



MORAN TOWNSHIP

Master Plan Update

Adopted by the Moran Township

Planning Commission on October 29, 2025

PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION OF ADOPTION:
MORAN TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Resolution Number: 25-01

The following Resolution was offered by Commissioner mark S. and seconded by
Commissioner Bandy V. :

WHEREAS, The Township of Moran has established a Planning Commission under the Planning Enabling Act, State Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended; and,

WHEREAS, The Township Planning Commission is required by Section 7 of said Act to make and adopt a master plan as a guide for the physical development of the township; and,

WHEREAS, The Township Planning Commission has worked with the consultants at Wade Trim to oversee a master plan update process that included investigations and surveys of the existing resources; and,

WHEREAS, The updated plan was presented to the public at a hearing held on October 15, 2025, before the Planning Commission, with notice of the hearing being provided in accordance with Section 43 of Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, The content of this document, together with all maps attached to and contained herein, is hereby adopted by the Planning Commission as the Moran Township Master Plan Update, on October 29, 2025.

AYES: 4

NAYS: 0

ABSENT: 1

I, Susan, Secretary of the Moran Township Planning Commission, do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct copy of a resolution that was offered by the Moran Township Planning Commission at their special meeting held on October 29, 2025.

Susan Jamlyn - Massawug
Signature

Moran Township Master Plan Update 2025

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Adopted October 29, 2025

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Chapter One: Plan Summary

The following document presents the methodology, data, and analysis used in the preparation of the 2025 Master Plan Update for Moran Township, Mackinac County, Michigan. This Plan is an update of the Township's 2016 Master Plan, which built upon prior master planning efforts in 2003 and 1994. This Plan provides the guidance needed to maintain the very special Upper Peninsula rural characteristics in the Township. This is what the public regards as the highest priority. The Plan focuses on the preservation and protection of the Township's natural and environmental features.

The preservation of the Township's scenic and highly visual corridors is a key element in the Plan. The Plan also concentrates commercial development adjacent to the City of St. Ignace, within the unincorporated community of Brevort, and in locations where water and sewer are or will be available. This Plan provides for proper land use and development without being unreasonably restrictive towards the private property owner.

Future land use designations describe the potential and appropriateness of development within generalized areas of the Township. These descriptions are based upon an array of variables including ownership, geology, utilities, population centers, topography, vegetation, and environmentally sensitive areas. The Plan recognizes the need to provide for increased population growth and respond to the expanding tourist trade that is important to the Township's economic welfare.

A description of the key community concerns and public input which served as a basis for the formulation of the goals, objectives, and future land use recommendations is included in Chapter 4, Needs Assessment.

Through the use of this Master Plan, growth and development can be guided in a purposeful and appropriate manner. Decisions will be made in a manner that is responsive to the needs and concerns of the Township citizens.

Chapter Two: Land Use Planning and Moran Township

Authority

Moran Township derives its authority to adopt a Master Plan from the Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended. Section 31.(1) of the Act states the following:

“A Planning Commission shall make and approve a master plan as a guide for development within the planning jurisdiction...”

Section 31.(2), of the act states that in the preparation of a Master Plan, a Planning Commission shall:

“(a) Make careful and comprehensive surveys and studies of present conditions and future growth within the planning jurisdiction with due regard to its relation to neighboring jurisdictions; (b) consult with representatives of adjacent local units of government in respect to their planning so that conflicts in master plans and zoning may be avoided; and, (c) cooperate with all departments of the state and federal governments and other public agencies concerned with programs for economic, social, and physical development within the planning jurisdiction and seek the maximum coordination of the local unit of government’s programs with these agencies.”

What is a Master Plan?

Communities are constantly changing and must plan for their future. Planning for the future is a broad and far-reaching activity that focuses on a wide range of concerns, issues, and disciplines.

Land use planning is critical in determining the most appropriate use of a community's land resources based upon a set of goals and objectives. It is a process that examines a community's characteristics and establishes a strategy for present and future land uses. A Master Plan establishes the guidelines and policies for the location and placement of new and/or expanded land uses within a community.

The function of this Master Plan Update is to provide guidance for the use of lands within Moran Township based upon the needs and concerns of the local residents, accepted land use planning standards, and the continuance of the general health, safety, and welfare of the residents and visitors.

Moran Township: The Need for a Master Plan

The Upper Peninsula's history, charm, scenic and recreational resources, in association with the Great Lakes and other natural resources, and general atmosphere has attracted a growing tourist population as well as persons looking for permanent residency. Moran Township's location at the southern periphery of the Upper Peninsula is directly impacted by these trends, especially along U.S. Route 2.

Moran Township is at a critical phase where land use planning is fundamental in preserving the area's natural and scenic resources. The future development of the area and the health, safety and welfare of the Township's residents and visitors are dependent on planning.

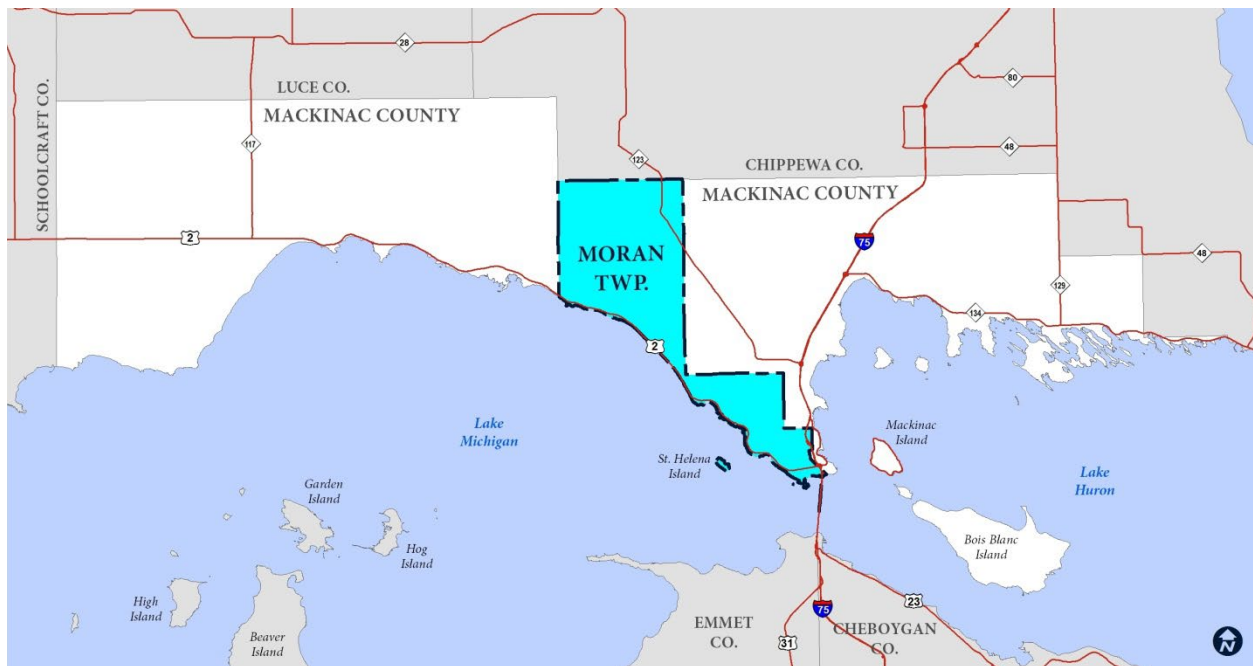
Preparing a Master Plan

The first phase in developing a master plan is data collection. Data collection includes gathering information on, but not necessarily limited to, natural features, soils, topography, vegetation, demography, and population trends. This data provides the needed base information in understanding the municipality. The second phase is the careful study of this information to gain insight into the critical issues and concerns of the area. The third phase is creating a set of goals to provide direction and clarity for the development of the master plan itself. The final phase is developing specific policies for future land uses. These policies are a result of an analysis of the findings in Phase 1 and Phase 2 and reflect the needs and concerns of the existing natural and socio-economic conditions. In this fashion, a future land use plan is developed that is responsive to the health, safety, and welfare of residents and visitors.

The Master Plan consists of a graphic future land use plan and accompanying text to support and clarify the Plan and its intentions.

Geographic Setting and Study Scope

Moran Township is located in the central portion of Mackinac County, within the Upper Peninsula of the State of Michigan (see map below). As the northern terminus of the Mackinac Bridge (Interstate 75), Moran Township is the “gateway” to the Upper Peninsula if traveling by road from Michigan’s Lower Peninsula. The Township’s southern boundary is formed by the shoreline of Lake Michigan. Moran Township also includes the small islands of St. Helena Island and Green Island. U.S. Highway 2 traverses through the southern portion of the Township along the Lake Michigan shoreline. State Highway 123 extends into the northern portion of the Township.



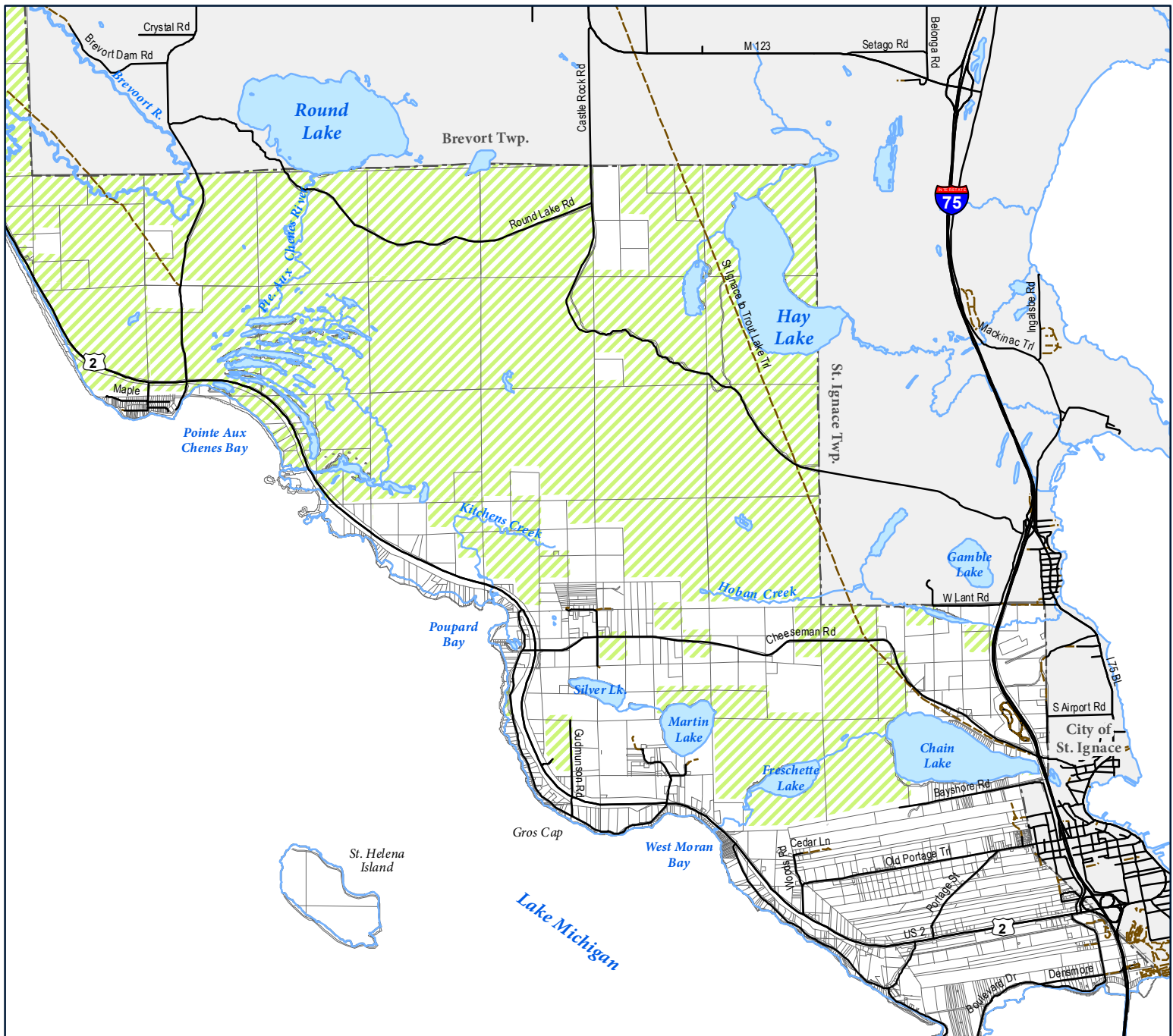
Moran Township is bordered by Hendricks Township to the west, Trout Lake Township (Chippewa Co.) to the north, Brevort Township to the north, St. Ignace Township to the northeast, and the City of St. Ignace to the east. Although not incorporated as villages or cities, the Township does contain the communities of Brevort (U.S. 2 at School House Road) and Ozark (M-123 at Lovegrove Road).

Moran Township has several unique characteristics. The most evident of these characteristics is the Township's size. The majority of townships in the United States were established on a grid network providing for a hierarchy of land areas from one square mile sections to 36 square mile townships to 1,296 square mile counties. Generally, each county consisted of 36 townships, each one being approximately six miles long by six miles wide and referred to as a congressional township.

Moran Township, on the other hand, is referred to as a civil township. Its boundaries are not wholly guided by the U.S. Public Land Survey Program but by political jurisdiction as well. Because of this, and the fact that the Township abuts Lake Michigan, the shape of Moran Township is quite unique and covers over 132 square miles. It is more than three times the traditional land area of most townships. Because of the Township's unique area, the maps presented in this Master Plan Update split the Township into two sections, the Northwestern portion and Southeastern portion.

Another unique characteristic is that approximately 80 percent of land in the Township is publicly owned. As shown in the **Base Map**, the vast majority of privately owned lands are located near or along the Township's coastline. Other concentrations of privately owned lands are found near the City of St. Ignace and near the unincorporated communities of Brevort and Ozark. It is these lands which are subject to the increasing pressures of development. Finally, while the Township is very large in area, its population is quite low.

The focus of this plan is on areas of the Township where there is the greatest degree of privately owned land. It is these areas where growth pressure is most forceful and where the potential for deterioration of the natural environment is greatest. However, all lands within the Township were examined and reviewed relative to their natural and cultural characteristics and their implications for overall land use planning in the Township.



Base Map Moran Township Southeast

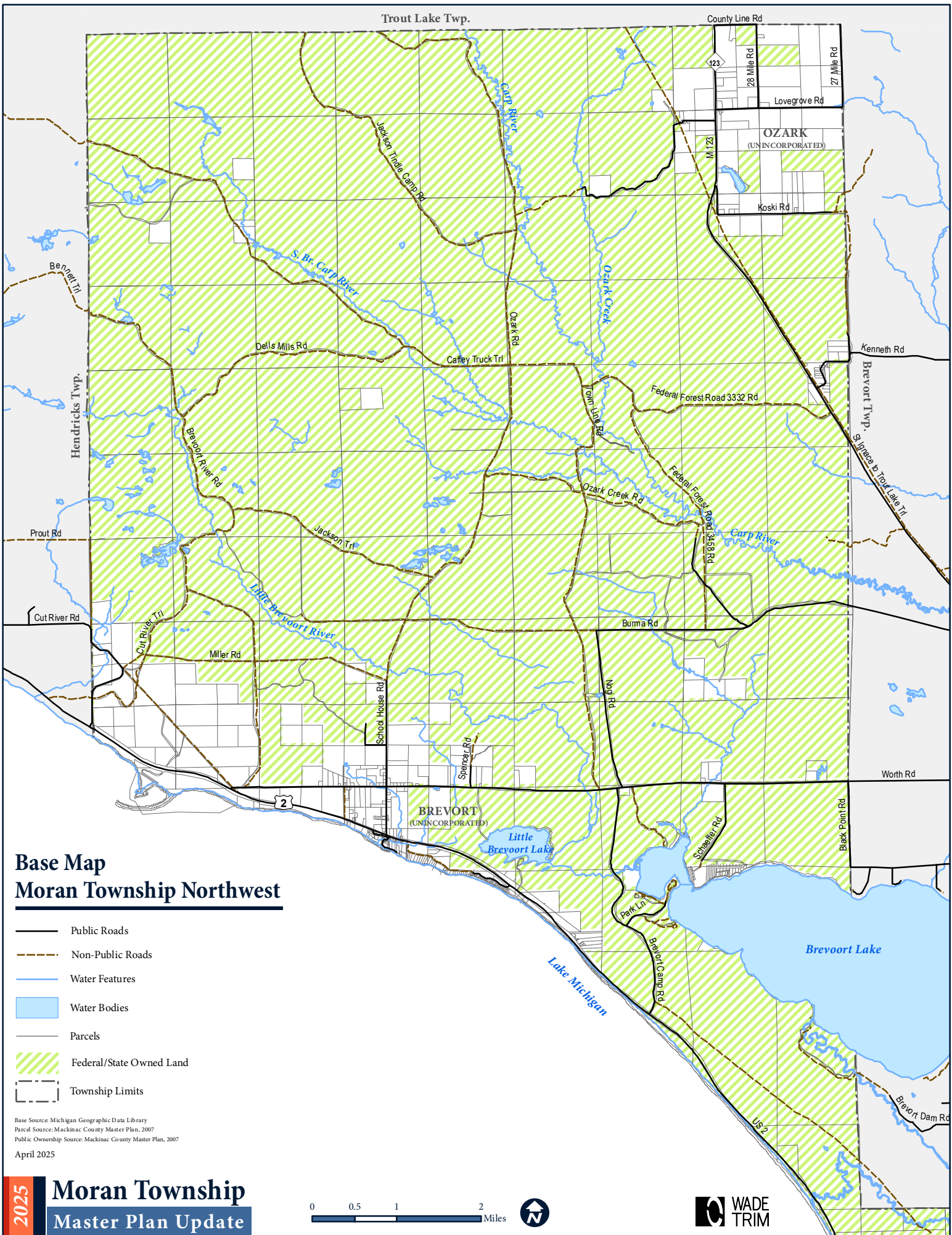
- Public Roads
- Non-Public Roads
- Water Features
- Water Bodies
- Parcels
- Federal/State Owned Land
- Township Limits

Base Source: Michigan Geographic Data Library
 Parcel Source: Mackinac County Master Plan, 2007
 Public Ownership Source: Mackinac County Master Plan, 2007








April 2025

2025 Moran Township Master Plan Update





Base Map Moran Township Northwest

-  Public Roads
-  Non-Public Roads
-  Water Features
-  Water Bodies
-  Parcels
-  Federal/State Owned Land
-  Township Limits

Base Source: Michigan Geographic Data Library
 Parcel Source: Mackinac County Master Plan, 2007
 Public Ownership Source: Mackinac County Master Plan, 2007
 April 2025



Chapter Three: Profile of Moran Township

Introduction

A Master Plan is a statement of action or strategy for land uses in the Township. These strategies are based on an analysis of the physical, social, and economic characteristics of the area. This chapter of the report explores these characteristics of the Township.

Natural Features

The primary factor in deciding the appropriateness of a particular land use in a specified area is its natural characteristics. These characteristics, including soils, topography, and ecology, present the opportunities and constraints a parcel or area has towards a particular land use. While, at times, an area of land may have the needed requirements for a specific land use, often times this is not the case. As a result, the land developer and the Township incur additional costs, both tangible and intangible. It is fundamental that new land uses and the expansion of existing land uses be directed toward areas that have limited development constraints to minimize social, economic, and environmental costs. The following is a review of these characteristics throughout Moran Township and their ramifications toward future growth.

Topography and Surface Drainage

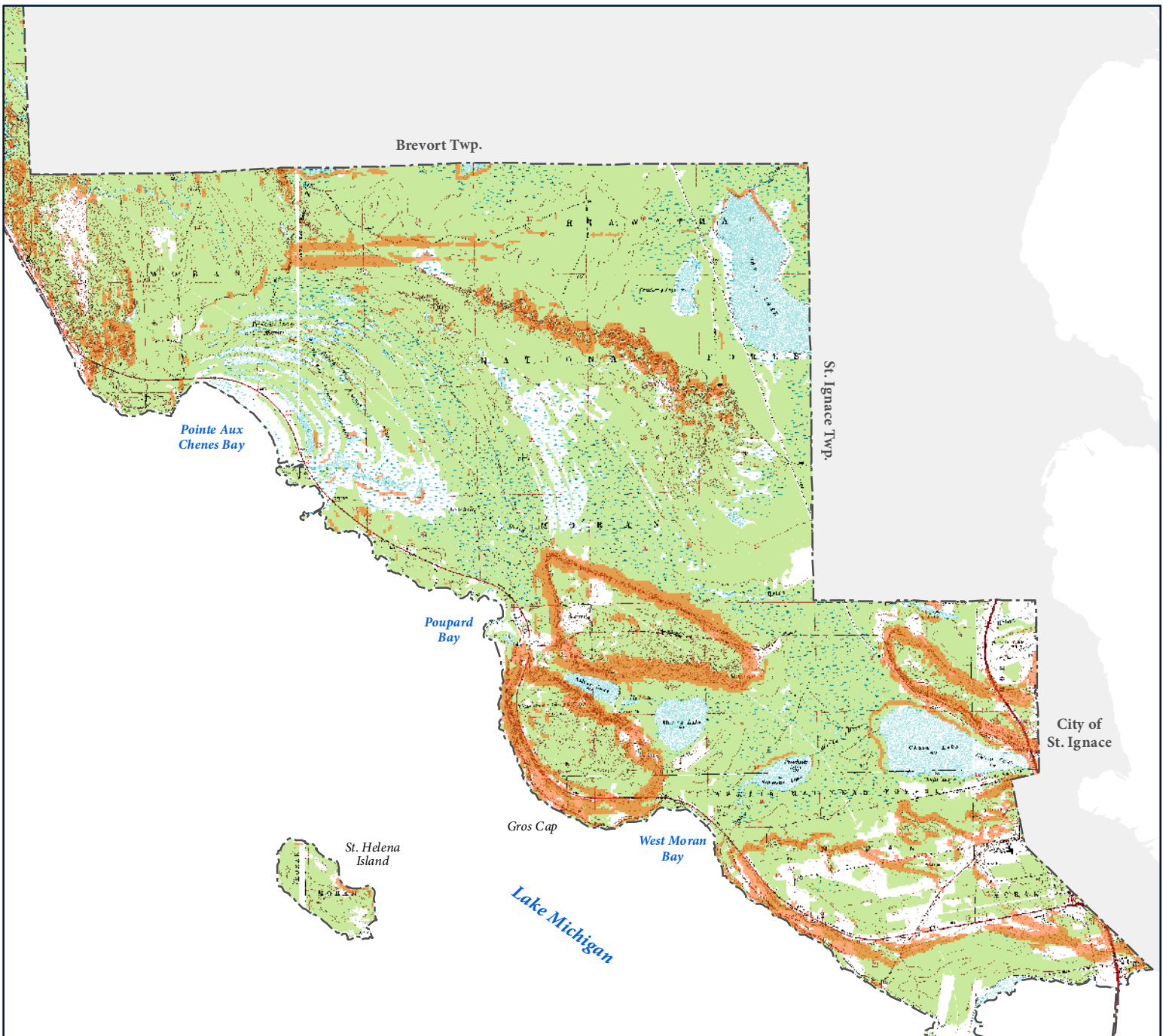
Moran Township has a great variation in topography (refer to the **Topography Map**). In the northwestern portion of the Township, generally north of Brevoort Lake, except for a few streambank areas (Little Brevoort River, Silver Creek, and Carp River), the land areas rarely exceed slopes of more than 10%.

Along the Lake Michigan shoreline and in the southeastern portion of the Township, the topography is considerably more varied. This is most notable within the land areas directly southwest of Hay Lake, around Silver Lake and Martin Lake, and in the coastline area between Pointe La Barbe and Cut River. The topography along the coastline varies considerably with some shoreline areas being fairly flat and level while others having excessive slopes and high bluffs.

There is an overall gradual rise in land elevation in the Township. This is particularly true in the northwestern portion of the Township where elevations range from 585 feet above sea level along the shoreline to 915 feet above sea level just north of Ozark. In the southeastern portion of the Township, the rise in elevation is not as great and reaches 640 feet above sea level just west of Hay Lake. However, bluffs near Silver Lake exceed elevations of 770 feet above sea level.

The majority of surface drainage collects within the expansive marsh network where subsurface drainage is poor. Many of these wetland areas drain into the multitude of rivers and creeks that meander throughout the Township. Many of these rivers and creeks empty into inland lakes prior to reaching Lake Michigan.

The coastline lands tend to have a greater susceptibility to erosion as a result of water and wind action, particularly during storm conditions. Numerous areas along the coastline of Moran Township are particularly vulnerable to erosion and have been identified as such by the Division of Land Resources Programs of the Department of Natural Resources.



Topography Map Moran Township Southeast

- Slopes Greater Than 10%
- Township Limits

Topography Source: MDNR DRG Topographic Map of Mackinac County
 Slope Source: Derived from Digital Elevation Model of Mackinac County
 April 2025



Trout Lake Twp.

Brevort Twp.

Hendricks Twp.



Topography Map Moran Township Northwest

- Slopes Greater Than 10%
- Township Limits

Topography Source: MDNR DRG Topographic Map of Mackinac County
 Slope Source: Derived from Digital Elevation Model of Mackinac County
 April 2025



Geology

The geology of Moran Township is similar to most of the eastern Upper Peninsula, which is the product of continental glaciations and the natural aging process of the Great Lakes resulting in a reduction of their original sizes.

The eastern portion of Moran Township's surface geology consists predominantly of ancient lakebeds and bedrock formations. The western portion of the Township consists predominantly of outwash and glacial channels, as well as swamp-like areas with a high degree of peat and muck materials.

The surface geology of the Township also includes sandy lakebeds along the Carp River Basin, bedrock in the area of Ozark south to the Carp River, and sand dunes south and west of Big Brevoort Lake.

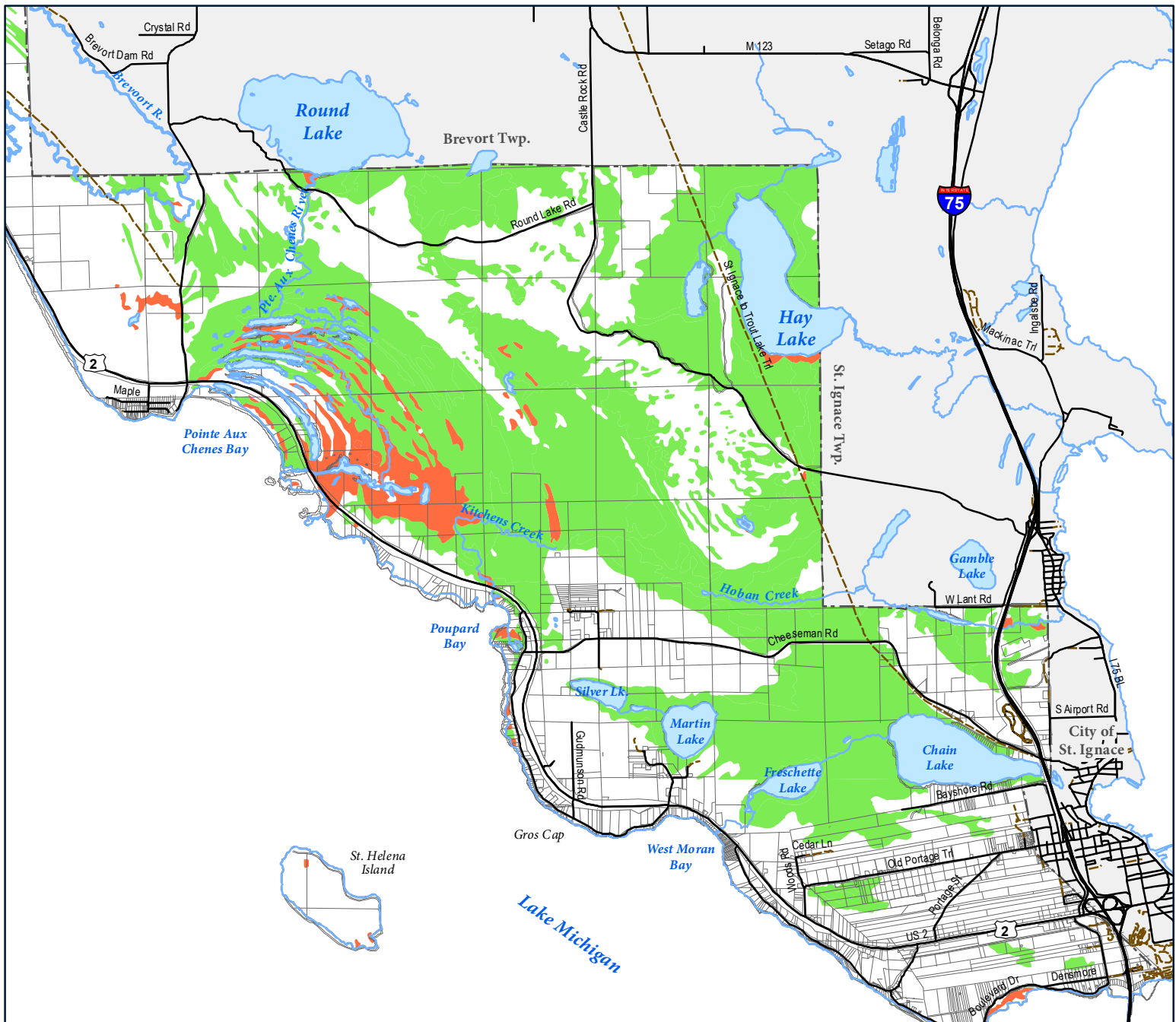
A sand dune complex characterizes the Brevoort area of the Township. The bedrock geology throughout the entire Township is comprised of Silurian Formations that are generally hard and resistant dolomites with evidence of embedded shale and gypsum. Much of the limestone bedrock has been fractured, recemented, and broken apart in the southeastern portion of the Township.

Vegetative Cover









The Township's land cover can be classified according to two covers, forested and marshlands. While open grassed areas do exist, they are generally limited to those immediate areas where houses have been established with associated yards and other small scale randomly cleared areas and do not represent a significant land cover in respect to quantity or location, except in the Ozark area.

Most of Moran Township consists of glacial lake deposits with a large portion of this lake plain consisting of flat and poorly drained lands characterized by highly variable swamp, bog, fen and marsh communities. Swamp forests including hemlock, northern white cedar, balsam fir, white spruce, trembling aspen, balsam, poplar, and scattered white pine. The drier ridges associated with these areas are characterized by Dry Northern Forest and Dry-Mesic Northern Forest including jack pine, red pine, red oak, big tooth aspen, and paper birch.

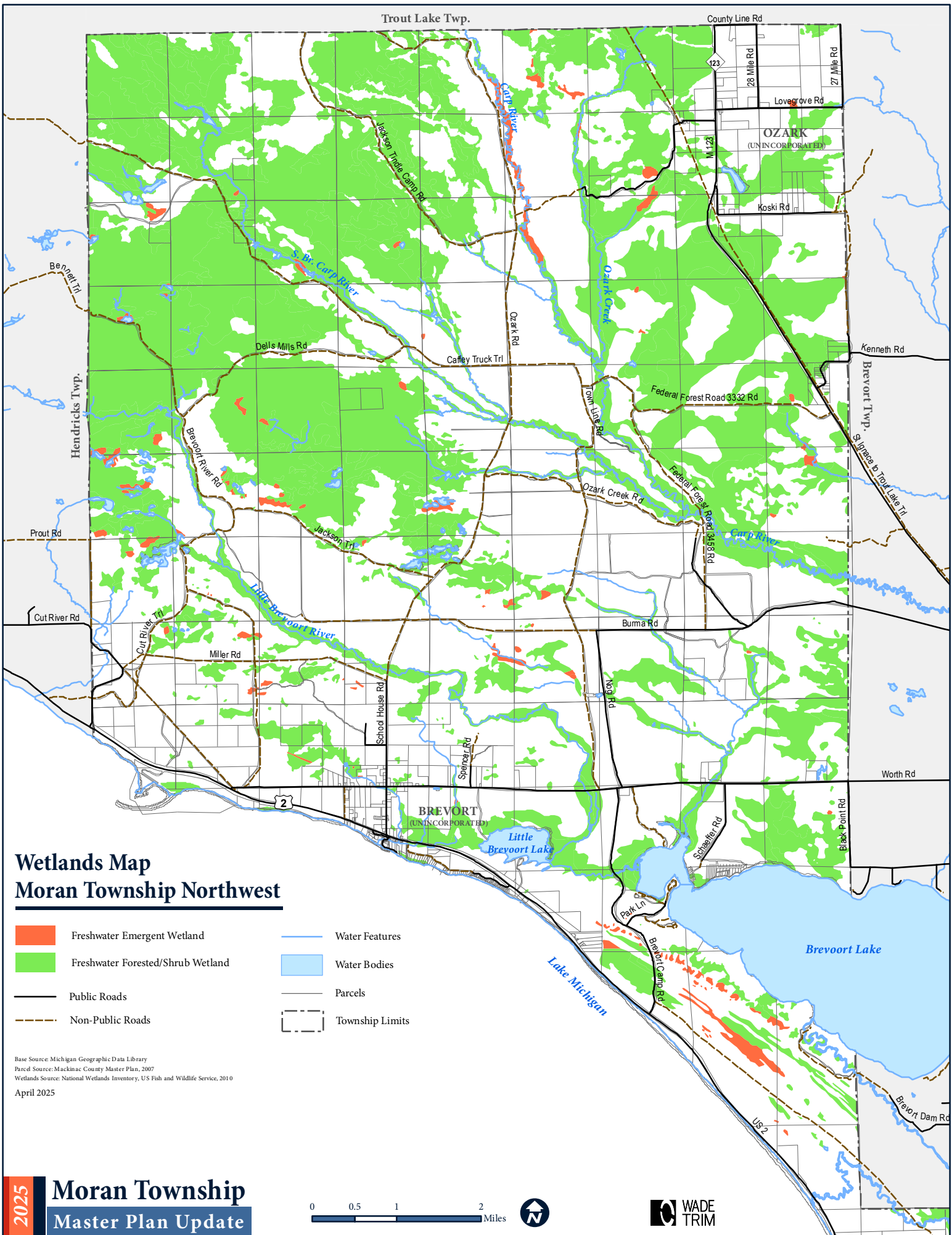
Lands along the Lake Michigan coastline associated with the extensive sand dunes are characterized by Northern Hardwoods. Forest vegetation includes beech, sugar maple, hemlock, black cherry and red oak. The low fore dunes are vegetated by herbaceous and shrub vegetation. The more interior dunes near Round Lake and Hay Lake, have forests of big tooth aspen, red pine, and white pine. Wet swales are located between the high dunes along Lake Michigan. The inland area supports a variety of wetland type vegetation including cedar, tamarack, and hardwood-conifer swamps, fens, bogs and marshes. The **Wetlands Map** delineates recognized wetland areas within Moran Township as documented by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's National Wetlands Inventory (NWI). As the peat lands throughout the Township vary in thickness, so does the vegetation associated with those areas. These areas of greater depth reflect a muskeg or bog-like vegetation while those areas of a more shallow nature consist of conifer forests and swamps.











Wetlands Map Moran Township Southeast

- | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------|
|  | Freshwater Emergent Wetland |  | Water Features |
|  | Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland |  | Water Bodies |
|  | Public Roads |  | Parcels |
|  | Non-Public Roads |  | Township Limits |

Base Source: Michigan Geographic Data Library
 Parcel Source: Mackinac County Master Plan, 2007
 Wetlands Source: National Wetlands Inventory, US Fish and Wildlife Service, 2010
 April 2025



Wetlands Map Moran Township Northwest

- | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------|
|  | Freshwater Emergent Wetland |  | Water Features |
|  | Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland |  | Water Bodies |
|  | Public Roads |  | Parcels |
|  | Non-Public Roads |  | Township Limits |

Base Source: Michigan Geographic Data Library
 Parcel Source: Mackinac County Master Plan, 2007
 Wetlands Source: National Wetlands Inventory, US Fish and Wildlife Service, 2010
 April 2025



Soils

In 1984, the U.S. Forest Service prepared an inventory of the Sault Ste. Marie and St. Ignace Ranger Districts, which include Moran Township. According to the inventory, the soil within the southeastern portion of the Township tends to be poorly drained, the majority of which are of a loamy and sandy loam nature. The soil in this area, between Martin Lake and Chain Lake, have wetland characteristics with a higher degree of peat and muck. The vast majority of privately owned lands within the northwestern portion of the Township have well drained loamy sands which are more supportive of site development than in the southeastern portion of the Township.

Special Natural Areas

Driving throughout Moran Township, one could easily view the entire region as a "special natural area" due to the extensive expanses of woodlands, marshes, shoreline and other features. These resources are, in fact, very special due to the wildlife habitats they provide, the scenic quality they present, and the critical role they play in shaping the overall character of the Township.

However, within the context of this report "special natural areas" refer to features within the Township that are of a more unique character and not nearly as visible. Because these special natural features are not typically as visible as other natural features, woodlands for example, they require much more attention when land planning for the present and future in order to support their healthy continuance.

The Department of Natural Resources provides, through the staff of the Nature Conservancy, the Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI) program which identifies these unique environmental features for the purposes of conservation programs and environmental planning. At the request of Moran Township Planning Commission, the Township Board contracted with the MNFI in 1986 to survey the Township. Moran Township was surveyed as part of the Michigan Natural Features Inventory program in which information was generated pertaining to Michigan's endangered, threatened, rare, or otherwise significant plant and animal species, plant communities, and other natural features.

Areas of critical concern on a national basis are found in the Pointe Aux Chenes Marshes and at selected areas along the Lake Michigan shoreline. These areas contain habitat for plant communities and specific species that are found nowhere else on earth. Preservation of these areas on the part of Moran Township is required for the betterment of society as a whole. Other significant areas of concern include state threatened habitats of high quality wetlands, critical dune complexes, peat lands, and mature forestlands. Each of these areas is identified in the Natural Features Inventory of Moran Township – the complete study, including computerized mapping of all the known occurrences, is on file with the MDNR state land computer mapping system.

Five areas within the Township are of such special concern that the federal and state governments have acted to protect these areas. These five areas are as follows:

1. Pointe Aux Chenes Research Natural Area. The United States Forest Service has designated this area for long-term preservation for scientific research purposes. The Forest Service owns and manages the majority of this land.
2. Carp River Wild and Scenic River. The River and a ¼ mile wide corridor on each side are protected as a wilderness area to remain in its natural state. This area is within the Hiawatha National Forest and there are no adjacent privately owned lands.

3. North Country National Scenic Trail. The North Country National Scenic Trail was established by Congress to create a national hiking trail extending from the State of New York to the State of North Dakota. The trail is patterned after the Appalachian National Trail. This initiative provides for a hiking trail with a 1,000-foot buffer zone of natural habitat along the side of the trail. This hiking corridor is to be protected in its natural state for future generations. In Moran Township, the U.S. Forest Service and a system of volunteers oversee the North Country Trail. The trail starts in St. Ignace, follows an old railroad grade along the north side of Chain Lake, crosses through the southwest corner of St. Ignace Township to re-enter Moran Township south of Castle Road, then follows along the south side of the road and exits Moran Township after crossing the Brevort River to cut across the extreme southwest corner of Brevort Township. The trail re-enters Moran Township, skirts the south and west shores of Big Brevort Lake, then angles northeasterly to cross the Carp River before exiting the Township to continue on its way towards Lake Superior and eventually North Dakota. It should be noted that the trail impacts private lands only along the north side of Chain Lake in Moran Township.
4. Brevort Lake/Lake Michigan Critical Dunes Area. The area of sand dunes between Brevort Lake and Lake Michigan is protected under the State Critical Dunes Act. This designated area starts at the west end of Point Aux Chenes Subdivision and extends to the Ozark Road right-of-way in the Village of Brevort. While the majority of dunes are within public ownership, a significant area immediately east of the Village of Brevort is privately owned.
5. Little Brevort Lake State Scenic Area. The area surrounding Little Brevort Lake is designated as a protected scenic area under the State Natural and Scenic Areas Act. This area is owned and regulated by the State of Michigan.

St. Helena Island

In addition, local land conservancies have acted to protect sensitive areas in the Township by purchasing them. Recently, the Little Traverse Conservancy purchased the 266-acre St. Helena Island. This island is located in the Straits of Mackinac six and one-half miles west of the Mackinac Bridge. There is a two-acre light station that has been in use since 1873 on the Island. This light station is owned and was restored by the Great Lakes Lighthouse Keepers Association. The island contains many environmental features, including a Great Blue Heron rookery and diverse plant life with three threatened species. Although the majority of the island is in its natural condition, there was a small village settlement in the 1850s. Remains of the village exist today. This island is a key visual feature of the area for individuals crossing the Mackinac Bridge and driving along U.S. Highway 2.

Groundwater

Based upon studies by the Water Resources Division of the U.S. Geological Survey, water availability within the southeastern portion of the Township near St. Ignace is quite limited and highly mineralized. Availability of water in the northwestern portion of the Township is considerably better although mineralization is a problem.

Availability of groundwater within the glacial deposits throughout the entire Township is low, generally less than 10 gpm. Aquifers in the southeastern part of the Township are extremely vulnerable to contamination from surface sources including septic fields and leaking underground storage tanks (LUST). This area, extending from I-75 west to the Brevort River, has little or no protective soil overlying the fractured limestone bedrock. Known as "Mackinac Breccia", this bedrock is easily penetrated by

surface runoff, sewage effluents, and man-made chemicals. There are numerous cases of contaminated drinking water wells.

In addition to failed wells, Moran Township has more cases of dry wells drilled than any other area in the eastern Upper Peninsula. Several wells have been drilled to the 700-to-800-foot depths, only to tap salt water and brine at these depths. The northwestern portion of the Township has fewer of these problems, although it is less developed and may experience more of these problems as it develops. It should be noted that those areas experiencing the greatest development pressures are also exhibiting the signs of poor water quality.

Cultural Features

While decisions of future land use are dependent on the natural features of the physical environment, cultural features have a strong impact on the decision-making process. An examination of the cultural features provides insight into the existing development patterns that have evolved over the past years. While a Master Plan should not be dictated by past and present development conditions alone, they should be considered when planning for the future.

Population, Housing and Economic Characteristics

Historical Settlement and Population

Prior to visitors from European lands, Mackinac County was inhabited by a number of major Native American tribes, most particularly the Ottawa and Ojibwa tribes and, subsequently, the Huron Indians. The waters and lands of the area provided a haven for life with plentiful food sources and modes of transportation.

French traders also found this area to be a land of abundance. As a result of the copious supply of furs and a very strong market, the French established a multitude of trading posts and forts. The City of St. Ignace was founded in 1671, when Pere Marquette established a mission. The French also established a trading post at Mackinaw City that became Fort Michilamackinac in 1715.

Similarly, the British traders also had a quest for furs and followed the French traders to the region. Continuous battles among the French, British, and Indians ensued throughout the region. In 1780, under the control of the British, Fort Michilamackinac was moved to Mackinac Island. Although the United States took initial possession of the island in 1783, the British occupied the area during the War of 1812. It was not until 1815 that the U.S. regained possession of the island and Fort Michilamackinac returned to the mainland.

The fur trade flourished for the arriving European settlers until the early 1800's when excessive trapping and hunting began to severely diminish the quantity of fur bearing animals. Afterwards, attention turned toward the extensive woodlands and waters where the timber and fishing industry became predominant throughout the 19th century.

During this time, many towns and villages within the Township grew. However, by the early 1900's, the quality timber resources were all but depleted. The St. Lawrence Seaway opening allowed for lamprey to feed on the fishing industry's prime species, lake trout and white fish, which set back the fishing industry. By the 1960's, due to this occurrence and unregulated fishing, the fishing industry had all but disappeared.

Moran Township's population was approximately 400 in 1920 and peaked at approximately 900 people in 1960. Since the mid 1900's, the primary economic base within the Township and greater Mackinac County has been the tourist industry fed by the extensive scenic, historical, and recreational resources throughout the area and greater eastern Upper Peninsula region. The tourist industry was given considerable support when the Mackinac Bridge opened in 1957 providing quick and convenient access to the area.

Recent Population Trends

The 2020 Census reported that the population count of Moran Township was 1,029 (530 males and 499 female). The population of Mackinac County was 10,834 in 2020 and 10,865 in 2023. In 2020, Moran Township contained approximately 9.5% of the County's residents.

Table 1 shows the population trends in Moran Township since 1940. Population growth in Moran Township has fluctuated over the past decades. Except for the 1960's, the Township's population increased between 1940 and 2000. However, since 2000, the population has declined.

**Table 1: Population Trends
Moran Township, 1940-2020**

Year	Population
1940	534
1950	535
1960	877
1970	779
1980	823
1990	838
2000	1,080
2010	994
2020	1,029
Source: U.S. Census Bureau	

Table 2 presents the future population of Moran Township through the year 2045 based on a linear trend (numeric) projection. The numeric method is based on the Township's population trends between 1990 and 2020 extended on a linear basis through 2045. With a total annual average increase of 6.36 residents between 1990 and 2020, the numeric method anticipates that the Township's population will continue to increase yearly by 6.36 residents, starting in 2020, through the year 2045. This results in a total Township population of 1,188 by the year 2045. It is the consultant's opinion that this is a realistic trend, which assumes that the Township's desired amenities and location will work to attract modest growth in the long-term. This projection, however, is derived exclusively from trends over the past 30 years, and cannot foresee any significant developments, economic occurrences, or changing personal habitation preferences that may occur in the future. This projection should, therefore, be seen only as a preliminary benchmark for analysis of future population attributes.

**Table 2: Population Projections
Moran Township, 2020-2045**

Population Source	Historical Population		Population Projections			
	1990	2020	2030	2035	2040	2045
U.S. Census	838	1,029				
Numeric Method ¹			1,093	1,125	1,156	1,188

¹ Represents extension of population trend between 1990 and 2020 on a linear trend basis.
Projection analysis by Wade-Trim

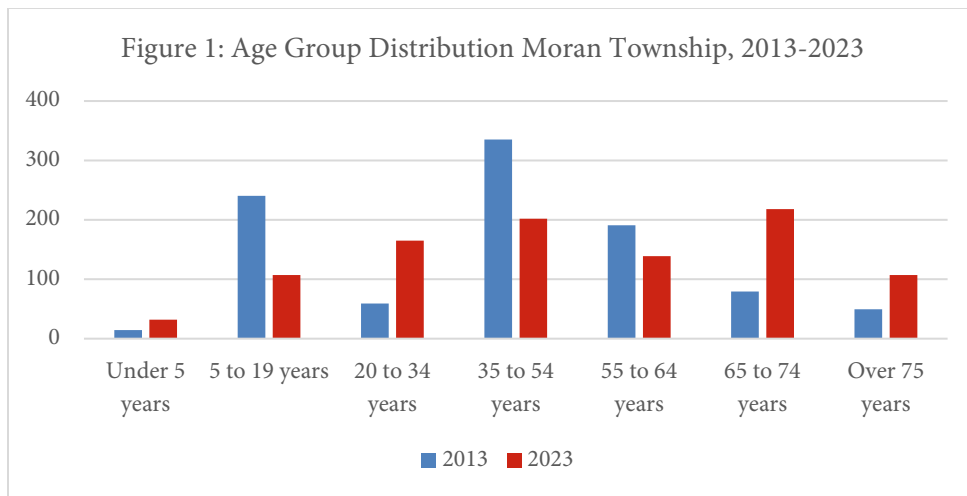
Age Trends

The median age for Township residents in 2023 was 53.8 years, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) estimates from 2023. For the County, it was 53.3. For comparison the Michigan median age is 40.1. Approximately 14.3% of the Township population was 19 and under, while 33.5% was above 65. The largest age cohort was between 65 and 74 years, which represented 22% of the Township population (refer to **Table 3** and **Figure 1**).

**Table 3: Age Group Distribution and Median Age
Moran Township and Mackinac County, 2023**

Age Group	Moran Township		Mackinac County	
	#	%	#	%
Under 5 years	32	3.3%	430	4.0%
5-19 years	107	11.0%	1,404	12.9%
20-34 years	165	17.0%	1,594	14.7%
35-54 years	202	20.8%	2,369	21.8%
55-64 years	139	14.3%	1,912	17.6%
65-74 years	218	22.5%	1,913	17.6%
Over 75 years	107	11.0%	1,243	11.4%
Total	970	100%	10,865	100%
Median Age	53.8		53.3	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2009-2013 and 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

A comparison of the Township’s median age in 2023 (53.8 years) with its median age in 2013 (48.1 years) reveals that the Township’s population is aging. The most significant age group change occurred in the 65-74 years age group, which represented 8.2% of the population in 2013, but which increased to 22.5% of the population in 2023.

Gender

The Township has a proportionately higher population with respect to the male sex (51.5%) compared to the female sex (48.5%). This disparity is most prevalent among the 55-to-64-year age cohort in Moran Township where there are 145 females and 96 males. There are 108 males under the age of 19 and 74 females. In addition, in the over 75 years of age cohort there are 55 males compared to 59 females (see **Table 4**).

**Table 4: Age Group Gender Profile
Moran Township, 2020**

Age Group	Moran Township	
	Male	Female
Under 5 years	20	10
5-19 years	88	64
20-34 years	74	50
35-54 years	103	99
55-64 years	96	145
65-74 years	94	89
Over 75 years	55	59
Total	530	499
Median Age	52.3	56.3

Source: 2020 Decennial Census

Ethnic Distribution

The population of Moran Township is racially homogeneous with 696 residents (67.6%) being White only. Eight community members are Black, five are of Asian descent, and 197 are of Native American decent. The U.S. Census classified 104 individuals as being of two or more races (see **Table 5**).

**Table 5: Racial Profile
Moran Township, 2020**

Race	Number of People	Percentage
White	696	67.6%
Black/African American	8	0.8%
Asian	5	0.5%
Native American	197	19.1%
Two or More Races	104	10.1%
Total	1,029	100%

Source: 2020 Decennial Census

Persons with Disabilities

According to the U.S. Census, 133 persons in the Township have a disability. Three of them are 17 years or younger, while 33 are between the ages of 18 to 64, and 97 are 65 years and over (see **Table 6**).

**Table 6: Persons with Disabilities
Moran Township, 2023**

Age Group with Disabilities	Number of People
Under 5 Years	0
5 to 17	3
18 to 64	33
65 years and over	97
Totals	133

Source: 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Household Characteristics

According to the 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, there are 501 households in the Township. As shown in **Table 7**, the U.S. Census classifies 367 of them as family households, while 134 are considered nonfamily households. Females head 28 households and 6 of them have children. There are 90 households that have individuals under 18 and 121 households that have individuals over 65. The average household size is 1.94.

The US Census defines a household as, “A person or group of persons who live in a housing unit.” A family is defined as two or more people residing together and related by birth, marriage, or adoption.

**Table 7: Household Characteristics
Moran Township, 2023**

Household Types	Number of Households
Family	367
Female head, no husband	28
Nonfamily	134

Source: 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Housing Characteristics

According to the 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, there are 863 total housing units within Moran Township. Of this total, the vast majority are 1-unit detached structures (68.5%). The next most common type of housing unit are apartments with 5 to 9 units, accounting for 79 total and comprising 15.8% of the total housing stock, then the next most common type of housing are mobile homes (refer to **Table 8**).

**Table 8: Housing Characteristics
Moran Township, 2023**

Units in Structure	Number	Percent
1-unit, detached	343	68.5%
1-unit, attached	6	1.2%
2 units	0	0.0%
3 or 4 units	8	1.6%
5 to 9 units	79	15.8%
10 to 19 units	0	0.0%
Mobile home	65	13.0%
Total housing units	501	100%

Source: 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Seasonal Population

It is significant to note that the U.S. Census population statistics do not include seasonal residents. The figures presented by the 2020 Census do not reflect the actual number of people residing in the Township during the summer months, during which Moran Township’s population surges. According to the 2023 ACS, there are a total of 863 housing units in the Township. Of these, 501 are occupied units (year-round), while 362 are vacant housing units. Of the 362 vacant units, 334 are for seasonal, recreational or occasional use. Using this information, it is estimated that the seasonal population could be an additional 648 residents (using the Township’s 2023 average household size of 1.94 as a guide).

Economic Levels

The median household income for Moran Township households in 2023 was \$66,622. This represents an increase from a median household income of \$55,833 in 2013. In 2023, approximately 14.6% of households had income less than \$25,000, while 14.2% had incomes between \$25,000 and \$49,999. 38.9% had incomes between \$50,000 and \$99,999, while 34.4% had incomes over \$100,000 (see **Table 9**). 1.6% of all families and 6.3% of all people were classified as being below the poverty level.

**Table 9: Distribution of Median Household Income
Moran Township, 2023**

Median Household Income (2013)	Households	
	Number	Percentage
Less than \$10,000	3	0.60%
\$10,000 to \$24,999	70	14.00%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	71	14.20%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	195	38.90%
Over \$100,000	162	32.40%
Total	501	100%

Source: 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Employment Characteristics

The U.S. Census classifies 877 individuals as being in the labor force. Of the people in the labor force, 424 are employed and 20 are unemployed. There are 103 families where both parents are in the workforce.

There are 417 employed individuals over the age of 16. Approximately 35% of employed individuals are in arts, entertainment, recreation, and hospitality related industries. In addition, 13.2% of the employed individuals are in educational services, health care, and social assistance, and 18% are in natural resources, construction, and manufacturing occupations (see **Table 10**).

**Table 10: Employment Characteristics
Moran Township, 2023**

Occupation	Civilian employed population 16	
	Number	Percentage
Wholesale and retail trade occupations	26	6.2%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	20	4.8%
Sales and office occupations	127	30.5%
Natural resources, construction, and manufacturing occupations	75	18.0%
Finance, insurance, and real estate	40	9.6%
Educational, health care, and social assistance	55	13.2%
Arts, entertainment, hospitality and other services	146	35.0%
Total	417	100%

Source: 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Educational Characteristics

Approximately 91.6% of the Moran Township population over the age of 25 has a high school degree, according to the 2023 American Community Survey. Likewise, 27.8% of the population over the age of 25 has a bachelor’s degree or higher.

Township students attend schools within the St. Ignace Area School District. According to the Common Core of Data for the 2023-2024 school year, the public school district has 4 total schools educating 426 total students in grades K through 12.

Existing Land Use

The **Existing Land Use/Land Cover Map** included in this chapter of the report will serve as a reference for Moran Township in its consideration of land use management and public improvement proposals. Existing land use information for Moran Township was initially derived from the land use data catalogued within the Mackinac County Master Plan (2007). However, this data was updated by Wade Trim through aerial photo interpolation to reflect recent land use changes. Finally, the existing land use data was verified by Township representatives.

The **Existing Land Use/Land Cover Map** illustrates how the land in the Township is being utilized today. A total of 10 existing land use/land cover categories have been established; a detailed description of each category is listed below. In total, the Township comprises 132.97 square miles of land. The overwhelming land use character of the Township is rural and environmental, which is represented by Forest lands comprising nearly 80% of the Township and Wetlands covering nearly 8% of the Township.

Urban land uses (including Residential, Commercial/Institutional, Recreation/Cemetery, Industrial/Utilities/Transportation, and Extractive) comprise less than 3% of the entire Township.

Agricultural

This category reflects lands which are currently being utilized for agricultural and farming operations, including traditional crop growing, grazing lands, tree farming, and other similar activities. Only a few properties in the Township, comprising approximately 100 acres, currently are utilized for agricultural activities.

Residential

This existing land use/land cover category accommodates all existing residentially developed lands within Moran Township. Included are residential lands which are non-subdivided as well as lands in platted subdivisions. Lot sizes within the non-subdivided areas typically range from 40-acres to 160-acres. These areas also include small 10-acre lots and large 320-acre lots. These non-subdivided lots are primarily wooded except for the residential structure and associated yard areas. Only a handful of platted residential subdivisions exist in the Township. The majority of these subdivisions are situated on the Lake Michigan coast or along an inland lake. Lot sizes within these subdivisions generally do not exceed one acre in size. In total, Residential lands comprise approximately 890 acres of land, or 1% of the Township.

Commercial/Institutional

This classification delineates the areas of the Township where commercial establishments are located. Included within this category are retail and office services, campgrounds and resort facilities, restaurants and similarly related uses. Also included in this classification are institutional uses, such as governmental facilities, educational institutions, religious institutions, and other public and semi-public uses.

The majority of the commercial establishments are along U.S. Highway 2, especially within the southeastern portion of the Township. These establishments cater to the tourist industry and consist of restaurants, supply depots, hotels/motels and tourist curio shops. When traveling along U.S. Highway 2, one is faced with a multitude of highly visible tourist establishments directly fronting the road with minimal landscaping, excessive signage, and a general lack of sensitivity to the aesthetic elements and character of the area. Once west of West Moran Bay, minimal development is seen until Brevort, where tourist-oriented establishments reappear. In total, Commercial/Institutional lands comprise approximately 270 acres.

Recreation/Cemetery

This classification includes properties which are recreational in nature, such as parks, recreation centers, campgrounds, golf courses, and other indoor and outdoor recreational facilities. Also included in this category are cemeteries. In total, Recreation/Cemetery lands comprise approximately 250 acres.

Industrial/Utilities/Transportation

Included in this category are industrial enterprises such as warehouses, oil processing facilities, and manufacturing and non-manufacturing uses which are primarily industrial in nature. Also included are utility properties and corridors and transportation related uses, such as electric substations, pipeline corridors, transmission line corridors, and airports. In total, this category includes approximately 250 acres of land.

Extractive

This classification delineates areas owned and maintained by mining industries for the purposes of sand and gravel excavation. These large excavation operations can be viewed as part of a long-term organized program for sand and gravel excavation for the purposes of commercial trade. This classification also includes smaller active gravel pits which are not necessarily State approved programs but have developed out of a "self-help" attitude by local persons in need. Extractive lands occupy approximately 340 total acres.

Forest

This category consists of those areas that are currently covered by forests, including those which have been utilized for harvesting of wood during the late 1800's and early 1900's. These areas have started to mature into the forest stands that existed prior to the lumber industry and are generally vacant of all structures. The vast majority of these forest lands are publicly owned (either within the Lake Superior State Forest or the Hiawatha National Forest). However, some forest areas included within this land use category are also privately owned. In total, Forest lands occupy approximately 67,020 acres of land or 79% of the Township.

Non-Forested Fields/Rights-of-Way (Vacant Lands)

This category consists of those areas which are currently open fields, and which are generally not covered by forests or wetlands. These areas are generally vacant of all structures and land uses. This classification also includes major transportation rights-of-way corridors, particularly the Interstate 75 right-of-way. These lands occupy approximately 5,430 acres or 6% of the Township.

Beaches/Dunes

This existing land use/land cover category reflects the presence of existing beaches and sand dune areas within Moran Township. In total, Beaches/Dunes occupy approximately 330 acres.

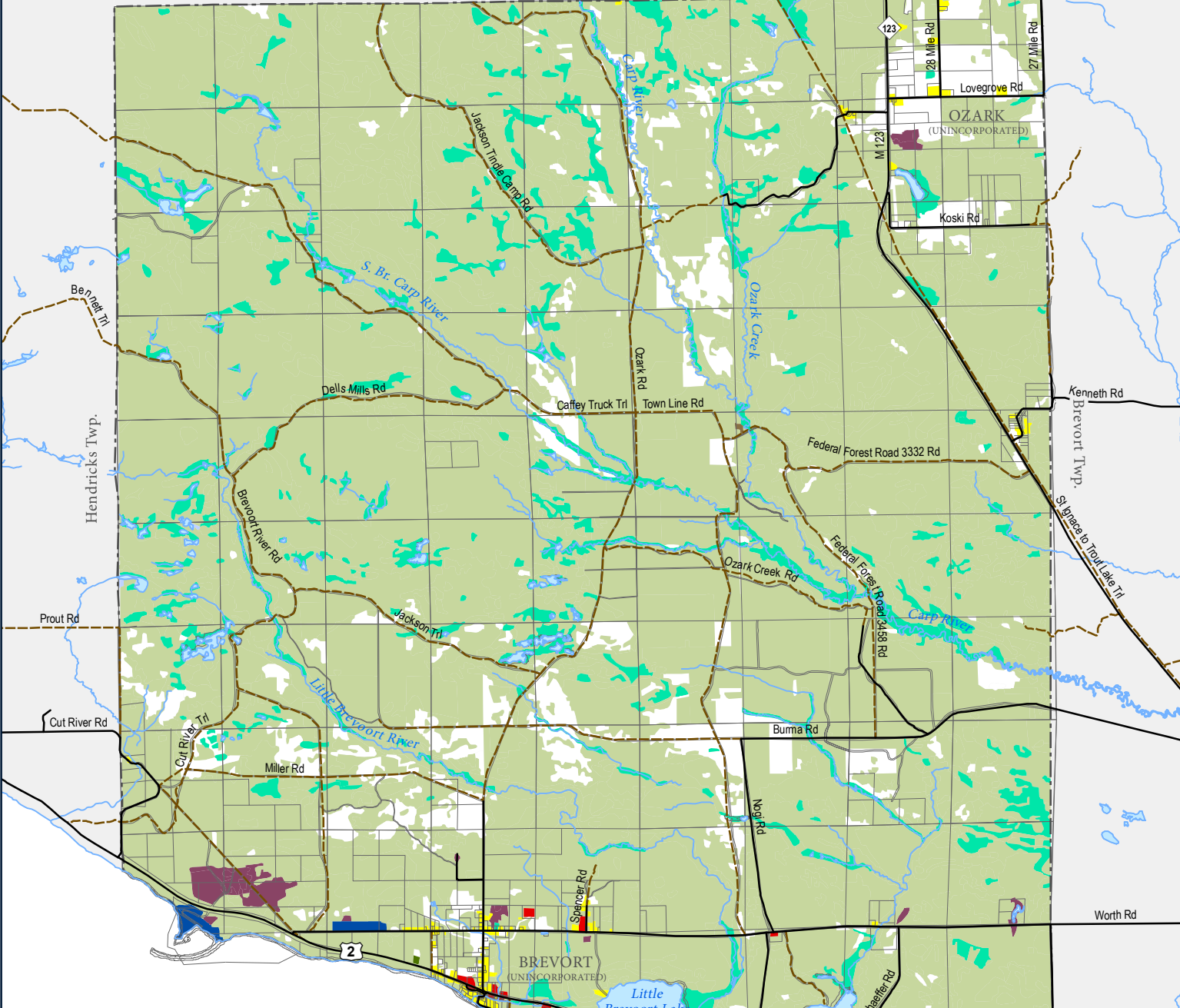
Wetlands

Existing wetlands within Moran Township have been classified into the wetlands existing land use/land cover category. Included are forested wetlands and non-forested wetlands. In total, Wetlands occupy approximately 6,575 acres or 8% of the Township.

















Archaeological and Historic Areas

Not nearly as visible as existing land use patterns, but nevertheless a strong element of the Township's character, are the archaeological and historic sites. These archaeological and historic elements provide insight into the past activities of the Township and should be valued for their past and continued mark upon the area's landscape and the cultural quality that they embody. The archaeological sites within Moran Township include aboriginal and prehistoric burial grounds; the historical sites within Moran Township include the Ottawa Indian Village on West Moran Bay, High Rollway, Gros Cap Cemetery, the Village of Gros Cap, and St. Helena Island.

Existing Land Use/Land Cover Map SE

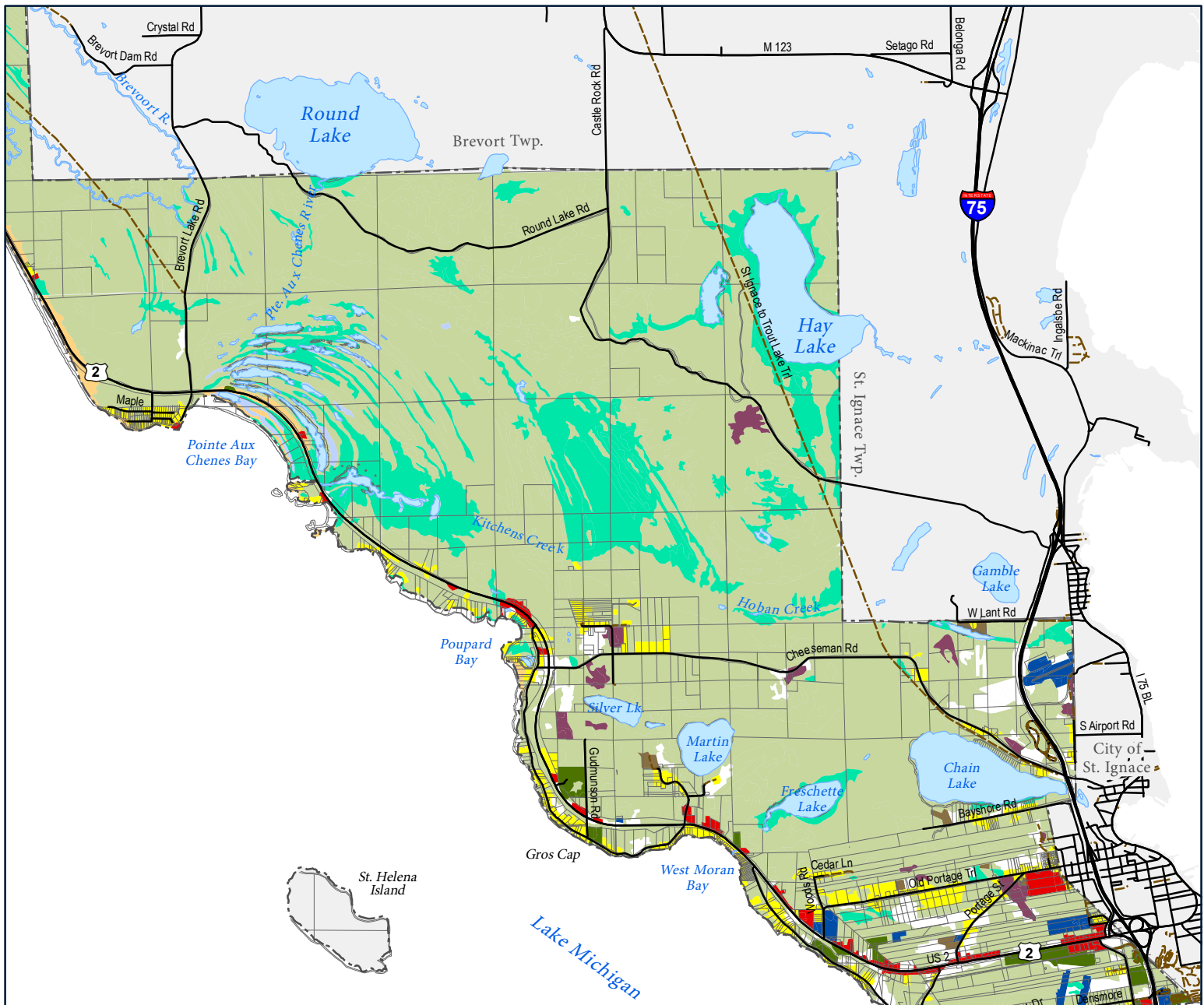


Existing Land Use/Land Cover Map Moran Township Northwest

















- | | | | |
|--|--|---|-----------------|
|  | Agricultural |  | Railroads |
|  | Residential |  | Roads |
|  | Commercial/Institutional |  | Water Features |
|  | Recreation/Cemetery |  | Water Bodies |
|  | Industrial/Utilities/Transportation |  | Parcels |
|  | Extractive |  | Township Limits |
|  | Forest | | |
|  | Non-Forested Fields/Rights-of-Way (Vacant Lands) | | |
|  | Beaches/Dunes | | |
|  | Wetlands | | |

Base Source: Michigan Geographic Data Library
 Existing Land Use/Land Cover Source: Mackinac County Master Plan (2007), Updated by Wade Trim and Moran Township (2025)
 May 2025





Existing Land Use/Land Cover Map Moran Township Southeast

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Agricultural |  Railroads |
|  Residential |  Roads |
|  Commercial/Institutional |  Water Features |
|  Recreation/Cemetery |  Water Bodies |
|  Industrial/Utilities/Transportation |  Parcels |
|  Extractive |  Township Limits |
|  Forest | |
|  Non-Forested Fields/Rights-of-Way (Vacant Lands) | |
|  Beaches/Dunes | |
|  Wetlands | |

Base Source: Michigan Geographic Data Library
 Existing Land Use/Land Cover Source: Mackinac County Master Plan (2007), Updated by Wade Trim and Moran Township (2025)
 May 2025

Transportation

The vehicular network throughout the Township is limited by the amount of public forestlands. The major roads within the Township are Interstate 75 and U.S. Highway 2. Interstate 75 runs north and south along the western and eastern boundaries of the City of St. Ignace and Moran Township, respectively. I-75 provides access, by way of the Mackinac Bridge, from the Lower Peninsula to the Upper Peninsula. Circulation east and west is provided by U.S. Route 2, a predominantly two-lane highway stretching from St. Ignace through Moran Township following the Lake Michigan coastline, through the community of Brevort, and continuing westward to Escanaba and Iron Mountain.

U.S. Highway 2 is a five-lane wide highway from the I-75 interchange westerly to Martin Lake Road, a distance of approximately four and a half miles. State Highway 123 extends through the northern portion of the Township, providing a connection from I-75 to the community of Ozark. Aside from these primary highway routes, the vast interior of Moran Township is generally void of vehicular circulation except for a handful of paved and unpaved roads providing access to and from more remote areas of the Township and beyond. The far south region of the Township, that area south and west of Poupard Bay, reflects a greater degree of development and, as such, a more developed circulation network. There is currently no rail service within the Township. The Township is served by the Mackinac County Airport, which is located in St. Ignace and has a 3,800-foot-long runway (the western-most portion of the airport runway extends into Moran Township).

The Mackinac Bridge

A special note should be made of the role the Mackinac Bridge commands across the state, nation, and local communities. Completed in 1957 at a cost of more than \$100,000,000, the bridge is considered one of the greatest in the world and a tribute to man's engineering genius. Spanning nearly five miles across the Straits of Mackinac and its main towers more than 500 feet above the water, the bridge is a spectacular link between the Upper and Lower Peninsulas and serves as a primary tourist resource as well as a spectacular backdrop to the many other tourist and non-tourist elements in the area.

As one travels across the Mackinac Bridge toward Moran Township, the bridge is an adventure unto itself and provides the driver with splendid panoramic views of Lake Michigan, Lake Huron, the Straits of Mackinac, Mackinac Island, and the foothills of the Upper Peninsula. Similarly, as one travels along the Township coastline, one is provided with a grandiose view of the Mackinac Bridge and the splendid grace it commands.

Public Services and Utilities

The majority of residents of Moran Township rely on private wells and septic fields. In fact, throughout the entire Township, the only areas to have municipal water and sewer directly about the City of St. Ignace, and even these areas are small in size. The City of St. Ignace Golf Course along U.S. Highway 2 and the local surrounding area, LaSalle High School on Portage Road and the local surrounding area, and the area just to the north of the far east end of Chain Lake are served by the City of St. Ignace's public water and sewer systems.

The issue of quality of drinking water is of great concern, as there have been a considerable number of private wells that have been found to be contaminated, as well as areas that would appear to have a high potential for future contamination.

Law enforcement within Moran Township is provided by the Mackinac County Sheriff Department headquartered in St. Ignace and supplemented by the Michigan State Police. Fire protection is provided through the St. Ignace Fire Department. Ambulance service is provided by Allied EMS Systems, Inc. Mackinac Straits Hospital and Health Center in the City of St. Ignace is the main health care facility in the County and effectively serves the residents of Moran Township.

Adjoining Land Uses and Jurisdictions

Though not a part of Moran Township, the land uses and areas abutting and/or surrounding the Township are a factor in preparing a master plan. A master plan must recognize adjacent land uses as they can have direct ramifications on the Township's development.

Certainly, the most significant of these land uses is the City of St. Ignace. This is the most urbanized area within the region and bounds Moran Township. The officially adopted master plan for the City of St. Ignace proposes residential land uses along the majority of the area that interfaces with the Township, except in the area of the county airport that is proposed for public institutional use.

The central business district of St. Ignace is located along the waterfront of Lake Huron and expansion of this district, to whatever degree it may occur, is somewhat restricted to the north and south. East and west expansion is limited due to Lake Huron and the steep escarpment respectively.

Nearly all properties within Moran Township that are not privately owned are part of the Hiawatha National Forest and Lake Superior State Forest. As national and state forests, the intent of these lands is not managed for development but for wildlife, recreation, timber production and research, and other conservation programs.

Chapter Four: Needs Assessment

Introduction

The Goals and Objectives and the land use descriptions are based on comments from Planning Commissions, Township Boards, and citizen input. The majority of these items were in previous land use plans. Moran Township has not changed significantly to warrant massive changes to these items. Comments from previous Planning Commissions and the current Planning Commission and Township Board are used to provide the basis for this Master Plan Update.

Key Community Concerns

Through various meetings with the Township Planning Commission during this Master Plan Update, as well as from previous Planning Commissions in past master planning efforts, numerous issues were discussed that provided insight into those concerns most apparent within the community. While these concerns ranged considerably in scope, they all have direct implications for land use planning and the preparation of a Master Plan Update for the Township. Below is a summary of the key concerns related to land use planning within the Township:

1. Flexibility within a land use plan for Moran Township is a necessity. Based upon the lifestyles and attitudes within the Township, and the Upper Peninsula in general, the land use plan must support the diverse needs of the Township residents and the immense beauty of this extremely rural area.
2. A critical concern of the Township is the present and future effect the tourist trade will have upon the character of Moran Township. Most particularly, this concern focuses upon the evolution of the U.S. Route 2 corridor and the aesthetic/scenic qualities it contains.
3. Another primary concern is the protection of the Township's natural environmental features, protection of the more sensitive areas including wildlife and natural areas and maintaining the area's rural character.
4. The increasing lack of safe drinking water found in private wells throughout the Township is an issue which needs to be addressed. Accordingly, public water and sewer services allowing for cost effective land development are critical.
5. Some aquifers and water supply wells in the Township are contaminated. The Township is committed to providing public water and sewer service to those areas currently having contaminated drinking water wells.
6. The Township is concerned that those areas with contaminated drinking water wells will increase with further development. Therefore, this Master Plan intends to limit future development in those areas susceptible to ground water contamination. Only low density, residential uses that can support long- term sustainable on-site utilities will be allowed. All commercial uses should be connected to public water and sewer systems when available.

Public Input

Public input for this 2025 Master Plan Update was gathered over the course of several Planning Commission meetings and a public hearing. Additionally, public input was gathered during previous master planning efforts. In particular, the results of a Community Workshop held in March of 2015, along with the results of a Brainstorming Session facilitated in 2002 as part of the previous land use plan, serve as a basis for the Goals and Objectives and Future Land Use planning recommendations. A summary of public input is included below.

2015 Community Workshop

A Community Workshop was hosted by the Township Planning Commission in March of 2015. The workshop agenda covered four primary topics:

- Presentation of existing conditions
- Review of currently adopted goals and objectives
- U.S. 2 Corridor future land use planning
- Review of currently adopted future land use plan/map

Recognizing that the majority of the goals, objectives and future land use planning recommendations from the Township's previous land use master plan remain relevant, the Community Workshop focused principally as a review of the previous land use master plan to determine where changes were warranted. The workshop began with a presentation of the key findings of the Moran Township Profile (Chapter 2). This then led to a review of the currently adopted goals and objectives. Citizens and officials who attended the workshop were able to identify new goals and objectives and revisions to existing goals and objectives which were needed to address contemporary concerns. The focus of the workshop then turned to future land use planning. Aided by large aerial photography and property base maps, specific ideas for future land use, development and preservation along the U.S. 2 corridor were offered. Finally, the workshop concluded with an activity where the currently adopted Future Land Use Map was reviewed and where changes, including new land use classifications, were identified.

2002 Brainstorming Session

In December 2002, during the development of the previous land use master plan, the Township Planning Commission and Board were involved in a public brainstorming session regarding land uses. They were asked what images or things best defined the character of Moran Township. Their responses included:

- Natural Resources- forest/lake/views
- Mackinac Bridge
- Campgrounds
- Rural Character- slow pace, open space, unpaved roads, undeveloped lands, abandoned villages.
- History- French/Swedish/Indian
- Logging
- Fishing
- Wildlife-eagles
- Hunting
- The Rapids, The Dam
- CCC Camp along Brevort Road, trees planted along the road
- North County Trail
- Dunes/beaches
- Highway 2

- Blueberry picking
- Cranberries

They also described what uses or types of development they would like in the Township. The following is this listing:

Township Appearance and Character

- Not using snow fence along the dunes on U.S. 2 (use more attractive fencing, such as a wood split rail style).
- Tree preservation is important.

Housing

- Maintain existing lot sizes south of U.S. 2. Maintain views and character.
- Allow for more housing development north of U.S. 2.
- Have smaller lots along the north side of U.S. 2 for housing. Not just within the Primary Inland Growth zoning district boundaries.
- Restrict mobile homes to specified areas.
- Develop concentrated housing in the Primary Inland Growth zoning district. Maybe have multifamily with water and sewer.
- Divide the Visual Corridor and Recreation Coastal zoning district to have businesses on the north side of U.S. 2 and view preservation on the south side.

Historical, Scenic, and Natural Resources

- The history of the Township is not well defined. Make history available to the public.

Public Services

- Have water and sewer in the Primary Inland Growth district (IG-2) as soon as possible.
- Maintain the ambulance service.
- Maintain the current fire department services.

Parks/Recreation/Trails

- Trails on public land need to be maintained and information about them available. Currently the trails are not maintained.
- Work on development of historic trails. (Such as the old stagecoach line along U.S. 2. Concern was expressed about crossing private property.)
- Have a family type park. Cooperate with the schools in providing a family park.
- Have improved access to the lake.
- There are a lot of bikers along U.S. 2 in the summer; this is especially dangerous along dunes.
- MDOT should construct bike trails along U.S. 2 when they work on U.S. 2.

Economy

- Improve infrastructure in commercial areas. Reduce lot sizes to reflect municipal services.
- Support tourism.
- Have light industry for employment opportunities.

Transportation

- Have intersection lighting.
- Limit new driveways accessing U.S. 2.

Property Rights vs. The Public Interest

- Uniform setbacks for non-conforming lots.
- When should trees be removed?

Summary

After reviewing the data generated during the master planning process, along with the input received from citizens, Planning Commissions and Township Boards, it becomes clear that there are a number of key issues within the Township.

A paramount concern is protection of the natural environment and rural character of the Township. The Township wants to adequately prepare for future growth to protect these resources. With this in mind, the Master Plan Update addresses the dynamics of preserving the natural environment while providing for increased development and population growth.

A second and related issue that must be addressed is the scenic views of the Township. U.S. Highway 2 is the primary thoroughfare along the Township's coast. It is critical that the visual quality be protected throughout the entire Township.

A third concern is utilities in the southern portion of the Township. Presently, the southeastern portion of the Township is experiencing significant problems with drinking water due to excessive mineralization and contamination. A situation exists where both public water and sewer facilities are needed. This situation gains greater intensity as growth and development occur in the Township.

Chapter Five: Land Use Goals and Objectives

Goals and Objectives Defined

The Master Plan uses the Future Land Use Plan map and written statements to convey a vision for future development. But before a community can actively plan for its growth, it must first set certain goals (the ultimate purpose or intent of the Plan) and objectives (the means of attaining the goal) that define the boundaries of its needs and aspirations and, thus, establish a basis for formulation of the Future Land Use Plan. These goals and objectives must reflect the type of community desired and the kind of lifestyle its citizens wish to follow, given realistic economic and social constraints. Both the goals and objectives should be general enough to permit future flexibility, but not so general that they fail to give direction to public and private decision makers. The establishment of reasonable and realistic goals and objectives which are truly meaningful to the community is an essential part of the community planning process.

The prescribed goals and objectives are based upon the fundamental intent of the Master Plan Update to establish a sound land utilization strategy. This strategy allows reasonable development in the Township, while protecting the desires of the residents. In addition, this strategy supports a healthy and safe environment while meeting the land use needs of its current and future residents and visitors.

Goals and Objectives

Within this framework, the following goals and policies were established by the Moran Township Planning Commission to guide the future development of Moran Township.

Goal #1 - The Master Plan Update

The goal of this Master Plan Update is to provide a clear and orderly direction for land uses in the Township. This Plan provides guidance in preserving the physical characteristics and cultural amenities of the Township, while promoting compatible development patterns.

Planning Objectives of the Master Plan:

1. Support and maintain the present rural Upper Peninsula character of the community.
2. Provide a degree of flexibility, where appropriate, without sacrificing effectiveness when developing land use regulations.
3. Provide continuity in land utilization throughout the Township and provide an orderly and practical basis for land use.
4. Provide for adequate protection of the Township's environmental, cultural and historical features.
5. Protect ground water aquifers from human contamination.
6. Provide guidance for development and ensure that it occurs in locations where appropriate with respect to infrastructure capabilities.

7. Provide guidelines for uses that could potentially have an adverse effect on the Township and its looks, such as solar energy systems, wind energy systems, battery energy storage systems, wireless communication towers, and sexually oriented businesses.

Goal #2 - Residential Development

Housing opportunities in the Township are to be in a manner that reflects the differing housing needs of individuals and families. All housing environments are to be healthy, pleasant, and safe.

Planning Objectives for Residential Development:

1. Permit higher-density residential developments in areas where public water and sewer systems are readily available. Densities of residential areas are to be contingent upon the existing and anticipated Township public facilities with particular concern on the availability of water and sewer services.
2. Provide opportunities for a variety of residential type including single-family homes, townhouses, apartments, manufactured housing, and rural homesteads.
3. Minimize development in sensitive environmental and natural areas.
4. Promote residential development that is rural in character by efficiently using land areas, encouraging planned residential developments, and discouraging residential strip development.
5. Provide suitable buffers between residential and non-residential uses to maintain property values.
6. Seek ways to encourage the development of suitable housing for the elderly population and for low- and moderate-income households.
7. Ensure all residential developments have safe and appropriate methods of sustainable, long-term sewage and drinking water sources.
8. Provide gas, electric, and recreational services and facilities for every development.
9. Preserve the views of Lake Michigan and the Mackinac Bridge. Ensure that land uses do not interfere with the scenic vistas and visual aesthetics along U.S. Highway 2.

Goal #3 - Non-Residential Development

Commercial, office, and industrial uses are to be built and operated in a manner that is compatible with the rural characteristics of the Township.

Planning Objectives for Non-Residential development:

1. Have all non-residential establishments maintain a visual image supportive of the rural and environmental characteristics of the Township.

2. Locate non-residential development near the existing and anticipated population centers of St. Ignace and Brevort. In the more urbanized southeastern portion of the Township nearest St. Ignace, municipal water and sewer systems should serve non-residential developments.
3. Regulate temporary uses of excavation and their restoration for the health, safety and welfare of the Township residents. Enforce measures to control sediment runoff and other environmentally harmful elements. Have excavation operations be visually screened from road rights-of-way and residential properties.
4. Maintain the existing rural character of the Township and support the visual aesthetic quality of the natural local landscape.
5. Minimize excessive and obtrusive signage, lighting and related elements.
6. Implement programs to minimize the possibilities of improper and illegal methods of sewage and garbage disposal, including back lot and landfills. Sanitary sewage and water supply construction permits are to be obtained prior to issue of the Township Zoning and Building Permits.
7. Encourage utility easements to be maintained and operated in a manner compatible with the health, safety and welfare of the Township. Where appropriate, the clearing of vegetation and use of herbicides is strongly discouraged and prohibited wherever possible.
8. Have industrial enterprises submit data describing all toxic elements, including hazardous and radioactive materials, utilized on site before determining the appropriateness of the land use.
9. Preserve the views of Lake Michigan and the Mackinac Bridge. Ensure non-residential uses do not interfere with the scenic vistas and visual aesthetics along U.S. Highway 2.
10. Reduce the potential of incompatible non-residential and residential land uses being placed together, such as sexually oriented businesses and residential development. Where compatible non-residential and residential land uses are adjacent, minimize negative impacts through the use of buffer devices such as walls, landscape areas, and transitional areas.
11. Encourage the clustering of non-residential uses while discouraging spot development and sprawl.

Goal #4 - Open Space and Natural Areas

The environmental and natural features in Moran Township are unique to the area and provide for abundance of scenic views, magnitude of recreation options, and sustainability of wildlife. These features are critical to the area and to the Upper Peninsula. Preserving them is one of the Township's highest priorities.

Planning Objectives for Open Space and Natural Areas:

1. Evaluate developments to understand their effects upon the surrounding natural environment.
2. Recognize the highly complex and sensitive nature of the natural environment. Understand the direct and indirect ramifications that can diminish and debilitate these areas as a result of poorly planned development.
3. Protect geographically depressed areas including marshes and wetlands which are critical to the natural and cultural environments of the Township as they serve to replenish ground water resources, store flood waters, and provide wildlife habitats.
4. Regulate drainage, filling and development within or near watercourses to ensure protection of valuable and sensitive environmental features and minimize pollution and flooding potentials.
5. Preserve and conserve natural areas and woodlots so that they will be available for use by future generations of Moran Township.
6. Monitor the rural and natural features along the U.S. 2 corridor in light of the heavy traffic it receives. Protect these features whenever possible.
7. Support land purchases by public agencies, private conservation groups, conservation easements, and cooperative efforts between pertinent public offices and/or private property owners to protect the Township's natural features and heritage.
8. Discourage the extension of utility services through special environmental areas.
9. Restrict outdoor lighting to protect the visual and environmental impacts on the nighttime experience and wildlife habitats.

Goal #5 - Public Utilities

The development and expansion of public utilities are to be in a manner that meets the present health, safety, and general welfare needs of the Township and the anticipated needs for the future. Public utilities should not be used as a vehicle for sprawl.

Planning Objectives for Public Utilities:

1. Recognize the benefits of the City of St. Ignace's proximity to the Township, the municipal services it provides, and the value of working with the City of St. Ignace for expansion of these municipal services into the Township.
2. Discourage the extension of public utilities into environmentally sensitive areas and areas not planned for development.

3. Ensure the development of utility services occurs at a rate that will not cause undesirable growth. Guide growth at a desirable rate as detailed in the Township's Water and Sewer Master Plan.
4. Implement the Water and Sewer Master Plan as soon as financial resources allow.
5. Connect non-residential developments to the municipal water and sewer systems. Have developers extend municipal water and sewer systems across the full width of their property in accordance with the State Approved Township Water and Sewer Master Plan.
6. Allow only lot sizes greater than 5-acres to occur outside of the municipal water and sewer service areas. Parcels with ample open space should maintain long-term, sustainable on-site utilities.

Goal #6 - Transportation

The development and improvement of roads are to be in a manner that meets the present health, safety, and general welfare needs of the Township and the anticipated needs for the future. Construction of new roads should not be used as a tool for sprawl.

Planning Objectives for Transportation:

1. Protect high quality scenic views and preserve critical natural features during road expansions or improvements.
2. Encourage non-motorized transportation systems. Work with local, county and State partners in the implementation of the Governor's Iron Belle Trail system.
3. Embrace context sensitive design road standards. Support different design standards for different roads. Know that roads in rural areas should differ from roads in urban areas with respect to the width, placement, and paving.
4. Be an active partner with road projects. Involve the public for road improvement projects.
5. Support mass transit programs.
6. Preserve existing tree canopies.
7. Promote access management.

Chapter Six: Future Land Use Plan

Introduction

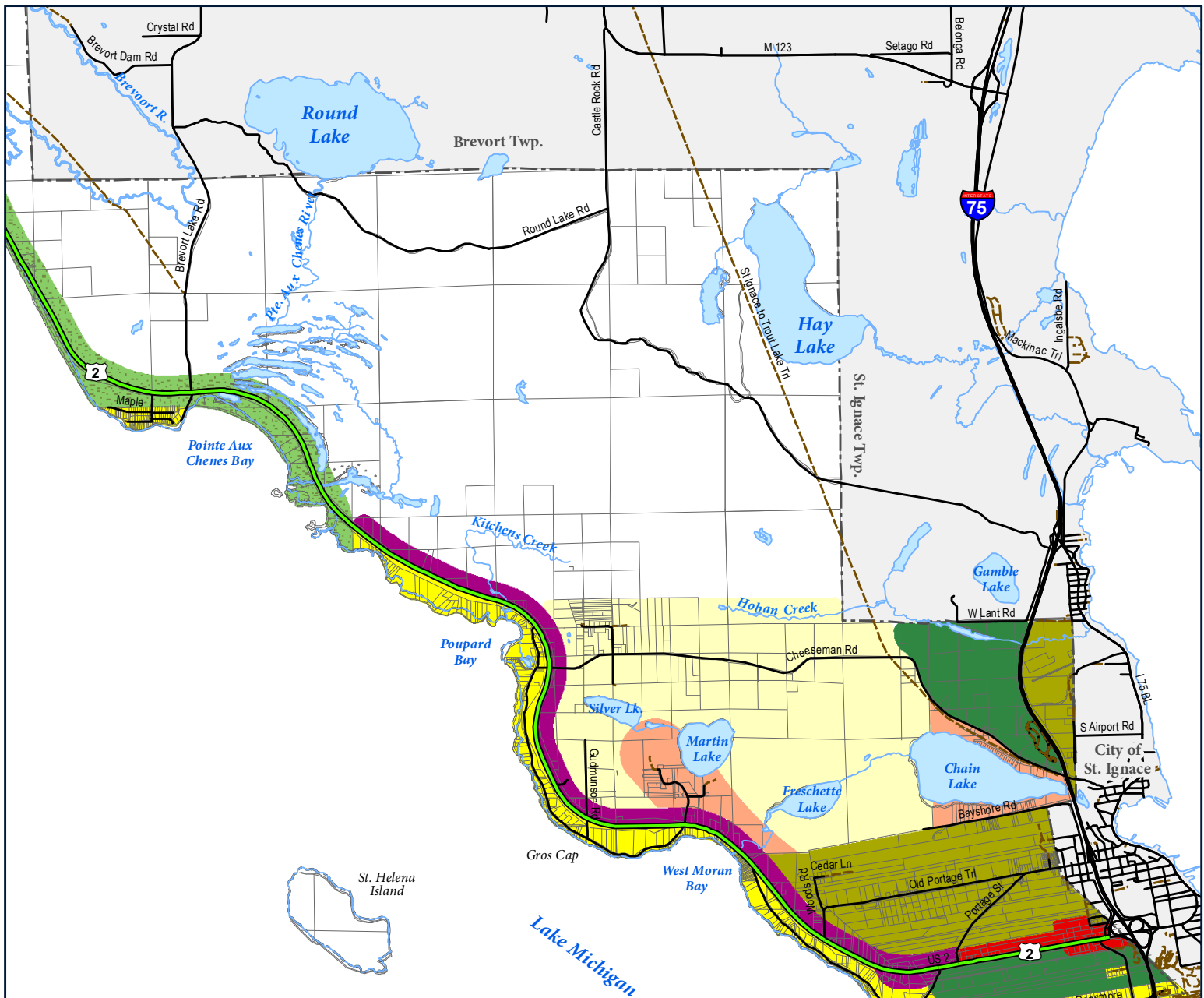
What does Moran Township want to look like in twenty years? The Planning Commission has used the information gathered in this document, along with public input, to develop this Future Land Use Plan – a depiction of how land use patterns in Moran Township will look in the year 2045. This Future Land Use Plan is intended to provide the necessary guidelines for making development, zoning, community facility, and capital improvement decisions.

The Future Land Use Plan consists of two components: a Future Land Use Map and a Future Land Use Narrative. The **Future Land Use Map** establishes and divides the Township into twelve future land use classifications. Although the map does include property lines for reference purposes, it is meant to be a generalized depiction of future land use classifications and is not intended to explicitly follow property lines. The Future Land Use Narrative describes each of the twelve future land use classifications, including their intended character, intensity and types of land uses allowed.




















A summary of the generalized future land use distribution within the Township is provided in **Table 11**. Reflective of the Township’s vast forested lands, the largest future land use classification is Forest/Recreation, covering three-quarters of the Township’s land area. The next largest future land use classification is the Ozark Agricultural Community, covering approximately 8% of the Township’s land area.

**Table 11: Generalized Future Land Use Distribution
Moran Township, 2025**

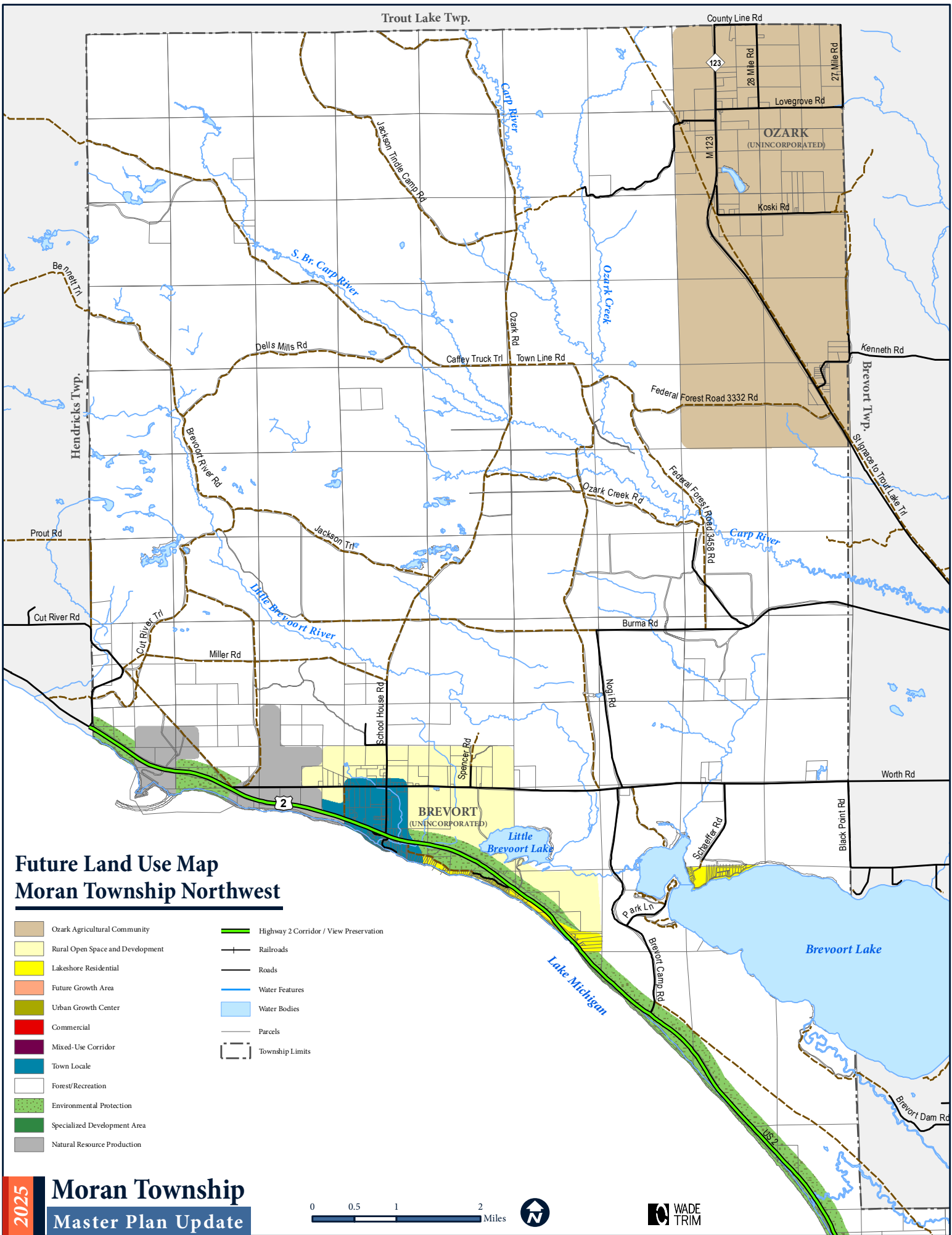
Future Land Use Classification	Approximate Acreage	Approximate Percentage of Township
Ozark Agricultural Community	6,450	8%
Rural Open Space and Development	5,050	6%
Lakeshore Residential	1,700	2%
Future Growth Area	900	1%
Urban Growth Center	1,750	2%
Commercial	200	<1%
Mixed-Use Corridor	800	1%
Town Locale	450	1%
Forest/Recreation	63,750	75%
Environmental Protection	2,150	3%
Specialized Development Area	1,100	1%
Natural Resource Production	800	1%
Totals	85,100 (ac.) / 132.97 (sq. mi.)	100%



Future Land Use Map Moran Township Southeast

- | | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|---|--|
|  | Ozark Agricultural Community |  | Highway 2 Corridor / View Preservation |
|  | Rural Open Space and Development |  | Railroads |
|  | Lakeshore Residential |  | Roads |
|  | Future Growth Area |  | Water Features |
|  | Urban Growth Center |  | Water Bodies |
|  | Commercial |  | Parcels |
|  | Mixed-Use Corridor |  | Township Limits |
|  | Town Locale | | |
|  | Forest/Recreation | | |
|  | Environmental Protection | | |
|  | Specialized Development Area | | |
|  | Natural Resource Production | | |

Land Owned
by Utility
Companies



Future Land Use Narrative

A detailed description of each future land use classification is provided below.

Ozark Agricultural Community

The Ozark Community is an agriculturally based community that is actively involved with farming operations. The history, nature, and charm of this community are unique in the Township. The visual quality of the area is spectacular.

The remoteness of this area protects it from most development trends. The intention of this land use classification is to maintain existing agricultural operations and lands, while allowing for growth. Future development should be compatible with existing farming operations and maintain the current visual experience throughout the Ozark community. Density allocation in this area should be one unit for every five acres.

Rural Open Space and Development

These are the rural lands. They surround the more urbanized areas, but are not as suited for development. Generally, these lands have natural and cultural elements that present obstacles to development. These areas have wetlands or wetland characteristics. Some lands contain endangered/threatened species and habitats. Long-term protection of these features is critical to maintaining the diverse natural heritage of the Township. The natural characteristics of these areas are similar to the surrounding public forestlands.

These areas have limited vehicle access reinforcing a very limited low-density development policy, such as having one unit on ten acres. Water and sewer services are not needed and should not be provided. Road improvements should be minimal. Infrastructure improvements should only be done on an “as needed” basis, and not be used to encourage growth.

In some instances, residential development may occur on smaller lots that are clustered together. These developments may have reduced setbacks and lot size requirements if their design preserves significant natural features, such as wetlands or endangered habitats.

Lakeshore Residential

Lakefront homes and cottages dominate this future land use category, most of which are located south of U.S. 2 along the Lake Michigan shoreline. Many of these residential areas were developed and subdivided before zoning regulations were in place, resulting in small lots with minimal road frontages. Historically, these areas along Lake Michigan (as well as a small area on the north side of Brevoort Lake) have generally been used for vacation or seasonal use. Over time, some of these cottages have been upgraded into year-round residences. Another noted trend is that several adjacent lots are being combined into one, older cottages are demolished, and new larger dwellings are being constructed. However, there are some cases where a large dwelling is constructed on one small lot, making the siting of well and septic system difficult, as well as difficulty in meeting the required zoning setbacks. Where two or more adjacent lots are under the same ownership, the owner should be required to combine the lots into one lot for building purposes. It is anticipated that single-family dwellings and cottages would be the primary uses, but existing vacation resorts should continue to exist.

Future Growth Area

These places are growing, but at a slower pace. These locations are not as accessible as the Urban Growth Center, but are adjacent to it. They are desirable due to their close proximity to natural features and service areas. These properties play a critical role in providing the visual landscape and wildlife habitat.

At this time, there are no public water or sewer services available. Although no water or sewer services are planned, it would be possible to provide services or their technological equivalent. These services would be needed if rapid growth occurred at a density higher than one acre or to protect the sensitive natural features.

In some instances, residential development may occur on smaller lots that are clustered together. These developments may have reduced setbacks and lot size requirements if their design preserves significant natural features, such as wetlands.

Urban Growth Center

People live and work here. In the next twenty years, this area will continue to grow. It is north of U.S. 2 and adjacent to an existing populated area, making it very accessible. Properties in this location are intended to have water and sewer services.

This is a mixed-use environment. Limited commercial, institutional and light industrial uses may be allowed if appropriately integrated with adjacent residential areas. Residential uses range from single-family detached homes to duplexes, townhouses, and apartments. The average density allocation is four units an acre. Higher densities may be needed to accommodate denser structures, such as townhouse and apartment buildings. Lower densities may be needed in areas not being served by public services.

Commercial uses are limited to small scale retail and service operations. These operations generally serve the near-by residents. Careful site plan review is needed to ensure impacts on adjacent properties are minimal. Commercial operations should not detract from neighboring uses. In some instances, they may enhance residential areas by allowing for mixed-use developments. However, more intense commercial uses need to be buffered from residential uses. One use, in particular, that is not appropriate within the urban growth center is sexually oriented business.

Industrial uses are limited to light manufacturing (prepackaged goods), storage and warehousing. These uses provide employment for residents. Special use permits are needed to ensure they will not negatively impact the surrounding uses. These uses are to be buffered from nearby residential and commercial uses.

Commercial

Located along U.S. 2, just west of the I-75 interchange, this land use category includes the land area occupied by retail uses offering commodities which attract a more regional clientele and are traditionally dependent on major thoroughfare traffic. Commercial uses may include hotels, markets, florists, personal service establishments, retail stores, restaurants and automobile related service establishments. Professional office establishments are also appropriate. Other non-residential uses, such as recreational facilities and institutions, may be allowed within this area.

The size of commercial development sites should be based upon several variables. Development should occur on sites that are proportional (not too narrow and deep or too wide and shallow) to provide

adequate space for parking, setbacks, and loading/unloading operations. Commercial sites should also contain sufficient open space areas to not only provide opportunities for landscaping which improves site aesthetics, but also to accommodate infrastructure needs (ground water recharge areas, on-site storage of storm water, septic field areas, etc.). Similarly, sites must contain sufficient frontage on U.S. 2 to address sound access management principles, such as driveway spacing standards.

Mixed-Use Corridor

Lands along the north side of U.S. 2 in the southeastern portion of the Township are included within the Mixed-Use Corridor future land use classification. This segment of the U.S. 2 corridor does not feature the dense concentration of commercial land uses which are found adjacent to the I-75 interchange. Rather, this corridor segment exhibits a rural character and features a mixture of land uses which include residential, commercial, industrial, recreational and open spaces. This designation recognizes the Township's desire to discourage the development of intensive strip-commercial uses and industrial uses, but allow for limited commercial, institutional and light industrial uses to occur within a rural setting.

Non-residential development sites must provide adequate space for parking, setbacks, and loading/unloading operations. They should also contain sufficient open space areas to not only provide opportunities for landscaping which improves site aesthetics, but also to accommodate infrastructure needs (ground water recharge areas, on-site storage of storm water, septic field areas, etc.). Non-residential development sites must contain sufficient frontage on U.S. 2 to address sound access management principles, such as driveway spacing standards.

Town Locale

This is the Village of Brevort area. Although it is rural in character, it can support future growth. This area is the Township's westernmost settlement consisting of restaurants, motels and limited retail establishments. Accessibility is good. It is situated upon U.S. 2 and supported by Ozark Road and Worth Road. While extension of the City of St. Ignace utility services to this area is highly impractical and cost prohibitive, alternatives such as community wells and sewage systems can accommodate increased growth and higher densities.

Like the Urban Growth Center, this is a mixed-use area. Where services can provide for them, higher residential density, commercial businesses, and industrial operations can occur. Where they are not available, a density allocation of one unit an acre is appropriate.

Forest/Recreation

This classification incorporates the majority of the Township. The vast amount of forested land provides the recreational amenities and visual scenery that define the Township. Land in this area is best suited to long-term protection through public ownership by the U.S. Forest Service, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, or other conservation organizations.

Where private property ownership exists, the Planning Commission and Township should encourage the long-term protection of the natural environment through conservation easements, property exchanges with lands outside this classification, and sale or donation of the property to governmental agencies or conservation minded organizations. Any residential development that does occur should be restricted to extremely low-density use. An appropriate residential density allocation for this area, if needed, would be one unit for every forty acres. In the northwestern portion of the Township, some Federal and State-owned lands may be used for low-impact agricultural operations through lease agreements.

Exterior lighting shall be strictly controlled to protect the nighttime environment and the overhead views of the night sky. There should be minimum road and infrastructure improvements. Water and sewer facilities should not be allowed to be extended into the forest/recreation area.

Environmental Protection

The Environmental Protection land use classification's primary objective is to preserve the critical natural resources, shoreline environment, water quality and scenic vistas along the U.S. 2 corridor within the western portion of the Township. Presently, this area of U.S. 2 is characterized by the presence of wetlands, forests, steep slopes, sand dunes, beaches, rivers, riparian areas, and wildlife corridors. Given these natural characteristics, lands within this category should be preserved and protected. Development within this area should be limited to low impact educational and recreational uses such as nature trails, hunting and fishing. This future land use classification would allow for extremely low density residential development and does not intend to restrict privately owned parcels from development. Rather, the intent is to maintain a set of regulations, such as natural feature setbacks, in order to protect fragile natural environments from environmental degradation.

Specialized Development Areas

Two locations in the Township are recognized as having unique environmental characteristics which will impact future development; therefore, they have been designed as Specialized Development Areas. One area is located north of Cheeseman Road, west of I-75. This area has steep slopes which are not as conducive to development. It is unlikely or unnecessary for water and sewer services to be provided in this area. The primary use for parcels within this area is single-family residential at a density of one unit for every five acres. In addition, this area may be appropriate for wind towers, landfills, and communication towers with approval of a special use permit. The special use permit process should be used to minimize the visual impacts of these land uses.

The second Specialized Development Area is located on the south side of U.S. 2, generally between Point LaBarbe Road and Boulevard Drive, which includes the St. Ignace Golf & Country Club and adjacent undeveloped lands. This area features steep slopes and offers panoramic vistas from U.S. 2 toward Lake Michigan and the Mackinac Bridge. The Township should proactively preserve this area to ensure that the scenic views are not lost to development. This is not a place for tall or large size structures. Structures higher than two stories are not appropriate in this location. Billboards, communication towers, wind towers, and test towers and cell towers are not appropriate and should not be visible to those who traverse along U.S. 2.

Natural Resource Production

This category is intended to accommodate lands owned by large-scale sand and gravel excavation enterprises anticipated to remain as such for the near and distant future. Excavation type land uses are transitional in nature and do not represent the final end-use. Therefore all excavating uses need to have re-grading and re-vegetation plans to restore the site to a condition that will allow future development to occur. The on-going monitoring of the gravel operation to assure compliance with plans is also needed.

After the lands have been restored, making future development possible, that area should be studied to determine an appropriate density. The density allocation should be dependent on the type of services that are going to be provided, the physical condition of the lands, and marketability.

A planned residential development that takes advantage of access to Lake Michigan and U.S. 2 may be appropriate. All development should be planned and designed using the Goals and Objectives listed in this Master Plan.

Other Planning Recommendations

Highway 2 Corridor/View Preservation

The entire U.S. Highway 2 corridor should be thought of as a viewing area, and not as a development area. The splendid and unique panoramic vistas and sights U.S. 2 provides for residents and tourists, depicts the essence of the Upper Peninsula character and beauty. The Township should proactively preserve this corridor to ensure that the scenic views are not lost to development. This is not a place for tall or large size structures. Structures higher than two stories are not appropriate in this location. Billboards, communication towers, wind towers, and test towers and cell towers are not appropriate and should not be visible to those who pass through this corridor.

The area south of U.S. 2 is what residents and visitors first see when coming from the Lower Peninsula. This area serves as the visual introduction to the region. There are beautiful panoramic views of Lake Michigan, the shoreline, Green Island, St. Helena Island, and the Mackinac Bridge. Structures should not obstruct these views.

Exterior lighting shall be strictly controlled to protect the nighttime environment and the overhead views of the night sky. Any and all development (residential and commercial) that occurs on U.S. 2 should comply with the access management provisions as described later in this Chapter.

Natural Resource Protection Plan

As expressed in Chapter 2, the natural environment in Moran Township is unique and significant. Additional policies regarding the development of these areas and their surrounding areas are warranted. Development should be contingent upon, although not necessarily limited to, the following:

- Any development within 500 feet of Lake Michigan or any water body in the Township should be scrutinized to determine its impact on the natural environment. Specific attention should be given to vegetation, wildlife, erosion, traffic, runoff, noise levels, soil composition, visual character, and water quality. A natural buffer area along Lake Michigan should be maintained. Only the minimal removal of natural vegetation should be allowed.
- Any development within 500 feet of a natural or archeological feature should be scrutinized to determine its impact on the natural environment. Specific attention should be given to vegetation, wildlife, erosion, traffic, runoff, noise levels, soil composition, visual character, and water quality. Natural buffer areas between the natural or archeological features and proposed development should be maintained. Specific natural or archeological features within the Township include, but are not limited to:
 - Pointe Aux Chenes Research Natural Area
 - Carp River Wild and Scenic River
 - North Country National Scenic Trail
 - Brevort Lake/Lake Michigan Critical Dunes Area
 - Little Brevort Lake State Scenic Area
 - Ottawa Indian Village

- High Rollway
 - Gros Cap Cemetery
 - Village of Gros Cap
 - St. Helena Island
- Any development of land containing or adjacent to wetlands should be scrutinized to determine their impacts on the natural environment. Developments should not affect surface and ground water quality, or other wetland areas. The filling or dredging of wetland areas should be kept to a minimum. Natural buffer areas between these areas and any development should be maintained. Only minimal removal of natural vegetation should be allowed.
 - Any development of sensitive lands should be scrutinized to determine the impacts on the natural environment. Sensitive lands include areas having: grades equal to or greater than 33%, river and stream banks, high risk erosion areas, bluffs and cliffs, sand dunes, and islands. Natural buffer areas between these areas and any development should be maintained. Only the minimal removal of natural vegetation should be allowed.

Transportation Plan

The transportation needs of any community cannot be ignored. In the broadest sense, a transportation system provides for all forms of mobility. Vehicular mobility, however, is the predominant method of movement for residents, businesses, and visitors within Moran Township. Although recreation trails are not the predominant method of travel, they have great importance to the residents and visitors to the Township. The Township’s transportation network, like others throughout the State, has been shaped by the fundamental necessities of today, including employment, recreation, schools, shopping, and tourism. The transportation system requires attention in order to maintain an efficient and safe system for everyone.

All roads and streets (and their improvements) in Moran Township should be thought of as an enhancement to the community and not as detractor. Streets should be designed to reflect “context sensitive design” objectives, whenever possible. Context sensitive design is a movement towards flexible road design instead of conforming to the “one size fits all” philosophy that currently exists when streets are designed. Design standards for roads serving the Urban Growth Area should differ from roads serving rural areas. Generally, roads should be designed to meet their location and usage needs, and not their potential full capacity needs. Road should be designed so that they look like they belong in this specific location.

Rights-of-way for all street classifications should be the minimum necessary to accommodate the roadway, transit-related improvements, sidewalks and utilities necessary for existing and planned development.

U.S. 2

During the summer months, vehicular traffic congestion can become a crucial problem. The large number of tourists to the Township and to the Upper Peninsula creates a steady flow of traffic along U.S. 2. This route is the Township’s main thoroughfare, and many businesses and residents depend on it for their access. This is the area where access management is needed the most.

U.S. 2 extends 26 miles through the Township. The majority of it is two-lane with five-lane stretches in the Urban Growth Area and Town Locale. MDOT has stated the segment between these areas is at capacity and improvements are needed. MDOT's policy is to preserve the existing road system while addressing safety and operational issues. Consequently, MDOT has been using passing lanes as ways to alleviate vehicle congestion. This approach has been successful in the Upper Peninsula and throughout Michigan.

The Township should support and endorse MDOT's policy of using passing lanes instead of widening the roads. This current policy allows for relief in traffic, while preserving the existing character of the U.S. 2 roadside. A four or five lane highway through the Township is not representative of Moran's or the Upper Peninsula's rural character. U.S. 2 should continue to remain a two-lane road with passing lanes, except in the Urban Growth and Town Locale Areas.

Local Streets and Roads

Local roads and streets provide safe and convenient access to homeowners, businesses, employees, and service vehicles. Roads should be carefully planned and designed. The effects on the user, the pedestrian, and the property along the roadside should be considered during road projects. All road designs should:

- Avoid difficult driveway approaches by providing adequate spacing between access points on opposite sides of the roadway.
- Avoid too many intersections connecting with major streets.
- Provide safe intersections with short curb radii to improve pedestrian access.
- Promote consolidated driveways and interconnections between developments whenever possible.
- For drainage control, curb and gutters should only be used in the urbanized areas, while ditches are used elsewhere.

Access Management

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

- Have ample spacing requirements between driveways
- Restrict the number of lots fronting on busy roads
- Regulate the location, spacing, and design of driveways

- Encourage shared access to parcels
- Separate driveways from intersections
- Restrict turning movements into and out of driveways
- Encourage front or rear access drives
- Connect streets, roads, and access easements whenever possible
- Promote internal connections

Trails

Moran Township, like the rest of the Upper Peninsula, is known for recreation. An important component of recreation is trails. These trails, especially ones used by snowmobilers, bikers, and hikers, attract tourists and are part of the Township's economic base.

Since the majority of the Township is in public ownership, there are many trails available to the public. It is estimated that there are over 67 miles of trails for off-road recreational vehicle use. There are over 55 miles of trails for snowmobile use and 37 miles of trails for hiking. Currently, there is a fat-tire bike trail at Silver Mountain, with upcoming expansion being presently worked on, in addition to people frequently biking in the right-of-way of U.S. 2.

A recent initiative of the Governor of Michigan is the development of Michigan's Iron Belle Trail. The Iron Belle Trail is a new hiking and bicycling route connecting Ironwood (in the Upper Peninsula) and Belle Isle (in Southeastern Michigan) which showcases Michigan's spectacular natural, cultural and historic resources. It builds upon Michigan's extensive trail network, linking many existing trails to provide a signature "Pure Michigan" experience. There are two "routes" of the Iron Belle Trail: a 791-mile bicycle route; and, a 1,273-mile hiking route. Moran Township is one of the only municipalities within the entire State that includes portions of both routes within its jurisdiction. These routes are:

- **U.S. 2 Biking Route (Part of the Iron Belle Bicycle Trail).** The U.S. 2 Biking Route has received official designation as part of the United States Bicycle Route System, spanning more than 600 miles from Michigan to the state of Washington. Presently, the route within Moran Township consists of the paved shoulder of U.S. 2. In previous Township Master Plans, a separated, paved biking trail has been proposed along U.S. 2 for the purposes of enhanced bicycle safety. The Township should proactively work with the State of Michigan in future designs of U.S. 2 to ensure that appropriate accommodations are made for bicycles, whether it consists of a separated trail or on-road trail.
- **North Country National Scenic Trail (Part of the Iron Belle Hiking Trail).** An existing trail project in the Township is the North Country National Scenic Trail. The North Country National Scenic Trail was established by Congress to create a national hiking trail

extending from the State of Vermont to the State of North Dakota. The trail is patterned after the Appalachian National Trail. This initiative provides for a hiking trail with a 1,000-foot buffer zone of natural habitat along the side of the trail. This hiking corridor is to be protected in its natural state for future generations. In Moran Township, the U.S. Forest Service and a system of volunteers oversee the North Country Trail. The trail starts in St. Ignace, follows an old railroad grade along the north side of Chain Lake, crosses through the southwest corner of St. Ignace Township to re-enter Moran Township south of Castle Road, then follows along the south side of the road and exits Moran Township after crossing the Brevort River to cut across the extreme south west corner of Brevort Township. The trail re- enters Moran Township, skirts the south and west shores of Big Brevort Lake, then angles northeasterly to cross the Carp River before exiting the Township to continue on its way towards Lake Superior and eventually North Dakota. It should be noted that the trail impacts private lands only along the north side of Chain Lake in Moran Township. Moran Township should continue to endorse this project.

Recreation

The majority of Township, about 80%, is publicly owned. This vast amount of land provides great opportunities for recreation. Popular activities include snowmobiling, fishing, hiking, ATVs, camping, hunting, and the disc golf course and fat tire bike trails at Silver Mountain. The Moran Township Parks and Recreation Plan describes the recreational needs for the Township. The listed projects were developed from public input. Since these projects reflect citizen's demands, the Township has endorsed the Parks and Recreation Plan. When the Township Planning Commission and/or Board has an opportunity to help finalize a listed project, they should pursue it.

Special Uses

Certain uses that have unique characteristics or more intensive natures require additional consideration prior to their approval. These uses have the potential to impact neighboring properties and the entire community. Decisions for their approval are more discretionary in nature and are made to ensure impacts are as minimal as possible. The purpose of designating special uses is to allow practical latitude for property owners or developers to use a parcel of land while maintaining protection of the health, safety, comfort, convenience and general welfare of neighbors and the community at large. Uses that require additional attention include, but are not limited to: PUD's, automobile service stations and commercial garages, drive-in restaurants, junkyards, landfills, mobile home parks, "Echo" housing, wind energy conversion systems, solar energy systems, battery energy storage systems, telecommunication towers, and sexually oriented businesses.

Chapter Seven: Implementation and Zoning Plan

Introduction

The overall intent of this Master Plan Update is to identify and develop the most appropriate land use strategies for meeting Township needs in a manner which supports the health, safety, and welfare of the current and future residents. These strategies are embodied within this Plan both graphically and in text. However, without the implementation of these strategies, this Master Plan becomes nothing more than a document upon a shelf. A Master Plan is a statement of policy and is ineffective unless acted upon. There are a number of avenues that Moran Township can follow to implement this land use plan.

Before implementation can occur, it is critical that the appropriate Township governmental bodies recognize and support this Master Land Use Plan. Once the Plan is adopted, it is considered official and should be used by the Planning Commission, Township Board and other Township bodies as a guide for future planning and resolving conflicts. Implementation of the Plan may be realized by actively:

- Regulating the use and manner of development of property through up-to-date reasonable zoning controls, subdivision regulations, and building and housing codes
- Assuring community wide knowledge, understanding, support, and approval of the Plan
- Providing a program of capital improvements and adequate, economical public services by using available governmental financing techniques to encourage desired land development or redevelopment
- Reviewing the plan periodically (at least every five years) to evaluate its consistency with changing trends and citizen desires

This Chapter discusses further the strategies for implementing the goals, objectives and land use recommendations of this Master Plan.

Zoning Plan

Zoning regulations are adopted under the local police power granted by the State for the purpose of promoting community health, safety, and general welfare. Such regulations have been strongly supported by the Michigan courts, as well as by the U.S. Supreme Court. Zoning consists of dividing the community into districts, for the purpose of establishing density of population and regulating the use of land and buildings, their height and bulk, and the proportion of a lot that may be occupied by them. Regulations in different kinds of districts may be different. However, regulations within the same district must be consistent throughout the community.

The intent of zoning is to assure the orderly development of the community. Zoning is also employed as a means of protecting property values and other public and private investments. Because of the impact that zoning can have on the use of land and related services, it should be based on a comprehensive long range community plan.

Zoning is an effective tool not only for the implementation of the Plan, but also benefits individual property owners. It protects homes and investments against the potential harmful intrusion of business

and industry into residential neighborhoods; requires the spacing of buildings far enough apart to assure adequate light and air; prevents the overcrowding of land; facilitates the economical provision of essential public facilities; and aids in conservation of essential natural resources.

The Moran Township Zoning Ordinance, with an effective date of April 1, 2007, is a regulatory tool that guides land use and development within the Township. As stipulated by the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, Public Act 110 of 2006, as amended, the Zoning Ordinance must be based upon a Master Plan. Therefore, this Master Plan, by setting forth the long term vision of Moran Township, provides the basis for the Township Zoning Ordinance, which contains the rules that govern the path to that vision. As required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, the following is an explanation of the relationship between the future land use classifications presented in this Master Plan and the zoning districts established in the Moran Township Zoning Ordinance. Potential revisions to the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map, based on the recommendations of this Master Plan Update, are also outlined.

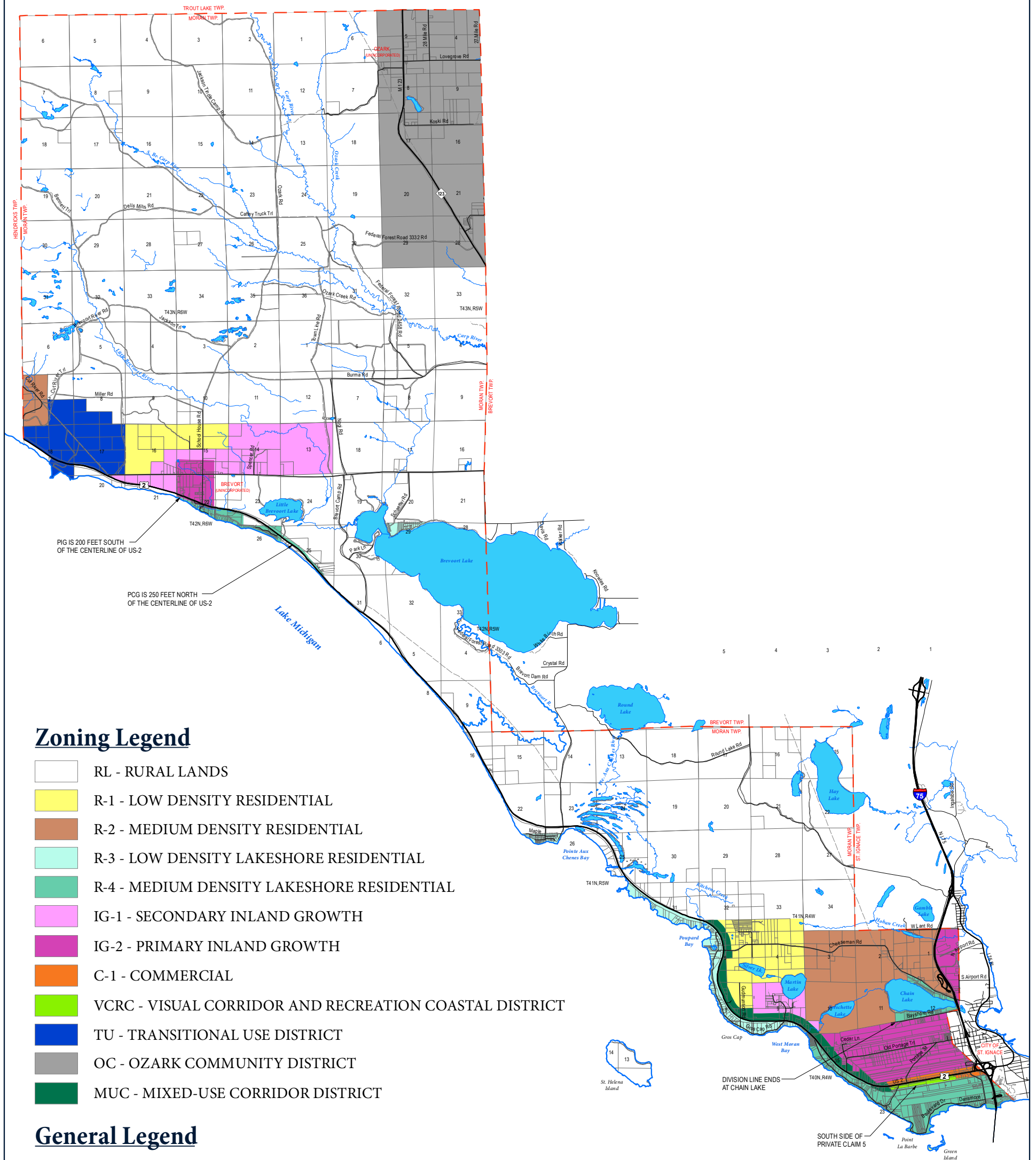
Existing Zoning Districts

The Moran Township Zoning Ordinance and its official **Zoning Map** has established a total of 11 zoning districts, as follows. Taken from the Zoning Ordinance, an excerpt of the intent statement for each zoning district is also listed.

- **RL – Rural Lands District.** The Rural Lands District is intended to acknowledge and preserve the extensive natural and environmentally sensitive properties that presently exist within the Township and are critical in establishing and maintaining the overall character of Moran Township and its economic wellbeing. This land is intended to remain in the present state with minimal disturbances and very low residential densities. Most of this land is expected to be publicly owned.
- **R-1 – Low Density Residential District.** The R-1 Low Density Residential District is intended to acknowledge and preserve the extensive natural and environmentally sensitive properties that exist within the Township, while allowing for residential development that is compatible with the surrounding areas at relatively low densities.
- **R-2 – Medium Density Residential District.** The R-2 Medium Density Residential District is intended to preserve natural and environmentally sensitive properties while allowing development. The Township recognizes the District’s value as a low-density development area during present times and its potential increase in density in the future based on growth trends.
- **R-3 – Low Density Lakeshore Residential District.** The R-3 Low Density Lakeshore Residential District is established to provide opportunities for land development in a manner that protects and generally preserves the overall existing character of Moran Township. There is a natural affinity for human beings to be drawn to the coastal environments that this District offers in the way of dune formations, Lake Michigan access, and splendid panoramic views. To fully deny access or use of these areas would be overly restrictive to the respective landowners and as such, this District provides regulatory guidelines that allow for the use of these land parcels in a manner that minimizes disturbance to these highly sensitive environmental ecosystems while acknowledging the potential for development.

Adopted Zoning Map Moran Township, Mackinac County, Michigan

Effective Date: September 3, 2005
Amended Through: December 6, 2023



Zoning Legend

- RL - RURAL LANDS
- R-1 - LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- R-2 - MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- R-3 - LOW DENSITY LAKESHORE RESIDENTIAL
- R-4 - MEDIUM DENSITY LAKESHORE RESIDENTIAL
- IG-1 - SECONDARY INLAND GROWTH
- IG-2 - PRIMARY INLAND GROWTH
- C-1 - COMMERCIAL
- VCRC - VISUAL CORRIDOR AND RECREATION COASTAL DISTRICT
- TU - TRANSITIONAL USE DISTRICT
- OC - OZARK COMMUNITY DISTRICT
- MUC - MIXED-USE CORRIDOR DISTRICT

General Legend

- Federal or State Highways
- Public Roads
- Two Track Roads
- ++ Railroads
- Township Boundary
- Lakes
- Creeks, Streams & Rivers
- Parcel Boundary Lines



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- **R-4 – Medium Density Lakeshore Residential District.** The R-4 Medium Density Lakeshore Residential District is established to provide opportunities for land development along certain areas of the Township's Lake Michigan shoreline in a manner that allows for increased land use density along the lakeshore. The intent of this District is to provide for higher density coastal development without sacrificing the health, safety, and welfare of Township residents, visitors, and natural character.
- **IG-1 – Secondary Inland Growth District.** The IG-1 Secondary Inland Growth District is established to provide opportunities for land development in a manner that protects and generally preserves the overall existing character of Moran Township. These areas are considered to be suitable primarily for rural residential development and provisions contained within this District support a continuation of its rural character as these sections of the Township lack traditional suburban facilities including public sewer, water, and extensive roadway facilities. While development is permitted in this District, this development does not take priority over the natural resources of the District and development shall be based upon the conservation of these areas and the maintenance of the health, safety and welfare of area residents. The District serves to encourage the orderly transition of land from agricultural or undeveloped use, to low-density residential and prohibits uses incompatible with this objective.
- **IG-2 – Primary Inland Growth District.** The IG-2 Primary Inland Growth District is intended to accommodate most of the anticipated residential and non-residential growth in Moran Township during the next twenty years. The IG-2 District will provide for a residential environment dominated by moderate density development (in terms of the hierarchy of zoning districts) including standard single-family detached dwellings in platted subdivisions as well as alternative residential types. Further, it provides for commercial, industrial and institutional uses in accordance with specified performance criteria. Land within this District will generally be located adjacent to major thoroughfares and within areas of the Township containing or expected to contain public sewer and/or water facilities.
- **C-1 – Commercial District.** The C-1 Commercial District is intended to accommodate commercial growth in Moran Township. The C-1 District allows for commercial operations along US-2 in areas where public water and sewer is or will be available.
- **VCRC – Visual Corridor and Recreation Coastal District.** The VCRC District is intended to maintain the strong positive visual image of Moran Township as the "welcome mat" to the thousands of tourists and residents crossing the Mackinac Bridge from the Lower Peninsula. This area provides unique shoreline environments for aquatic and wildlife species and beautiful panoramic vistas from the bridge. Though not designated as an "open space" zone, the VCRC District's foundation has a strong open space/recreation character, while it also recognizes the District's inherent economic land value due to its natural features, proximity to St. Ignace and Mackinac Bridge, and existing and anticipated public utility services. The purposes of this District are to provide opportunities for land development and conserve the natural character and economic well-being of the Township.
- **OC – Ozark Community District.** The OC Ozark Community District is intended to accommodate and preserve the unique character of the Ozark Community, its agriculturally based economy,

and rural community atmosphere. In line with protecting the area's special rural atmosphere, the predominant land uses allowed within this district shall be limited to farming and associated facilities and large-lot residential dwellings.

- **TU – Transitional Use District.** The purpose of the TU Transitional Use District is to protect public health, safety and general welfare; protect the area's natural environment, promote aesthetic values, and provide for environmentally sound reclamation of land disturbed by mining activities through an impartial series of standards and regulations governing the extraction of material from the earth. It should be understood that excavation type land uses are transitional in nature and are by no means representative of the final end use. Accordingly, the intent of this zone is to designate those land areas which use is transitional by nature and establish operational and reclamation guidelines which promote the public health, safety and welfare and the reclamation of these land areas so they do not remain as visually obtrusive elements.
- **MUC – Mixed Use Corridor District.** The purpose of the MUC Mixed-Use Corridor District is to establish regulations to provide orderly commercial development along the U.S. 2 corridor, to encourage the most appropriate use of adjacent lands, to maintain the rural characteristic of the area, and to promote the safe and efficient movement of traffic. The U.S. 2 corridor is the heart of the community and establishes an image of the quality of life in the Township for visitors and residents alike. Preservation of this natural beauty is required to enhance trade, capital investment, tourism and general welfare.
- **CVP – Corridor Viewshed Protection Overlay District.** The purpose of the U.S. 2, CVP Corridor Viewshed Protection Overlay District is to preserve and enhance the unique scenic and rural qualities of the U.S. 2 corridor while promoting future development along the corridor that respects the natural beauty of the landscape. The CVP Overlay District is intended to encourage development practices that will not detract from the scenic and rural qualities of the countryside along U.S. 2, including the preservation of open space and the splendid and unique scenic viewsheds and panoramic views of Lake Michigan and its shoreline, Green Island, St. Helena Island, and the Mackinac Bridge.

Relationship between the Future Land Use Classifications and Zoning Districts

The Moran Township Master Plan Update has established a total of 12 future land use classifications, as listed below:

- Ozark Agricultural Community
- Rural Open Space and Development
- Lakeshore Residential
- Future Growth Area
- Urban Growth Center
- Commercial
- Mixed-Use Corridor
- Town Locale
- Forest/Recreation
- Environmental Protection
- Specialized Development Area
- Natural Resource Production

Additionally, a Highway 2 Corridor/View Preservation “overlay” classification has been established which outlines recommendations which would be applicable in addition to the recommendations for the underlying future land use classification.

Table 12 summarizes how the future land use classifications in this Master Plan Update relate to, or can generally be accomplished by, the various zoning districts from the Township Zoning Ordinance.

Potential Zoning Ordinance and Map Changes

After the adoption of the 2016 Master Plan, Moran Township proceeded with several rounds of Zoning Ordinance amendments to carry forward the recommendations of the Master Plan. This included the adoption of a new mixed-use zoning district (MUC District) and a new corridor viewshed overlay district (CVP Overlay District). Further amendments included various revisions to the existing zoning districts, including new district names. This 2025 Master Plan update does not outline specific Zoning Ordinance amendment recommendations; however, it is advised that Moran Township regularly review its Zoning Ordinance and undertake amendments, as necessary, to address contemporary issues within the Township.

Public Support of the Master Plan

Citizen participation and understanding of the general planning process and policies of the Plan are critical to the success of the Township’s planning program. A well-organized public relations program is needed to identify and marshal public support. Lack of citizen understanding and support could well have serious implications for the eventual implementation of planning proposals. Failure of the public to back needed bond issues and continuing dissatisfaction concerning taxation, special assessments, zoning decisions, and development proposals are some of the results of public misunderstanding and rejection of long range plans.

In order to organize public support most effectively, the Township must emphasize the necessity of, and reasons for, instituting the planning program. Accordingly, the Planning Enabling Act under Section 51 states that the Township Planning Commission “may publish and distribute copies of the Master Plan or of any report and employ other means of publicity and education.” Additionally, the Planning Commission “shall consult with and advise public officials and agencies, public utility companies, civic, educational, professional, and other organizations, and citizens concerning the promotion or implementation of the Master Plan.” In this spirit, the Township may wish to prepare a plan summary brochure for public distribution upon its adoption.

**Table 12: Future Land Use and Zoning District Relationship Summary
Moran Township, 2016**

Future Land Use Classification	Principal Zoning District(s) which can accomplish the recommendations of the Future Land Use Classifications	Other Zoning District(s) which may accomplish the recommendations of the Future Land Use Classifications
Ozark Agricultural Community	OC – Ozark Community District	
Rural Open Space and Development	R-1 – Low Density Residential District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IG-1 – Secondary Inland Growth District • SOS – Secondary Open Space District
Lakeshore Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R-4 – Medium Density Lakeshore Residential District • R-3 – Low Density Lakeshore Residential District 	
Future Growth Area	IG-1 – Secondary Inland Growth District	R-4 – Medium Density Lakeshore Residential District (along Chain Lake)
Urban Growth Center	IG-2 – Primary Inland Growth District	
Commercial	C-1 – Commercial District	CVP – Corridor Viewshed Protection Overlay District
Mixed-Use Corridor	MUC – Mixed-Use Corridor District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C-1 – Commercial District • IG-2 – Primary Inland Growth District • CVP – Corridor Viewshed Protection Overlay District
Town Locale	IG-2 – Primary Inland Growth District	
Forest/Recreation	RL – Rural Lands District	
Environmental Protection	RL – Rural Lands District	CVP – Corridor Viewshed Protection Overlay District
Specialized Development Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VCRC – Visual Corridor and Recreation Coastal District (south side of U.S. 2, west of I-75) • R-2 – Medium Density Residential District (north side of Cheeseman Road, west of I-75) 	
Natural Resource Production	TU – Transitional Use District	

Capital Improvements Program

The term “capital improvements” is generally intended to embrace large scale projects of a fixed nature, the implementation of which results in new or expanded public facilities and services. Such items as public building construction, park development, sewer installation, waterworks improvements, street construction, land acquisition, and the acquisition of certain large-scale pieces of equipment (graders, sweepers, trucks, etc.) are included in the capital improvements budget.

Few communities are fortunate enough to have available at any given time sufficient revenues to satisfy all demands for new or improved public facilities and services. Consequently, most are faced with the necessity of determining the relative priority of specific projects and establishing a program schedule for their initiation and completion. The orderly programming of public improvements is to be accomplished in conjunction with the long range Master Plan for development.

In essence, the capital improvements program is simply a schedule for implementing public capital improvements, which acknowledges current and anticipated demands and which recognizes present and potential financial resources available to the community. The capital improvements program is a major planning tool for assuring that the projects proceed to completion in an efficient manner. The capital improvements program is not intended to encourage the spending of additional public monies but is simply a means by which an impartial evaluation of needs can be made. The program is a schedule established to expedite the implementation of authorized or contemplated projects.

Long-range programming of public improvements is based upon three fundamental considerations. First, the proposed projects must be selected on the basis of community need. Second, the program must be developed within the community’s financial constraints and must be based upon a sound financial plan. Finally, programming flexibility must be maintained through the annual review and approval of the capital budget. The strict observance of these conditions requires periodic analysis of various community development factors, as well as a thorough and continuing evaluation of all proposed improvements and related expenditures.

The Planning Enabling Act outlined a new requirement for all Planning Commissions in communities that have adopted a Master Plan and operate a public water and/or sewer system to annually prepare a capital improvements program. According to the Act, the program “shall show those public structures and improvements, in the general order of their priority, that in the Commission’s judgement will be needed or desirable and can be undertaken within the ensuing 6-year period.”

5-Year Master Plan Review

The Moran Township Master Plan Update is a flexible document that should be updated periodically to address major changes in the community, such as the addition/loss of a major employer or changing citizen attitudes relating to a controversial issue. At least every five years after the adoption of a Master Plan, the Planning Enabling Act requires that a Planning Commission “review the Master Plan and determine whether to commence the procedure to amend the Master Plan or adopt a new Master Plan.” The findings of the review must be recorded in the minutes of the relevant meeting or meetings of the Planning Commission.



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