response service to the Township when scheduling allows.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Goal 1

Maintain and upgrade existing roads

STRATEGY 1.1

Use the Township road millage to implement street resurfacing in the Township.

Goal 2

Improve non-motorized/pedestrian facilities.

STRATEGY 2.1

Inventory the condition of existing sidewalks and prioritize replacement.

STRATEGY 2.2

Work with MDOT to identify and implement appropriate crosswalk locations on M-28 in the Bergland townsite.

Economic Development





The Bergland Township and Ontonagon County economy was once based on copper mining and forest products. The region has now transitioned to an economy based upon tourism, outdoor recreation, retirement homes, and remote workers.

Bergland Township has potential for sustainable growth and development. The Township offers an attractive location on Lake Gogebic, with good highway access, in a region rich with outdoor recreation attractions, and natural resources. The Township has good basic infrastructure, access to high-speed broadband, and lower housing costs.

In recent years, there has been a movement of people to rural communities that offer quality of life assets like those found in Bergland. The locational preferences of the millennials and recent college graduates has shown a trend that young people are choosing where to live based on lifestyle and quality of life considerations, rather than job opportunities or pay. Businesses, particularly those within the knowledge economy, have fewer requirements that dictate location within a particular region. Instead, they are looking for places that will provide a high quality of life for their employees and an appealing work environment.

In the Master Plan survey, 61% of respondents said they live in Bergland because of its proximity to natural resources and recreation. 41% said they are employed full-time, while 46% said they are retired.

When asked where they are employed, 50% (19 of 38 responses) said they work remotely. This is a trend the Township can focus on to attract more residents.

Increasingly, research into economic trends and economic development strategy suggests that the traditional models of business attraction may not be suitable, successful, and sustainable for many communities, particularly those places in geographically isolated regions. Instead, investment in public infrastructure and broadband improvements, placemaking, and amenities that will enhance the community's image and attractiveness to prospective businesses, entrepreneurs, and employees, is recognized as a viable strategy.

It should be noted that manufacturing growth opportunities for Bergland Township are limited. Economic development efforts should be focused on value-added use of readily available natural resources or high-value, low-volume goods.

NATURAL RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

There is still potential for natural resource development in the region, with two separate copper mining projects being proposed by the Highland Copper Company, Inc. The White Pine North project at the existing White Pine mine site north of Bergland, and the Copperwood project further west in Gogebic County are in various stages of permitting and feasibility. White Pine North is a joint venture primarily owned by Kinterra Resources. Either or both of these projects could expand employment opportunities for Bergland residents.

SMALL SCALE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOCUSED ON LOCAL BUSINESS

As a small community with limited resources, the best thing Bergland Township can do to create economic development activity is to continue to improve the quality of life opportunities in the community, making it a great place to live and do business. Strengthening neighborhoods, eliminating blight, improving recreation opportunities, fostering the development of new housing, and supporting business revitalization are all important elements to this strategy.

The Master Plan supports an “economic gardening” approach to growing jobs and businesses in Bergland Township. This proven approach grows the local economy from within by promoting local entrepreneurship and small and local business development. The primary idea of economic gardening is to work with what is already present in the community to build new opportunities.

Bergland Township should provide support for existing businesses and particularly home-based businesses, persons who work from home as freelancers, consultants, or remote employees, and other individuals making or selling products from home. Removing any local zoning barriers to home-based business is one example of supporting economic development.

In general, economic gardening strategies should seek to connect existing businesses and entrepreneurs to resources that will help them grow and thrive, while removing the barriers to starting and operating a business. One such resource organization is the non-profit Northern Initiatives, based in Marquette, that serves northern Michigan and parts of northern Wisconsin with lending and business consulting. Northern Initiatives administers a revolving loan fund that was capitalized, in part, from a revolving loan fund that originated in Ontonagon County through CDBG and UDAG grant funds that were loaned out to a local business.

TOURISM

During the pandemic in 2020, the nearby Porcupine Mountains State Park experienced unprecedented growth in visitation. The growth trend continued in 2021 and 2022, peaking at more than 600,000 persons. Bergland is only 18 miles away from the primary entrance to the Porcupine Mountains, and many of these visitors pass through Bergland on their way to the Porkies.

The increase in visitation parallels what is being experienced across the Upper Peninsula. People are discovering the Upper Peninsula because of a stronger interest in travel and vacationing closer to home, and increased interest in active lifestyles and outdoor activities.

Lake Gogebic is an attraction by itself, with excellent fishing in summer and winter. There are a number of resorts and businesses that already are in place to capitalize on the lake.

In the past, tourism jobs were associated with restaurant, service, and motel staff, which typically have been minimum wage positions. Instead, tourism should be embraced for the opportunities it creates to own and manage small business. The Township can support growth of tourism in the community and the region by encouraging entrepreneurs to start tourism-related businesses, such as outdoor equipment rentals, guided tour companies, lodging, fishing charters, food trucks, gift shops, a brew pub, and other small business that can benefit from the exiting visitation to the region.

There is a growing market for year-round backcountry adventure tourism, and Bergland Township offers the type of natural environment to attract this tourism niche.

The proximity to, and existing trail connection from Bergland to the North Country Trail could attract more visitation to the community. The Township should consider a unified wayfinding signage system to highlight this connection, existing trailheads and other attractions.

ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Summary

ONTONAGON COUNTY ECONOMIC DATA

- Total Labor Force: 2,187

Industry by number of workers 16 & over (2,033):

- Health care & social assistance: 17.2%*
- Manufacturing: 5.8%
- Retail trade: 11.4%
- Accommodation & food services: 10.0%
- Educational services: 6.0%
- Public administration: 7.1%

Source: ACS 2023

*Does not account for the recent closure of the Aspirus-Ontonagon Hospital.

More than 50 years ago, when downhill ski resorts were beginning to be developed in the western UP, a ski area was proposed in the hills north of Bergland. Known as Holiday Mountain, the project was proposed on private and USFS land, but failed to secure the needed financing.

The potential development of a new downhill ski resort is marginal, as only one new resort has emerged in the last 25 years in Michigan; however, many well-established ski resorts have made significant investments in lifts and infrastructure in recent years due to a resurgence of downhill skiing. Mount Bohemia opened in Keweenaw County in the year 2000 and has grown as a nationally-known niche destination for backcountry skiing. Mount Bohemia also offers remote snowcat-accessed skiing on a nearby hill. The hills north of Bergland in the area where the Holiday Mountain resort was proposed has potential for an undeveloped backcountry ski experience. A business could emerge to house, guide and support backcountry skiers.

BLIGHT CONTROL AND CODE ENFORCEMENT

Reducing or eliminating blighted properties can positively impact a community's ability to attract new residents and business. Blight enforcement requires a strong ordinance, enforced by a Civil Infractions Ordinance, to be effective.

PLACEMAKING AND COMMUNITY BEAUTIFICATION

Placemaking is a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design and management of a community's assets, inspiration, and potential, with the intention of creating public spaces that improve community vitality and promote people's health, happiness, and well-being.

Investing in Bergland's public spaces and appearance can change the "outside impressions" that both locals and visitors have about the community.

PLACEMAKING IDEAS FOR BERGLAND:

- **Street banners along M-28 and Pine Street.**
- **Wayfinding System to direct visitors to local and area natural and man-made attractions.**
- **Sidewalks and pedestrian-scale lighting.**
- **Landscaping of public spaces.**
- **Creating a community gathering space on the M-28 site owned by the Township and use the space for a farmers and artisans market in the summer and fall.**

WINTER AS AN OPPORTUNITY

Bergland is already well known as a destination for snowmobiling because of its abundant snowfall, Lake Gogebic, and a central location to the excellent trail system. During the winter of 2023-24, the snowmobile tourism was severely impacted by a lack of snow. Diversifying winter tourism opportunities to other activities would soften the impact of low-snow winters. Snowshoeing, cross country skiing, winter camping, ice fishing, and backcountry downhill skiing are less dependent upon the deep snow Bergland is famous for.

WINTER IDEAS FOR BERGLAND:

- **Establish a winter festival event, possibly on the ice of Bergland Bay/Lake Gogebic to include food, entertainment, ice fishing, snow and ice sculptures, etc. There are many fine examples and models in northern communities to get ideas.**
- **Work with the USFS to expand the Bergland Ski Trails in order to attract more use and create a destination trail system. Consider creating a parallel snowshoe trail and winter "fat tire" biking trail system.**
- **Encourage existing resorts to establish ice fishing shanty rentals, as they do on large lakes in Minnesota.**

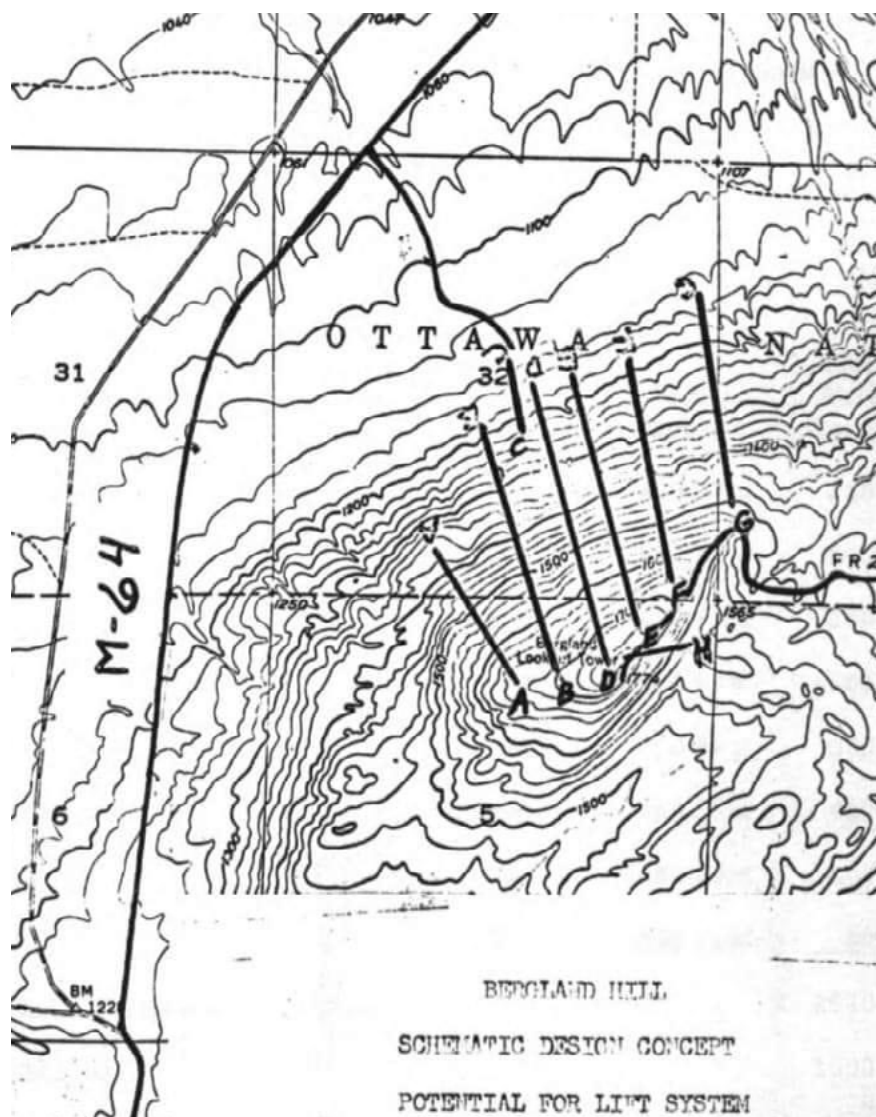
ENCOURAGE VOLUNTEERISM

Many of the suggestions in this chapter require people to implement. Consider ways to get more people involved in the community, including reaching out to new residents in the area, interfacing with the business community, and engaging people who live on Lake Gogebic. Some communities honor volunteers with an annual recognition dinner/social event.

REDEVELOPMENT TOOLS

BROWNFIELD REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

The Ontonagon County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority and Land Bank, established under the Brownfield Redevelopment Act PA 381 of 1996, as amended, can provide a developer with access to MDEQ, MSHDA, and MEDC related Tax Increment Financing as well as MDEQ grant and loan funding for appropriate projects. Eligible work includes environmental assessment, due care, lead and asbestos assessment and abatement, and demolition, public infrastructure and site work. Qualified housing projects have recently become eligible for brownfield activity tax increment financing.



Source: Midwest Lost Ski Areas project. Clipping is likely from the Ironwood Daily Globe

Figure 9.0 Potential Ski Area Project

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Goal 1

Market vacant Township-owned and privately-owned land for developers.

STRATEGY 1.1

Prioritize sites for redevelopment efforts and determine which types of businesses and housing are appropriate on these sites.

STRATEGY 1.2

Create property information packages.

STRATEGY 1.3

Create developers' packets for available sites and start actively recruiting businesses through directly mailing developers and by posting the information on the Township website.

STRATEGY 1.4

Work with WUPPDR on these packets.



Figure 9.1 Bergland Business District

Goal 2

Participate in and support area-wide economic development activities.

STRATEGY 2.1

Encourage Ontonagon County and county local governments to support the dormant County Economic Development Corporation (EDC).

Goal 3

Enhance quality of life opportunities.

STRATEGY 3.1

Continue work to strengthen neighborhoods, eliminate blight, improve recreation opportunities, foster the development of new housing, and support business district revitalization.

STRATEGY 3.2

Work on community beautification and placemaking projects in Bergland.

Goal 4

Expand tourism opportunities

STRATEGY 4.1

Develop a unified wayfinding sign system identifying existing trails and attractions.

STRATEGY 4.2

Consider opportunities to diversify winter tourism, such as ski and snowshoe trails, backcountry skiing and adventures, and a winter festival event.



Future Land Use 10 & Zoning Plan



Natural resources, history and transportation/access have shaped the existing land use in Bergland Township. From its early beginnings related to mining and lumbering, the Township has evolved to its current function as a residential and recreational community, with limited commercial facilities serving residents and the tourism economy of Ontonagon County.

This chapter of the Master Plan describes the existing land uses, and provides a Future Land Use Plan, Land Use Goals and Strategies. A Zoning Plan describes potential changes to the Township Zoning Ordinance needed to implement the Future Land Use Plan.

EXISTING LAND USE

BERGLAND/MERRIWEATHER TOWNSITES

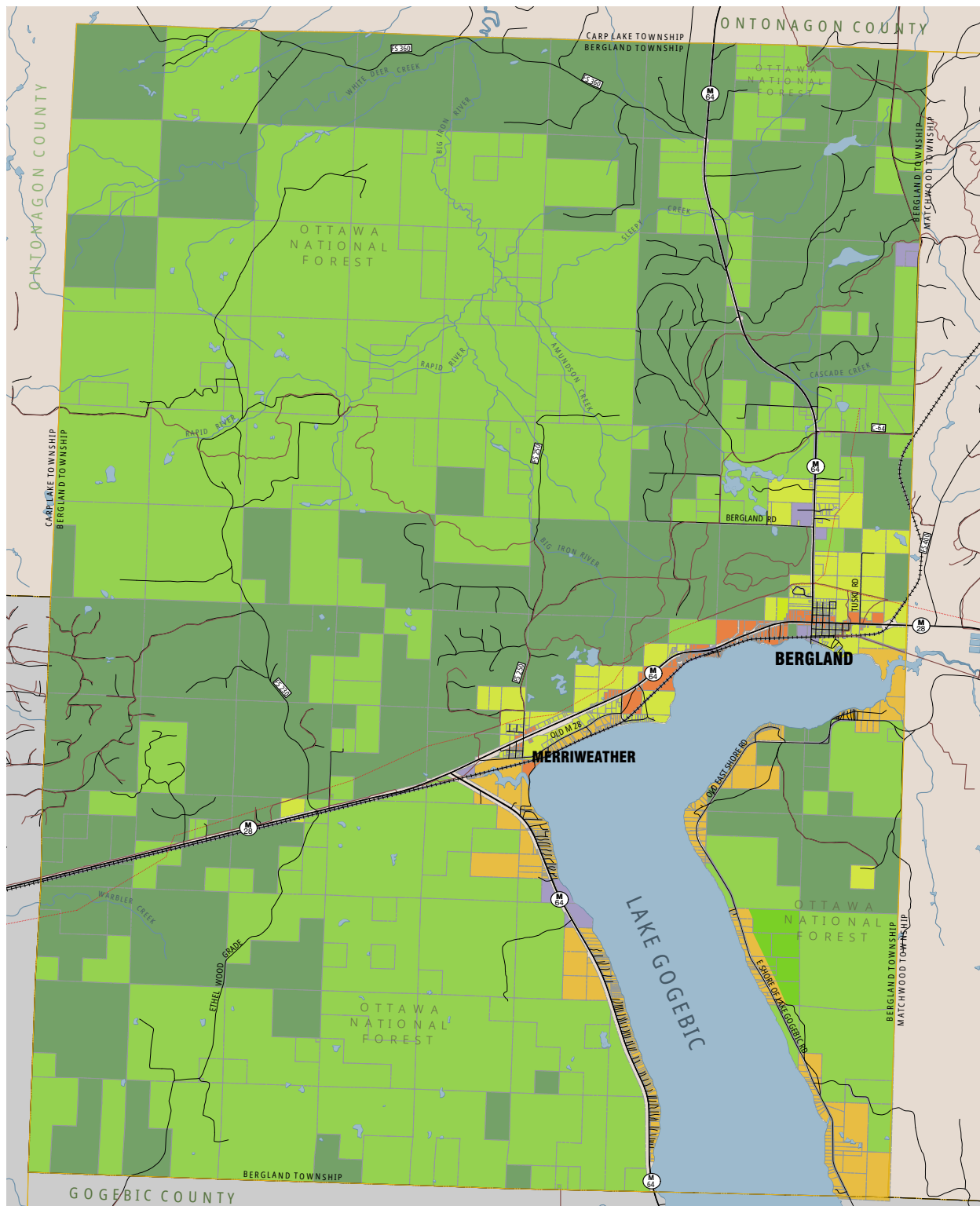
Lake Gogebic has had a significant impact on the existing land use in Bergland Township. The town of Bergland was platted in 1902 in order to build and operate a lumber mill on the north-east side of Bergland Bay. The town of Merriweather was platted in 1924 on the north-west side of Lake Gogebic.

The Bergland townsite consists of approximately 620 acres of land north and south of M-28 from its Junction with M-64. It includes a mix of land uses including single-family residential, commercial, the Bergland Township Park, and a DNR managed Lake access site. The townsite is served with municipal water and sewer service.

The Merriweather townsite includes a mix of land uses including single family residential and commercial properties, as well as a community park. The townsite does not have municipal water but is served by the Bergland municipal sewer system.



Figure 10.0 Lake Gogebic - Lakeshore District



legend

- PARCEL BOUNDARIES
- TOWNSHIP BOUNDARY (USGS)
- WATER BODIES (USGS)
- MAJOR STREETS (USGS)
- MINOR STREETS (USGS)
- UTILITY LINES (USGS)
- TRAILS (USGS)
- RAIL (USGS)

land use categories

- RESIDENTIAL
- LAKESHORE RESIDENTIAL/RESORT
- MIXED - USE
- COMMERCIAL FOREST/AGRICULTURE
- US NATIONAL FOREST
- GOVERNMENT (STATE/COUNTY/TWNSHP)



mapping based on:
Parcel Data provided by Ontonagon County,
<https://gis-michigan.opendata.arcgis.com/>, and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)
Topo TNM Style data, USGS Topo Map Vector Data, 7.5 x 7.5 minute
Shapefile Data for Aldridge Creek, Bergland, Bergland NE, and Merriweather,
Michigan. Topo TNM Style Template Disclaimer: Initial styling of this Map
Template was provided by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). The USGS does
not endorse any products created from the template.

Figure 10.1 Existing Land Use

LAKESHORE RESIDENTIAL/RESORT

The shoreline of Lake Gogebic has been developed with year-round home, cottages/camps, resorts, the Bergland Township Park and the Ontonagon County park. Most of these dwellings have private wells and septic systems, except for the properties along the north shore which are served by the Bergland municipal sewer and water systems.

MIXED USE/COMMERCIAL

The M-28 corridor through the Bergland and Merriweather townships includes a number of businesses, including resorts, a convenience store/gas station, several restaurants, motor sports dealerships, and tourist service businesses.

COMMERCIAL FOREST/ AGRICULTURE

While the Ottawa National Forest is a major land owner and land use in Bergland Township, there are significant other lands owned by private corporate forestry companies. The Michigan Commercial Forest Act (CFA) program provides a property tax incentive to private landowners to retain and manage forestland for long-term timber production. It is a voluntary program; participating landowners may withdraw from the program at any time, although there is a tax penalty for withdrawal from the program. The CFA program is administered by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR). CFA land must be open to the public for fishing, hunting, and trapping by foot access, motorized access is not a right granted to the public.

US NATIONAL FOREST

The million-acre Ottawa National Forest is located throughout the western half of Michigan's Upper Peninsula, and has significant land holdings in Bergland Township. These lands are managed for timber production, wildlife habitat, watershed protection, biodiversity conservation, and recreation.

FUTURE LAND USE

The future land use of Bergland Township is expected to remain mostly unchanged. The Township Zoning Ordinance will ensure that any changes in land use are consistent and compatible with the existing land use pattern.



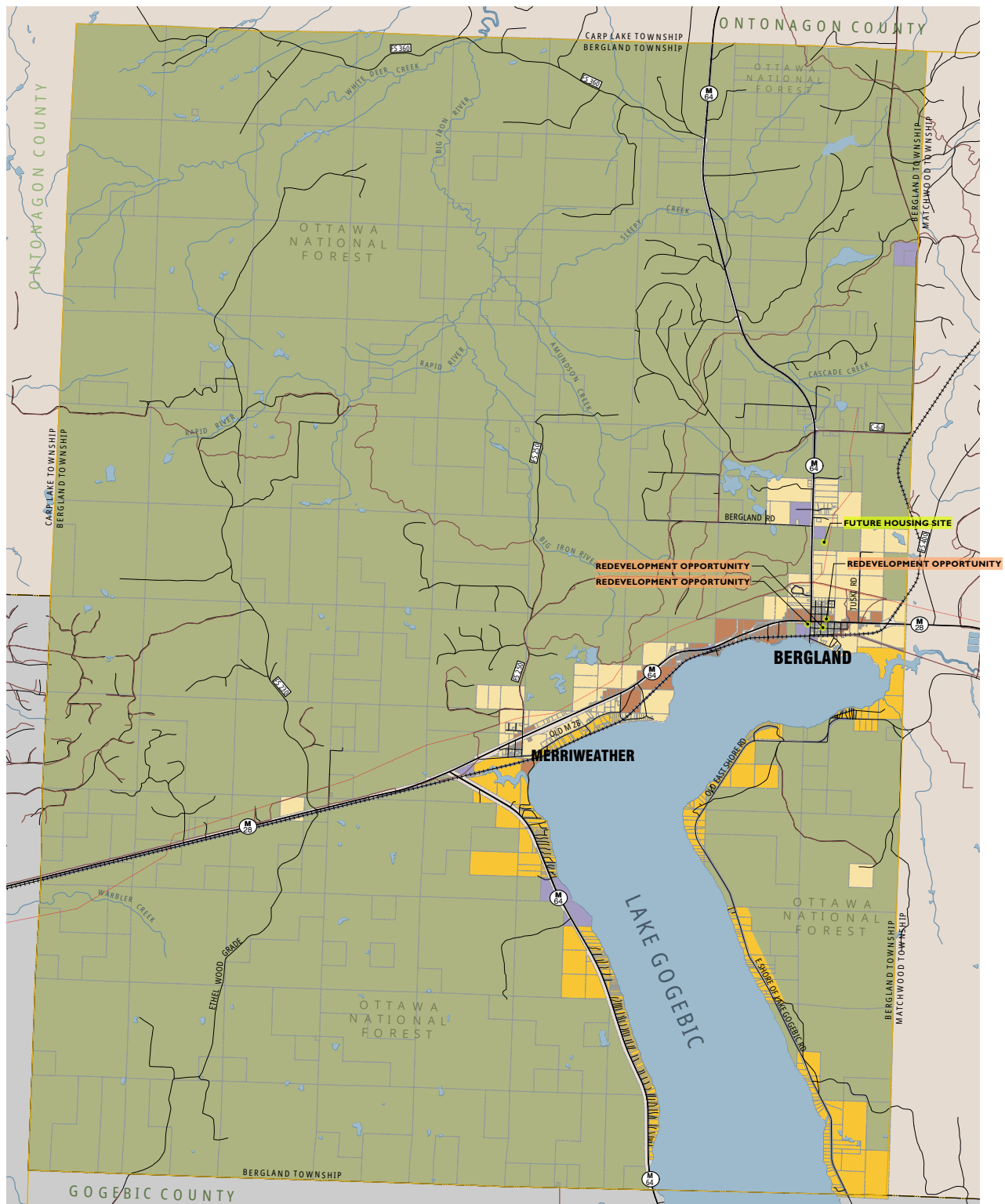
RESIDENTIAL

There is a great need for housing for current and future residents in the area, and it makes sense to locate that where municipal services can provide support for that housing. North of the Bergland township along M-64 are several tracts of land within reach of the municipal water and sewer systems that should be considered for development of medium to high-density housing.

The former Bergland School property is privately owned, but has deteriorated significantly to the point that re-use of the structure is unlikely. The Township should continue efforts to attempt to acquire the site, demolish the dilapidated structure, and make it available for a housing project.

There may also be a need for housing for long-time residents who are unable to maintain their current residence yet want to stay in the community.

Figure 10.2 Existing Commercial



legend

- PARCEL BOUNDARIES
- TOWNSHIP BOUNDARY (USGS)
- WATER BODIES (USGS)
- MAJOR STREETS (USGS)
- MINOR STREETS (USGS)
- UTILITY LINES (USGS)
- TRAILS (USGS)
- RAIL (USGS)

land use categories

- RESIDENTIAL
- LAKESHORE RESIDENTIAL/RESORT
- MIXED - USE
- COMMERCIAL FOREST/USFS/AGRICULTURE
- GOVERNMENT (STATE/COUNTY/TWNSHIP)
- FUTURE DEVELOPMENT/HOUSING OPPORTUNITY



mapping based on:
Parcel Data provided by Ontonagon County,
<https://gis-michigan.opendata.arcgis.com/>, and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)
Topo TNM Style data, USGS Topo Map Vector Data, 7.5 x 7.5 minute
Shapefile Data for Aldridge Creek, Bergland, Bergland NE, and Merriweather,
Michigan. Topo TNM Style Template Disclaimer: Initial styling of this Map
Template was provided by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). The USGS does
not endorse any products created from the template.

Figure 10.3 Future Land Use Map

LAKESHORE RESIDENTIAL/RESORT

The existing development pattern along the Lake Gogebic shoreline will continue. There will be continued conversion of seasonal homes, cottages, and camps to year-round homes. If current trends continue, older, smaller cottages will be torn down and replaced with larger year-round homes.

MIXED USE/COMMERCIAL

The M-28 corridor can accommodate small scale commercial development to serve residents and visitors, which was identified in the Community Survey as one of 4 priorities for the Master Plan. Redevelopment of vacant or underutilized land was also identified in the survey as a Master Plan priority, such as the vacant school property, the former grocery store site, and the Township-owned property on M-28.

COMMERCIAL FOREST/USFS/AGRICULTURE

The majority of land in Bergland Township will continue to be used as National Forest, managed by the USFS, and commercial forestlands owner by corporate and small scale private owners. There are lands north along M-64 and south along the East Shore Road that will continue as agricultural and some properties may transition to rural residential land use.

Future Land Use Category	Current Zoning Category
Residential	R-1 SF Residential Lake District
Mixed use/Commercial	C-1 Commercial
Agriculture	Agriculture
Commercial Forest/ USFS	Currently None



REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

There are several key redevelopment sites in Bergland. It should be a priority to put these key sites to a commercial or multi-family housing use. Another possibility would be to use one site for a new township hall and firehall.

- The SW corner of M-28 and M-64, currently a private, pay for use parking lot.
- The vacant former Bergland School building located on the NE corner of M-28 and Maple St.
- The SE corner of M-28 and Elm St, currently used for the Polaris electric ATV charging station.
- The former Forest Service property on west end of Bergland townsite

Figure 10.4 Polaris ATV Charging Station

Figure 10.5 Existing Zoning Map (Placeholder)

ZONING PLAN

The Zoning Plan is a required Master Plan element by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008) and describes changes to the Township Zoning Ordinance to implement the desired Future Land Use of the Township. This section describes recommended changes to be made.

The current Bergland Township Zoning Ordinance was adopted in 2008 and amended in 2019, however, the model used for the ordinance predates the year of adoption. There are many issues with the ordinance. Fortunately, there has not been a lot of zoning activity in the Township, and the ordinance has not been tested in court. It is the Township's intent to develop and adopt either a new ordinance or completely update the existing document following adoption of the Master Plan.

Some of the issues with the current ordinance include:

- The ordinance lacks good organization.
- There are not enough definitions.
- There are regulatory statements in the definitions.
- There are Zoning districts defined that do not exist on the Zoning Map.
- Too many residential districts, with only one shown on the Zoning Map.
- The lists of permitted uses are outdated
- Reference to "Special Exception Uses" in each district; the proper term is Special Uses.
- There are 4 Lake sub-districts, none of which appear on the Zoning Map.
- The ordinance includes an insufficient Special Exception (Use) explanation, review standards, and procedure.
- The setback requirements are confusing.
- There is no explanation and process for amending the Zoning Ordinance.
- The explanation of zoning administration requirements is insufficient.
- Confusing roles, responsibilities, and explanation of the Zoning Board of Appeals.
- Insufficient explanation of enforcement and penalties.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Goal 1

Provide opportunities for limited and controlled development that does not change the essential character of the land or exceed the carrying capacity of the Township.

STRATEGY 1.1

Identify properties suitable in and near the Bergland and Merriweather townsites for future residential and low-intensity commercial development, and explore opportunities for developing a variety of housing options in this area.

STRATEGY 1.2

Locate new development in or near existing developed areas to promote an efficient and compact pattern of development, reduce the negative effects of sprawl, and reduce infrastructure and service costs.

STRATEGY 1.3

Encourage the redevelopment of existing vacant, blighted and/or underutilized properties.

Goal 2

Foster a distinctive, attractive community with a strong sense of place.

STRATEGY 2.1

Ensure that new development or redevelopment is compatible with the scale and architecture of existing properties, especially in the Bergland/Merriweather areas, and the Lake Gogebic shoreline, while preserving existing natural features as much as possible throughout the Township.

Goal 3

New development must be consistent with the vision of the Township that upholds an ethic of stewardship.

STRATEGY 3.1

Continue to commit to the protection and preservation of the Township natural resources such as the Lake Gogebic shoreline and water quality, clean air, open space, woodlands, water resources, and environmentally sensitive areas while maintaining a balance between economic opportunity, quality-of-life, natural biodiversity, and sustainability of life support systems.

STRATEGY 3.2

Adopt and enforce regulations to restrict and control inappropriate development in areas where there are steep slopes, soil erosion possibilities, shorelines, and wellhead protection areas.

STRATEGY 3.3

Preserve the rural and scenic character of the Township by discouraging land splits and encouraging rural residential cluster/conservation development where possible.

STRATEGY 3.4

Develop and enforce new zoning regulations to preserve and enhance riparian buffers along water bodies in the Township to protect water quality, aquatic and wildlife habitat, slow runoff, and allow a greater percentage of water to return to groundwater.



Figure 10.6 Aerial View of Bergland, 2024

Environmental Sustainability





This chapter will focus on environmental sustainability, specifically areas that are important to consider for Bergland Township as it makes future planning decisions. When communities make small incremental changes towards improved environmental sustainability it can very well end up making a big impact for future generations. Some ways to do that are in regulatory improvements by the way of Ordinance or Policy changes.

Bergland Township has an abundance of unique and pristine natural features, highlighted by Lake Gogebic. It will be important that these areas are provided regulations and protections in both the zoning ordinance and other Township policies moving forward. The current zoning ordinance does not specifically include any special districts that provide specific environmental protections. Some examples of special districts that are included in other zoning ordinance are:

- Floodplains and Flood Plain Areas
- Wellhead Protection Areas
- Natural Shoreline Districts. (providing special protections within a certain feet of a shoreline)
- Inland Lakes
- Historic Preservation District
- Steep Slopes
- Tree Protection Requirements

In the future there may be increased development pressures, changes in housing or other development patterns, new technologies, or other factors that may require Bergland Township to examine whether additional special districts may need to be added to the zoning ordinance or other special policies created to help protect its natural resources. .

The following are some resources that will help guide future growth and planning decisions to encourage and help maintain these natural areas and environmental protections for the community.

SUSTAINABILITY GUIDE

The following is a general guide for sustainable considerations. These best practices should be referenced and/or required where applicable in any future zoning ordinance revisions or in the creation of any future design standards or operating policies for the Township.

Regulations based on these general principles would seek to provide a strong foundation for future growth, conserve limited resources, and protect the natural environment for the long-term health of our planet and future generations.

PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE SITE

- Protect ecologically sensitive sites
- Minimize the development footprint (refer to low impact development section)
- Integrate buildings with site topography
- Site homes and developments in a way that celebrates natural habitats

IMPROVE ENERGY EFFICIENCY

- Incorporate passive solar design strategies (proper orientation of structures, placement of windows, etc.)
- Use proper insulating techniques for the building envelope
- Design for efficient use of space (i.e. bigger isn't always better)
- Install high-performance windows and place to take advantage of natural light and cross ventilation
- Consider active solar or wind systems for energy or water heating

USE ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE BUILDING MATERIALS

- Select materials that are appropriate and durable for harsh winter climates
- Select products that support local manufacturers and local economies
- Select materials with recycled content or that are recyclable
- Avoid materials that unduly deplete natural resources
- Avoid materials that generate excess pollution during manufacturing

CREATE A SAFE INDOOR ENVIRONMENT

- Avoid materials with high VOC (volatile organic compounds) such as some carpets, adhesives, paints, etc.
- Provide for proper ventilation in all buildings
- Maximize the control of indoor environments with proper window placement, lighting, and temperature controls

PROVIDE EFFICIENT WATER USAGE

- Use low-flow plumbing fixtures
- Incorporate efficient hot-water delivery systems
- Consider gray water usage, provide for water storage for landscape use
- Incorporate water efficient landscaping

REDUCE GENERATION OF SOLID WASTE

- Provide for both construction and home waste recycling
- Purchase building materials so as to minimize waste
- Utilize recycled materials in new construction
- Continue to provide recycling areas for residents at transfer stations.

CREATE A HEALTHY LIVING ENVIRONMENT

- Encourage home or community gardening
- Incorporate walking trails, especially nature trails with educational opportunities.
- Incorporate alternative forms of transportation as options (walking, biking, bus, etc.)



Photo Credit: <https://sustainablesites.org/colby-college-athletic-fields>

FIGURE 9.0 - Protecting The Site - Integrating Facilities Into Natural Topography



Photo Credit: Brian Knight, <https://www.greenbuildingadvisor.com/article/cost-effective-passive-solar-design>

FIGURE 9.1 - Energy Efficiency - Passive Solar Design Strategies

LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT

In order to protect our vital and important natural water resources (including drinking water) in the region it should be required for all new developments to incorporate low impact development practices in the construction of any projects. These are also known as: Green Infrastructure or Stormwater Best Management Practices, (BMPs).

The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments created a “Low Impact Development Manual for Michigan” in 2008. This is still a tremendous resource for Michigan communities.

The following are just some of the BMPs and techniques that would be suitable to incorporate into development projects in the Township, however creativity and ingenuity should be encouraged as the stormwater solutions can be incredibly varied across different sites. The photographs in this chapter are example images meant to inspire.

SOME NONSTRUCTURAL BMPS ARE:

- **Cluster Development**
- **Minimize Soil Compaction**
- **Minimize Total Disturbed Area**
- **Protect Natural Flow Pathways**
- **Protect Sensitive Areas**
- **Reduce Impervious Surfaces**
- **Stormwater Disconnection**

SOME NONSTRUCTURAL BMPS ARE:

- **Bioretention (Similar To Rain Gardens)**
- **Planter Boxes Or Tree Wells**
- **Depressed Tree/Planter Islands In Parking Lots**
- **Vegetated Swales**
- **Infiltration Trenches**
- **Pervious Pavements**
- **Green Roofs**
- **Rainwater Collection/Reuse**
- **Native Vegetation Requirements**

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN RATING PROGRAMS

There are several well known and accepted sustainable design rating programs for the development of building and site plans. Developers should be encouraged to utilize these programs (or at least follow their criteria even if they don't become fully certified) for all new projects. An incentive program or reduced permitting fees or timelines for projects that use one of these metrics and become certified projects could also be considered. Projects that use these rating systems bring an additional level of recognition and marketing power to the community.

LEADERSHIP IN ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN (LEED):

The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) administers the LEED program. It is the most widely used green building rating system in the world. The USGBC vision is that buildings and communities will regenerate and sustain the health and vitality of all life within a generation. With a mission to transform how buildings and communities are designed, built and operated, enabling an environmentally and socially responsible, healthy, and prosperous environment that improves the quality of life. Developers can use this rating system when designing and constructing virtually all building, community and home project types. LEED provides a framework to create healthy, highly efficient and cost-saving green buildings.

Refer to www.usgbc.org for more detail.

SUSTAINABLE SITES INITIATIVE

(SITES):

SITES certification is available for a wide range of development projects, with or without buildings. SITES is a rating system that guides, evaluates and certifies a project's sustainability in the planning, design, construction and management of landscapes and other outdoor spaces.

SITES supports landscape architects, planners, and others in implementing nature-based solutions. SITES projects enhance biodiversity and mitigate climate change, while conserving resources, improving public health and protecting critical ecosystems.

Refer to www.sustainablesites.org for more detail.

THE NATIONAL GREEN BUILDING STANDARD™:

The National Green Building Standard™ provides independent, third-party verification that a home, apartment building, or land development is designed and built to achieve high performance in six key areas: Site Design, Resource Efficiency, Water Efficiency, Energy Efficiency, Indoor Environmental Quality, and Building Operation & Maintenance.

Refer to www.nahb.org for more detail.

ENERGY STAR:

Energy Star Certified homes are designed and constructed to be significantly more energy efficient than those built to code while lowering homeowner utility bills and providing superior comfort, quality, and durability.

Refer to www.energystar.gov for more detail.

THE LIVING BUILDING CHALLENGE™:

This is a building certification program, advocacy tool and philosophy that defines the most advanced measure of sustainability in the built environment possible today. This is just one program that is a part of the International Living Future Institute (ILFI). There are additional programs that may be of interest including The Living Community Challenge.

Refer to <https://living-future.org> for more detail.

MICHIGAN GREEN COMMUNITIES:

Established in 2009, Michigan Green Communities (MGC) is a statewide sustainability benchmarking, networking, and technical assistance program. MGC is the product of the collaboration and partnership among the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), the Michigan Association of Counties (MAC), the Michigan Municipal League (MML), and the Michigan Townships Association (MTA).



**FIGURE 9.3 - Bus Stop In Munising
Converted To Utilize Porous Pavement
With A Rain Garden**

The Michigan Green Communities Challenge is an annual program that serves as a guide to help communities measure their progress towards sustainability. The Challenge includes several categories and each is comprised of several action items. Communities earn points by completing these action items. Participation is free and open to any local government in Michigan

Recognition Awards: Track your sustainability progress, see how you compare to other Michigan communities, and earn certification as a bronze, silver, or gold community. Challenge participants earn a logo to display on your website and in print materials, are publicized at the annual awards conference and on the MGC website, and are included in a press release.

Refer to <https://migreencommunities.com/> for more detail.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Goal 1

Protect and enhance the existing natural resources.

STRATEGY 1.1

Consider adding environmental provisions (floodplains, wellhead protection, shoreline buffers, steep slopes, etc.) in the existing ordinance to meet current situations.

STRATEGY 1.2

Review the existing ordinance and consider adding tree protection and/or tree replacement requirements in the Zoning Ordinance.

STRATEGY 1.3

Create a policy for annual street tree plantings to start replacing street trees every year, especially in the Bergland and Merriweather townships. Also consider neighborhood outreach to help residents properly maintain existing street trees.

Goal 2

Promote sustainable design and management efforts.

STRATEGY 2.1

Include a requirement for sustainable design and low-impact development (LID) practices in the zoning ordinance and/or design standards. Including but not limited to; innovative stormwater techniques, recyclable materials, green roofs, pervious pavements, energy-efficient lighting, native landscaping and preservation of existing trees.

STRATEGY 2.2

Seek and promote funding opportunities for sustainable development practices.

GOAL 3

Utilize public projects to implement and promote sustainable design and raise awareness within the community.

STRATEGY 3.1

Create a Request For Qualifications (RFQ) process for qualified architects and contractors in sustainable design.

STRATEGY 3.2

Create baseline standards for building upgrades and new construction.

STRATEGY 3.3

Create baseline standards for incorporating green infrastructure into improvement projects of public right-of-ways, alleys, and parking facilities.

GOAL 4

Increase materials management options.

STRATEGY 4.1

Establish drop-off facility or transfer station for garbage and recyclables.

STRATEGY 4.2

Establish seasonal household junk disposal day(s).

STRATEGY 4.3

Create a drop-off or participate in a collaborative program for less common recycling items.

GOAL 5

Conserve energy resources.

STRATEGY 5.1

Continue to work so that all public lighting is converted to LED.

STRATEGY 5.2

Utilize more robust architectural standards for new construction and renovations to include building features that save energy.

GOAL 6

Expand the use of green stormwater infrastructure.

STRATEGY 6.1

Develop zoning incentives for integrating green stormwater infrastructure into private development projects.

STRATEGY 6.2

Integrate green stormwater infrastructure into parks or other public projects.

STRATEGY 6.3

Promote the use of permeable pavement and other options for limiting the amount of stormwater runoff.



Figure 9.5 - Increasing Street Trees Provides A Wealth Of Environmental Benefits¹

¹ <https://www.reliance-foundry.com/blog/11-benefits-street-trees>

Implementation

12

A faded, grayscale background image of a winter forest. The scene shows numerous tall, thin trees, likely deciduous without their leaves, standing in a field covered with a layer of snow. The lighting is soft, suggesting a misty or overcast day, with some light filtering through the branches in the distance.



The Master Plan is a guide for the Bergland Township elected and appointed officials to follow. The Plan presents many Goals and Strategies to implement. Some strategies require funding, others are policy related and low cost. Implementation will require time, patience and perseverance.

The Master Plan should be referred to for all Township decisions. The Michigan Planning Enabling Act, PA 33 of 2008, requires the Master Plan to be reviewed and updated as follows:

At least every 5 years after adoption of a master plan, a planning commission shall review the master plan and determine whether to commence the procedure to amend the master plan or adopt a new master plan. The review and its findings shall be recorded in the minutes of the relevant meeting or meetings of the planning commission. Master Plan updates must follow the same procedures as preparing and adopting a Master Plan.

The tables below list the Master Plan strategies, identify responsibility for implementation and suggest a timeframe for accomplishing the strategy.

HOUSING

GOAL 1: Address Housing Supply		
STRATEGY	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY	SUGGESTED TIMEFRAME
1.1 Explore opportunities to expand housing opportunities and consider alternate housing formats/types such as duplex, tri-plex, and four-plex housing, on vacant lands where community water and sewer services are available.	Planning Commission	1-2 years
1.2 Continue to work with broadband providers to extend fiber optic infrastructure to the remaining businesses and residences that are not served.	Township Board	On-going
1.3 Monitor STR activity, and enact new appropriate STR standards and regulations through the Zoning Ordinance, and enforce the regulations.	Planning Commission	On-going
1.4 Consider opportunities to modify the Zoning Ordinance to encourage duplex and multi-family housing, as well as accessory housing units on larger residential properties for long-term workforce rentals.	Planning Commission	1-2 years
1.5 Identify blighted and obsolete properties that are suitable for redevelopment of single-family properties.	Planning Commission	On-going
1.6 Identify larger vacant sites that may be available and suitable for multi-family housing and ensure the new zoning ordinance allows this type of development	Planning Commission	1-2 years
1.7 Continue to work towards the redevelopment of the former Bergland School site, by identifying and seeking grant opportunities, and utilizing tools such as Michigan's new brownfield tax increment financing for housing legislation.	Planning Commission & Township Board	1-3 years

TABLE 12.0 - HOUSING STRATEGIES

NATURAL LANDS & FEATURES/PARK & RECREATION FACILITIES/HISTORICAL SITES

GOAL 1: Define an affordable and achievable recreation improvement program for the township that will provide for the needs, health, and wellness of residents and visitors and increase use and user satisfaction at township facilities.

STRATEGY	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY	SUGGESTED TIMEFRAME
1.1 Contract with a qualified consultant to prepare a master plan for the Township Park on Lake Gogebic to guide future improvements and serve as the basis for grant funding.	Planning Commission	1-2 years
1.2 Implement the Recreation Plan “Action Plan” projects identified.	Township Board	On-going
1.3 Develop themed identification signage and a wayfinding system for Township and regional recreation facilities and trailheads.	Planning Commission	2-5 years

TABLE 12.1 - NATURAL LANDS & FEATURES/PARK & RECREATION FACILITIES/HISTORICAL SITES STRATEGIES

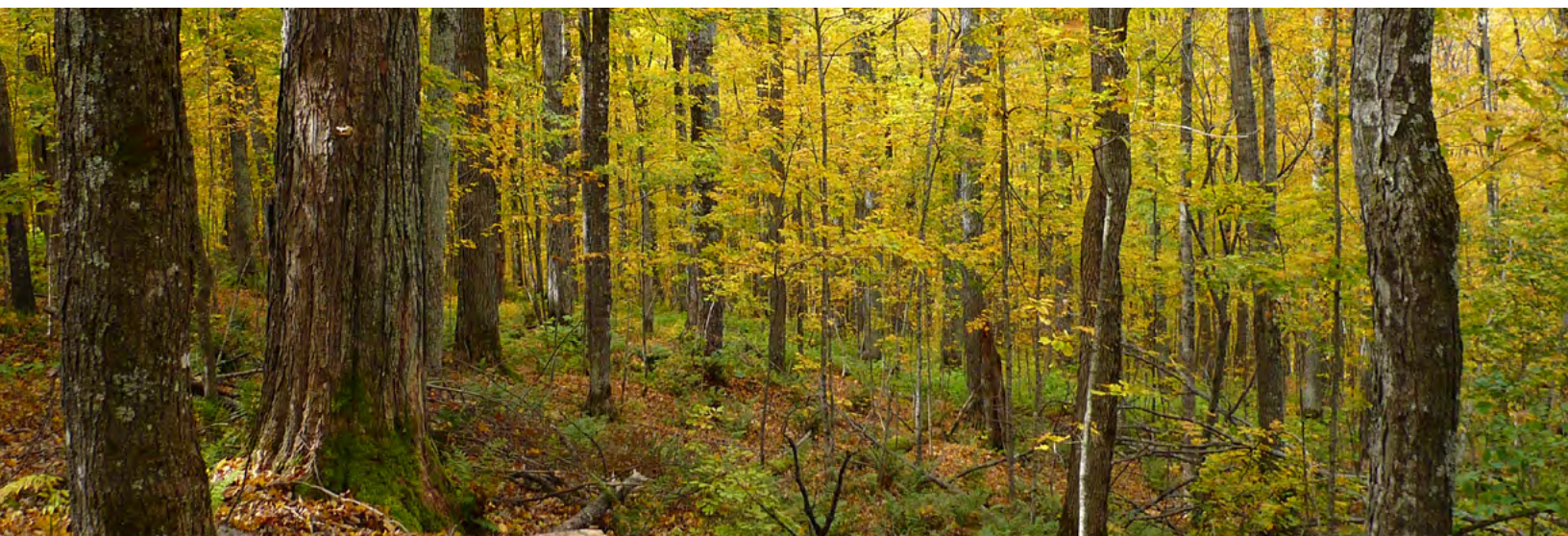


Figure12.0 Gogebic Ridge Trail

TOWNSHIP INFRASTRUCTURE/PUBLIC FACILITIES/ SAFETY & EMERGENCY SERVICES

GOAL 1: Develop and maintain community infrastructure which serves residents and encourages business opportunities and growth		
STRATEGY	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY	SUGGESTED TIMEFRAME
1.1 Consider constructing a new Township Hall/Fire Hall/Community Center.	Township Board	On-going
1.2 Implement the water and sewer system improvement projects identified in recent studies.	Township Board	2-5 years
1.3 Annually review and update the Capital Improvement Plan.	Planning Commission	On-going
1.4 Promote the availability of broadband in the community as an asset to attract remote workers.	Township Board	On-going
Goal 2: Ensure the Township has Emergency Management plans in place.		
2.1 Evaluate which plans are appropriate and need to be in plan, i.e. Forest Fire, catastrophic blizzard or tornado, extended loss of electricity, contamination of water supply, and failure of sewage system.	Planning Commission and Township Board	On-going
2.2 Increase efforts to recruit and train volunteer firefighters.	Township Board	On-going
2.3 Explore opportunities to improve emergency and urgent communications to Township residents.	Township Board	On-going

**TABLE 12.2 - TOWNSHIP INFRASTRUCTURE/PUBLIC FACILITIES/
SAFETY & EMERGENCY SERVICES STRATEGIES**

TRANSPORTATION

GOAL 1: Maintain and upgrade existing roads		
STRATEGY	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY	SUGGESTED TIMEFRAME
1.1 Use the Township road millage to implement street resurfacing in the Township.	Township Board	1-5 years
GOAL 2: Improve non-motorized/pedestrian facilities.		
2.1 Inventory the condition of existing sidewalks and prioritize replacement.	Planning Commission	1-5 years
2.2 Work with MDOT to identify and implement appropriate crosswalk locations on M-28 in the Bergland townsite.	Planning Commission and Township Board	1-3 years

TABLE 12.3 - TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES



Figure12.1 Bergland Welcome Sign

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GOAL 1: Market vacant Township-owned and privately-owned land for developers.		
STRATEGY	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY	SUGGESTED TIMEFRAME
1.1 Prioritize sites for redevelopment efforts and determine which types of businesses and housing are appropriate on these sites.	Planning Commission	1-5 years
1. 2 Create property information packages.	Planning Commission and Township Board	1-3 years
1.3 Create developers' packets for available sites and start actively recruiting businesses through directly mailing developers and by posting the information on the Township website.	Planning Commission and Township Board	1-2 years
1. 4 Work with WUPPDR on these packets.	Planning Commission	1-2 years
GOAL 2: Participate in and support area-wide economic development activities.		
2.1 Encourage Ontonagon County and county local governments to support the dormant County Economic Development Corporation (EDC).	Planning Commission and Township Board	1-2 years
GOAL 3: Enhance quality of life opportunities.		
3.1 Continue work to strengthen neighborhoods, eliminate blight, improve recreation opportunities, foster the development of new housing, and support business district revitalization.	Planning Commission and Township Board	On-going
3.2 Work on community beautification and placemaking projects in Bergland.	Planning Commission and Township Board	On-going
GOAL 4: Expand tourism opportunities		
4.1 Develop a unified wayfinding sign system identifying existing trails and attractions.	Planning Commission and Township Board	1-3 years
4.2 Consider opportunities to diversify winter tourism, such as ski and snowshoe trails, backcountry skiing and adventures, and a winter festival event.	Planning Commission and Township Board	On-going

TABLE 12.4 - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

FUTURE LAND USE AND ZONING PLAN

GOAL 1: Provide opportunities for limited and controlled development that does not change the essential character of the land or exceed the carrying capacity of the Township.		
STRATEGY	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY	SUGGESTED TIMEFRAME
1.1 Identify properties suitable in and near the Bergland and Merriweather townsites for future residential and low-intensity commercial development, and explore opportunities for developing a variety of housing options in this area.	Planning Commission	1-2 years
1.2 Locate new development in or near existing developed areas to promote an efficient and compact pattern of development, reduce the negative effects of sprawl, and reduce infrastructure and service costs.	Planning Commission	On-going
1.3 Encourage the redevelopment of existing vacant, blighted and/or underutilized properties.	Planning Commission and Township Board	On-going
GOAL 2: Foster a distinctive, attractive community with a strong sense of place.		
2.1 Ensure that new development or redevelopment is compatible with the scale and architecture of existing properties, especially in the Bergland/Merriweather areas, and the Lake Gogebic shoreline, while preserving existing natural features as much as possible throughout the Township.	Planning Commission	On-going
GOAL 3: New development must be consistent with the vision of the Township that upholds an ethic of stewardship.		
3.1 Continue to commit to the protection and preservation of the Township natural resources such as the Lake Gogebic shoreline and water quality, clean air, open space, woodlands, water resources, and environmentally sensitive areas, while maintaining a balance between economic opportunity, quality-of-life, natural biodiversity, and sustainability of life support systems.	Planning Commission and Township Board	On-going
3.2 Adopt and enforce regulations to restrict and control inappropriate development in areas where there are steep slopes, soil erosion possibilities, shorelines, and wellhead protection areas.	Planning Commission and Township Board	On-going
3.3 Preserve the rural and scenic character of the Township by discouraging land splits and encouraging rural residential cluster/conservation development where possible.	Planning Commission and Township Board	On-going
3.4 Enforce existing zoning regulations to preserve and enhance riparian buffers along water bodies in the Township to protect water quality, aquatic and wildlife habitat, slow runoff, and allow a greater percentage of water to return to groundwater.	Planning Commission and Township Board	On-going

TABLE 12.5 - FUTURE LAND USE AND ZONING PLAN STRATEGIES

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

GOAL 1 Protect and enhance the existing natural resources.		
STRATEGY	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY	SUGGESTED TIMEFRAME
1.1 Consider adding environmental provisions (floodplains, wellhead protection, shoreline buffers, steep slopes, etc.) in the existing ordinance to meet current situations.	Planning Commission	On-going
1.2 Review the existing ordinance and consider adding a Tree Protection and/or including a tree replacement requirement in the Zoning Ordinance.	Planning Commission	1-2 years
1.3 Create a policy for annual street tree plantings to start replacing street trees every year, especially in the Bergland and Merriweather townsites areas. Also Consider neighborhood outreach to help residents properly maintain existing street trees.	Planning Commission and Township Board	1-2 years
GOAL 2: Promote sustainable design and management efforts.		
2.1 Include a requirement for sustainable design and low impact development (LID) practices in the zoning ordinance and/ or design standards. Include but not limited to; innovative stormwater techniques, recyclable materials, green roofs, pervious pavements, energy efficient lighting, native landscaping and preservation of existing trees.	Planning Commission	2-5 years
2.2 Seek and promote funding opportunities (grants) for sustainable development practices.	Planning Commission and Township Board	On-going
GOAL 3: Utilize public projects to implement and promote sustainable design and raise awareness within the community.		
3.1 Create a Request For Qualifications (RFQ) process for qualified architects and contractors in sustainable design.	Planning Commission and Township Board	2-5 years
3.2 Create baseline standards for building upgrades and new construction.	Planning Commission and Township Board	On-going
3.3 Create baseline standards for incorporating green infrastructure into improvement projects of public right-of-ways, alleys, and parking facilities.	Planning Commission and Township Board	2-5 years
GOAL 4: Increase materials management options.		
4.1 Establish drop-off facility or transfer station for garbage and recyclables.	Township Board	2-5 years
4.2 Establish seasonal household junk disposal day(s).	Planning Commission and Township Board	1-2 years
4.3 Create a drop-off or participate in a collaborative program for less-common recycling items.	Township Board	2-5 years

GOAL 5: Conserve energy resources.		
STRATEGY	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY	SUGGESTED TIMEFRAME
5.1 Continue to work so that all public lighting is converted to LED.	Township Board	On-going
5.2 Utilize more robust architectural standards for new construction and renovations to include building	Township Board	On-going
Goal 6: Expand the use of green stormwater infrastructure.		
6.1 Develop zoning incentives for integrating green stormwater infrastructure into private development projects.	Township Board	3-5 years
6.2 Integrate green stormwater infrastructure into parks or other public projects.	Township Board	On-going
6.3 Promote the use of permeable pavement and other options for limiting the amount of stormwater runoff.	Planning Commission and Township Board	On-going

TABLE 12.6 - ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES



Figure12.3 Lake Gogebic in Winter