Welcome to the City of

Munising, MI



2020 Master Plan

Adopted 2020
Updated 2026

MUNISING
GATEWAY TO ADVENTURE

CUPPAD

Introduction

Welcome to the City of Munising Master Plan

What is a Master Plan?

A Master Plan is a document that provides guidance for the growth, development, and physical improvements within a municipality. The document reflects the community it serves and draws on public input to define a united vision of the community's future. Based on thorough analysis of community data, the Master Plan offers constructive recommendations and implementation steps that can be undertaken to achieve the City's vision.

The core purpose of a Master Plan is to guide land use patterns, economic development and redevelopment, transportation and access, community infrastructure and services, and the management of the community's natural resources. It is a tool for identifying the long-range community challenges on the horizon and provides the framework for how we will adapt to meet the needs fo the future.



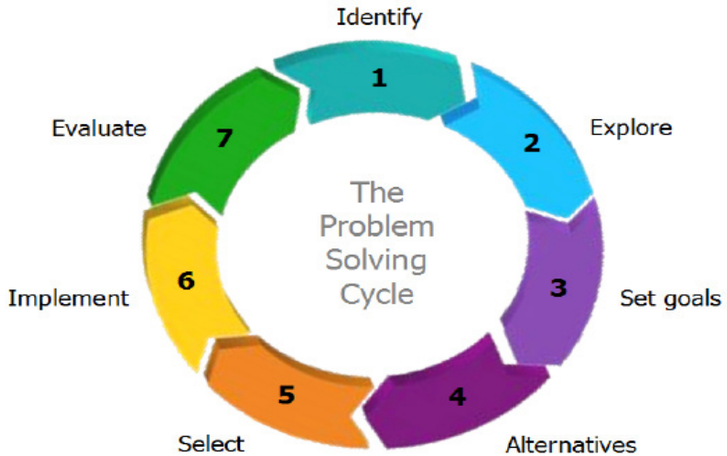
Authority to Plan

In Michigan, P.A. 33 of 2008, commonly referred to as the *Michigan Planning Enabling Act*, authorizes units of government to plan, create Planning Commissions, and regulate and subdivide land. The act permits and mandates the Planning Commission to create and adopt a Master Plan. The Master Plan is the basis for land use regulations and zoning. For units of government that have and enforce zoning, that zoning must be based on a plan. The purpose of this Master Plan is to guide future development towards more economic and efficient use of the land; promote public health, safety, and the general welfare; and provide for adequate transportation systems and infrastructure, public utilities, and recreation.



The Planning Process, Generally

Community planning is a cyclical process. Every five years, a community must review its Master Plan and consider necessary updates. The *Annual Report* found in Appendix A provides the important factors which could be reviewed to determine the need for updates to the plan. The seven-step process chart (right) describes the phases of the plan's development, starting with a review of the current plan. Next, the plan engages with community stakeholders who will provide important perspectives and feedback on areas relevant to their interests.



In the third step, research and analysis on a range of community related topics is performed to give insight into the factors and trends shaping the community. From this analysis, we are able to engage with community stakeholders on step four to identify issues, needs, and opprtunities as they relate to the community.

Step five involves the creation of a strategic framework for addressing the issues and opportunities that were defined, and result in a collection of top goals, related objectives, and policy recommendations for future adoption. These strategic items are then included with the content of the plan and in step six, the Planning Commission proceeds with the formal adoption of the Plan at a public meeting.

After the adoption of the Master Plan, local elected and appointed leaders, City administrators, and other public and private stakeholders will work together on step seven to implement the action items and recommendations found in the plan. Five years from the adoption of the plan, the Commission will start again from the beginning of the cycle to determine what has been accomplished and what changes need to be made to the strategy in light of new information.

Past Planning Activities

In order to adequately plan for the future, a community must first review the recommendations and strategies of other relevant and recent community plans. By coordinating and aligning strategies with these past efforts, we avoid the pitfall of "reinventing the wheel" and build a strategy that interrelates with other programs and initives to build mutual support, as opposed to pushing in different directions in pursuit of the same vision.

2009 Munising Master Plan

The 2009 Master Plan was developed in coordination with CUPPAD and provided the fundamental elements that were required by newly enacted Michigan Planning Enabling Act of 2008. A number of strategic items contained within this plan have been accomplished while others are still in progress and have been carried over into this new plan.

Munising Downtown Development Plan

The Downtown Development and TIF Plan was developed in 1988 and was amended in 2013, which extended the life of the district's tax capture authority until 2033. The amended plan includes a 20-year work plan of actions and investments; many of which have been accomplished ahead of schedule. Downtown redevelopment and infrastructure are consistent themes in this plan and as such, the DDA and Planning Commission work together closely on development objectives.

Non-Motorized Plan

In 2013, the City and DDA coordinated on a non-motorized transportation plan which described the existing conditions, issues, and opportunities present in the community. The plan proposed a strategy for the development of new facilities, including costs, responsible parties, and potential funding sources. A number of these projects have since been developed

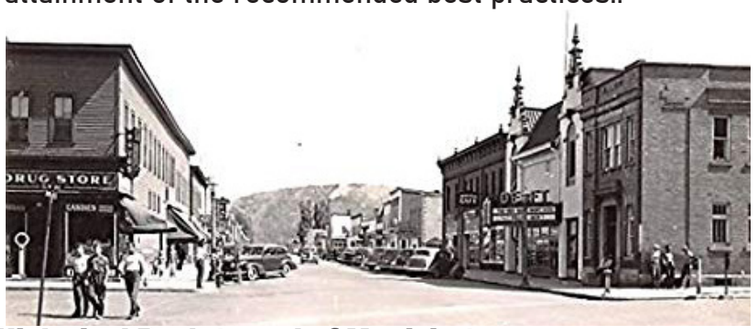
Regional Economic Development Plans

CUPPAD maintains the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and the 10-year Regional Prosperity Plan. Both plans cover the 6-county Central U.P. region and focus on broad goals for development with a focus on projects that relate to growing the economy and talent pool, infrastrucutre improvements, enhancing educational oppotunities, and improving quality of life. Munising provides relevant and dynamic projects.

Redevelopment Ready Communities

Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) is a community and economic development certification program for cities offered by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. It reviews and certifies communities for their adoption of best practices for planning, zoning, development review processes, consideration of existing redevelopment sites, and local economic development and community marketing strategies.

Munising has been engaged in RRC since 2017 and has *earned the RRC Essentials designation*, which signifies attainment of the recommended best practices..



Historical Background of Munising

The name "Munising" is derived from an Ojibwe Native American word, "Minissing" or "island near a lake," for the nearby Grand Island, located on the southern shore of Lake Superior. This area served as a home to the indigenous Ojibwe and later to early fur trading Europeans that arrived to the area as early as 1834.

Until Alger County was organized in 1885, Munising and its surroundings were a part of Schoolcraft County. Munising was incorporated as a village in 1897. It became the county seat in 1902 and was incorporated as a city in 1915. Although some of the early natural resources-based industries have ceased operations, Neenah Paper remains the area's largest employer and has been a stable economic force for many decades. Moreover, the Alger Maximum Correctional Facility, the expanded Kewadin Casino, Munising Memorial Hospital and the emergence of many new service related businesses have helped to strengthen the overall local economy. The area's natural resources have become the predominant force in the local economy through the expansion of tourism services and high-quality recreational opportunities. Jobs and customers created by a booming tourist industry have dramatically improved local economic conditions. The Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, Hiawatha National Forest, Alger Underwater Preserve, and Grand Island are among the major attractions and offer a wide variety of four-season recreational opportunities.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction....1-2
Guiding Principles & Vision....3-4
Trends shaping the the City and Region....5-8
People and Community....9-10
Economic Development....11-14
Natural Resources, Environment & Energy....15-16
Housing and Neighborhoods....17-20
Quality of Life....21-22
Downtown Development....23-24
Infrastructure and Community Facilities....25-32
Land Use and Zoning Plan....33-39
Implementation Strategy....41-43
Appendicies
Planning Commission Annual Report....A

Guiding Principles & Vision for the Future

Throughout the process of developing this Master Plan, a number of overarching guiding principles were consistently mentioned which described common values held in the community. These guiding principles and the following vision statement paint a unifying picture of Munising's future which will result from the from the implementation of strategic elements found in the plan.



Small Town Character

Munising embodies the concept of small town character in the U.P. The natural topography of the surroundings physically limits the possibility of expansion beyond its existing boundaries, therefore no significant growth is expected. Munising offers a traditional downtown and commercial establishments, making it the primary hub of commerce and culture in Alger County. Residents of the community have a high regard for its charming neighborhoods and good schools, making it an ideal place to raise a family.

Appreciation of Natural And Cultural Assets

The Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore is Munising's most regarded claim to fame, but beyond that, numerous opportunities for natural resource recreation and enjoyment of cultural amenities make Munising a place where people want to stay. It is a place where artists are inspired by the natural beauty of the surroundings and their works are prominently featured in businesses and public spaces throughout the community. Year-round outdoor recreational opportunities, such as cross country skiing, snowmobiling, mountain biking, and simple beachgoing are just a few examples of the possibilies for outdoor enthusiasts.



Welcoming to Economic Development and Tourism

Business and industry are welcomed in Munising, as they provide the incomes for our year-round residents and the tax base that makes much of our public improvements possible. In recent years, tourism and outdoor recreation has expanded significantly, which brings opportunities for capitalizing on the changing conditions. The tourism industry is Munising's primary economic driver and supplies a significant share of jobs, however, it is important that tourism growth maintains a reasonable balance with neighborhood livability and does not diminish Munising's small town character.

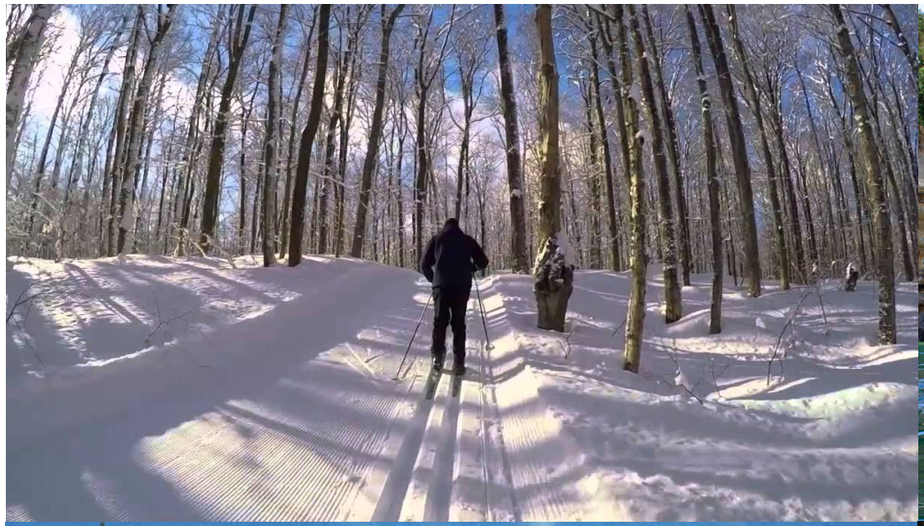
The People's Vision of Munising

By assembling the individual pieces that comprise the guiding principles of our community, we start to develop a picture of the qualities we expect to maintain and develop in the future. This vision summarizes these aspirations in a powerful and succinct statement about what we hope Munising will be like by 2050 and provides us with a shared understanding of where the strategy intends to take us.

Munising will be a community for all ages that embraces its **small-town character** and capitalizes on its unique **cultural and natural assets** which are found nowhere else. We will strive for a compatible **balance** between the quiet **residential character** that makes Munising a quality place to live and the **economic growth** that will make our residents and businesses prosperous in the future. Our community and visitors will enjoy the opportunities and lifestyle amenities the community provides which enable all to enjoy our slice of paradise in the U.P.

The Munising Planning Commission has developed a strategic framework to ensure the achievement of this vision. The strategy that was created was the result of multiple meetings with input from key stakeholders, other relevant studies and plans, and from the inclusion of community development best practices. The strategic framework in this plan begins on page 10.

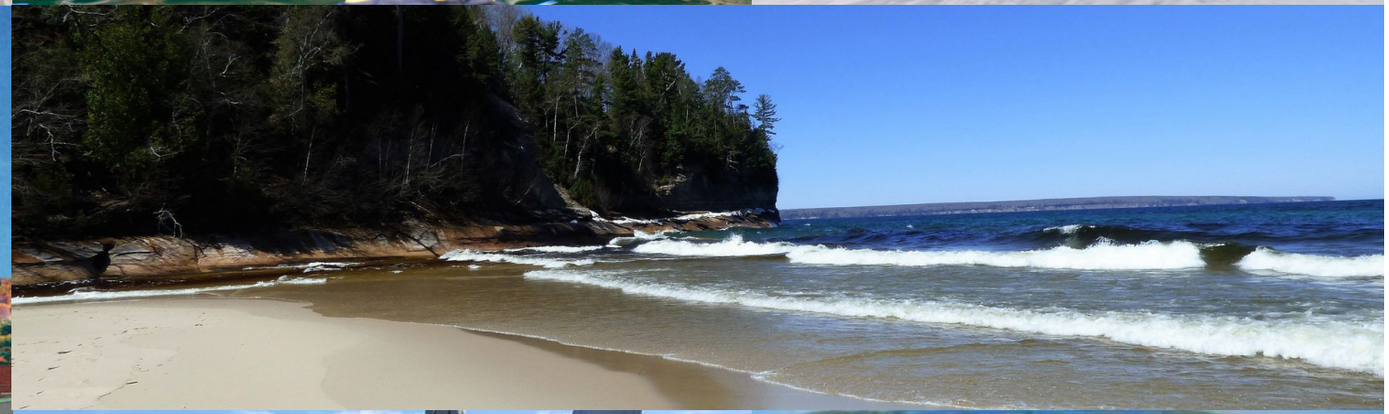
Each year, the Planning Commission will develop an annual status report of progress on the Master Plan, and once every five years, the Commission will review the Plan for the update and adoption of new strategy items. An example of the annual report is provided in Appendix A.

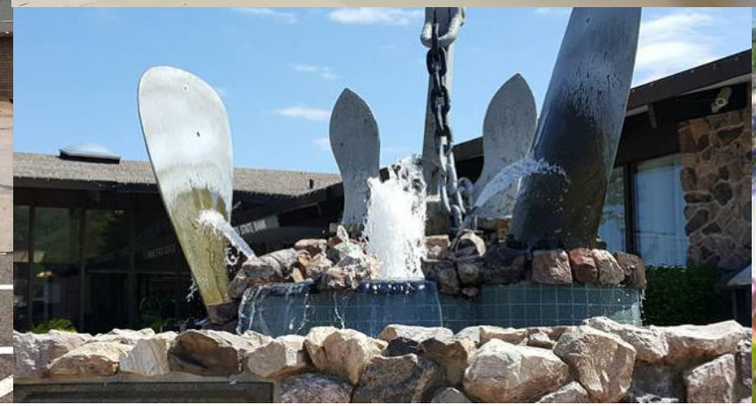







MUNISING





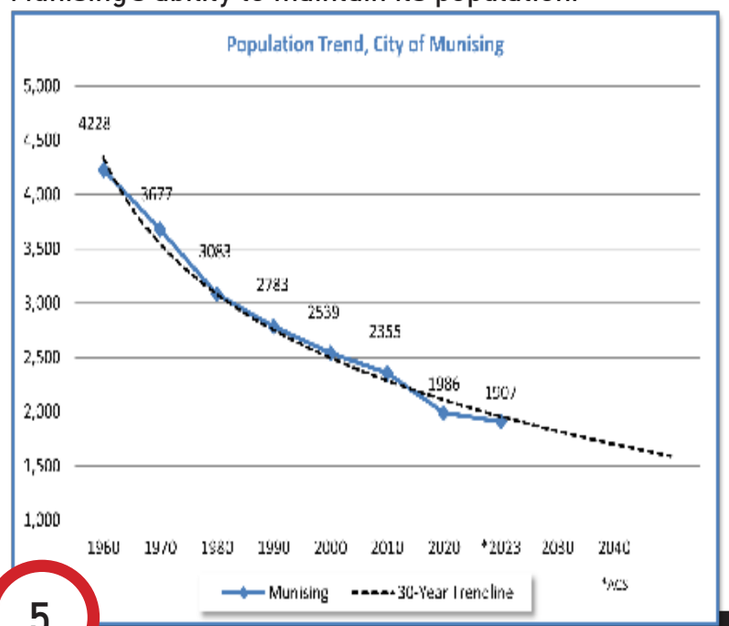


Trends Shaping the City and the Region

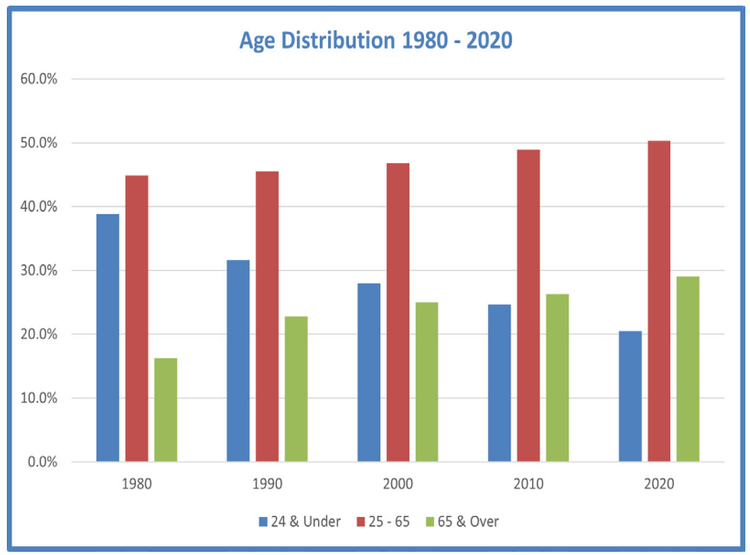
This section of the Master Plan is often referred to as the "fact book"; an important component that provides data on the changes that are occuring in the community with regard to population, economics, and housing among other topics. By analyzing the data of the past, we can draw conclusions about what the future might hold and be better prepared for the changes that take place and ability to seize on opportunities.

Population Trends

As of the 2020 Census, the population of Munising was 1,986. This is a 15% decrease over the 10-year period, measured from the 2010 Census. The 2023 Census Bureau estimates place the City at 1,907 total population, which suggests area struggles with the availability of housing continues to challenge Munising's ability to maintain its population.

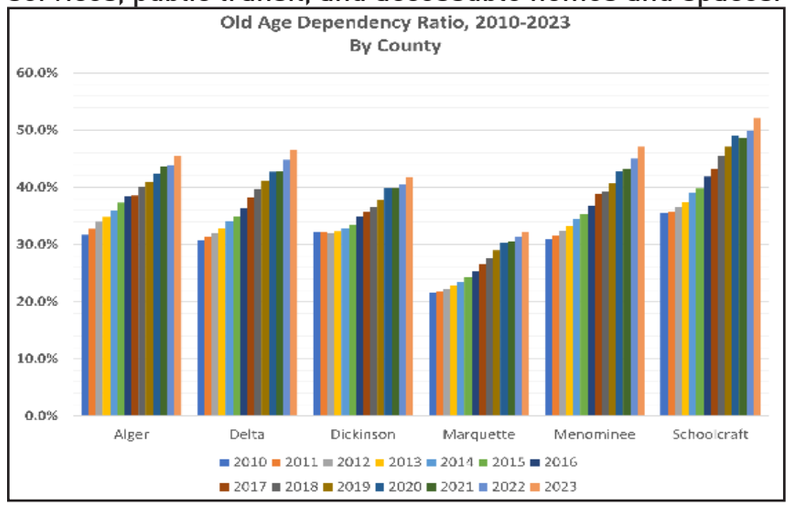


The City appears to be on a fairly predictable track for population and matches the State and nationwide trends toward an aging population. The figure below shows a breakdown of age groups from 1980 to 2020. Age groups are broken up into learning age, working age, and retirement age. As with most communities in the U.P., the 24 and under age group has seen a consistent decline, falling 18 points since 1980. However, the working age group has seen a minor increase, but will likely begin to drop off as the Baby Boomer generation ages into the retirement across the next decade. If this trend continues, Munising could expect to see an increase over the ensuing years in both males and females 65 and over. Such an increase may contribute to demand for additional services and considerations for a large retirement-age population.



As the Munising area's population shifts toward a gradually aging population, the local school systems will also be impacted if young families with children continue to struggle to find available housing. In Alger, households with school age children declined 2.1% from the years 2000 to 2023, resulting in decreased enrollment.

A concept known as Old Age Dependency Ratio compares the population of working age individuals to retirement age individuals. As the graphic below shows, all counties in the Central U.P. region, including Alger, are experiencing a rapidly increasing ratio of retirement aged individuals to working aged ones. This might also mean that, as older residents of outlying communities grow older, the City of Munising could likely see a growing need for health care services, public transit, and accessuble homes and spaces.

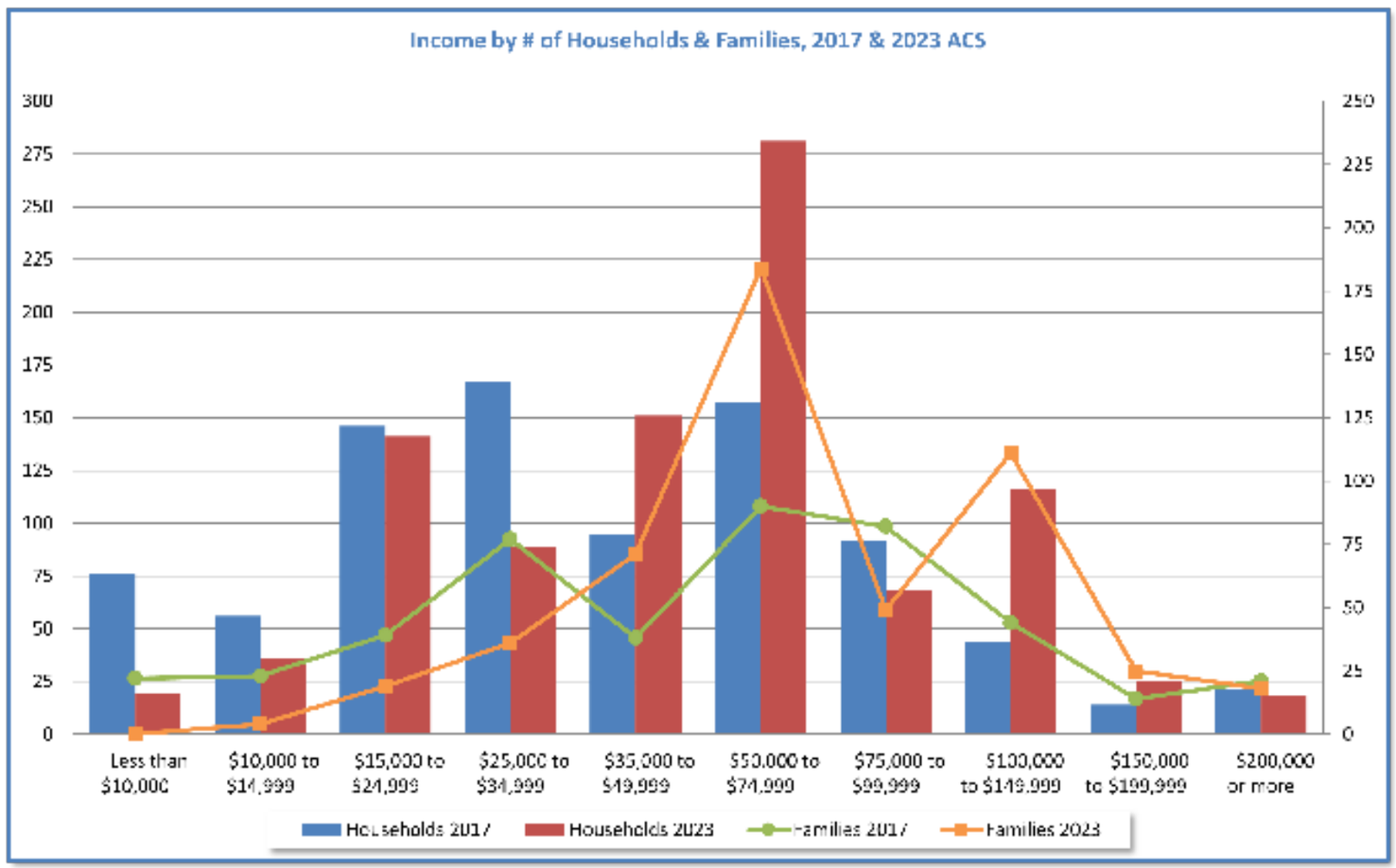


A countywide decline in the share of working age individuals also poses potential challenges for the future of the laborforce as the need to replace senior workers by younger ones plays out. It also suggests that the City, with the help of its local employers, workforce, and economic development professionals should focus heavily on talent attraction and retention efforts aimed at young working age individuals to fill the community's available professional and skilled trades jobs. The Greater Munising Bay Partnership for Commerce (GMBPC) is a partner on the Central UP CEDS committee, a regional collaboration that supports economic development efforts throughout the region. Guided by the CEDS strategy, the GMBPC and partners work together on strategies for talent attraction.

Income Trends

At this point in 2025, the most current and best available income figures are provided by the Census Bureau's 2023 American Community Survey (ACS). Like any survey, it comes with a margin of error relative to the size of the community sample. In Munising's case, the sample size of the population has an approximate margin of error of about 5% for the data that is shown.

The chart below depicts two types of income data (households and families) which were measured using two different data sets (the 2017 ACS and the 2023 ACS) representing a period of five years. The bars in the graph show *household* data with blue representing data from 2017, while the red bars show the most current data from 2023. Similarly, the line graphs display incomes for *families*, with the green line showing 2017 incomes and the orange line reports income from 2023. A household consists of all the people who occupy a housing unit, collectively, while a family is defined by two or more related individuals within a single household.



The chart to the left provides a profile on both the number of households and families in each income group, for both the 2017 and 2023 ACS. Comparing the 2017 data and the 2023 estimate, a significant decline can be observed in the *Less than $10,000* income bracket for householdsand families. Only the $25,000 to $34,999 incomes experienced a significant decrease, while those making *$100,000 to $149,000* also saw a substantial increase. This suggests incomes have been rising across the board. To further understand changes in income for Munising residents, we compare median incomes for the same datasets.During this period of time, the cumulative rate of inflation in the U.S. was 24.3%

	2017 ACS	2023 ACS
Median Household Income (MHI)	$34,152	$54,375 (+59%)
Median Family Income (MFI)	$53,864	$63,000 (+17%)

The data indicates that median household income has experienced rapid growth over the five year period, and is beginning to catch up with the incomes of neighboring counties, but still falls short of Michigan's median income of $69,183. While this is a trend in the right direction, a sizeable number of households may still be feeling financially insecure as expenses like housing, energy, and the costs of goods and services have seen rapid increases in recent years.

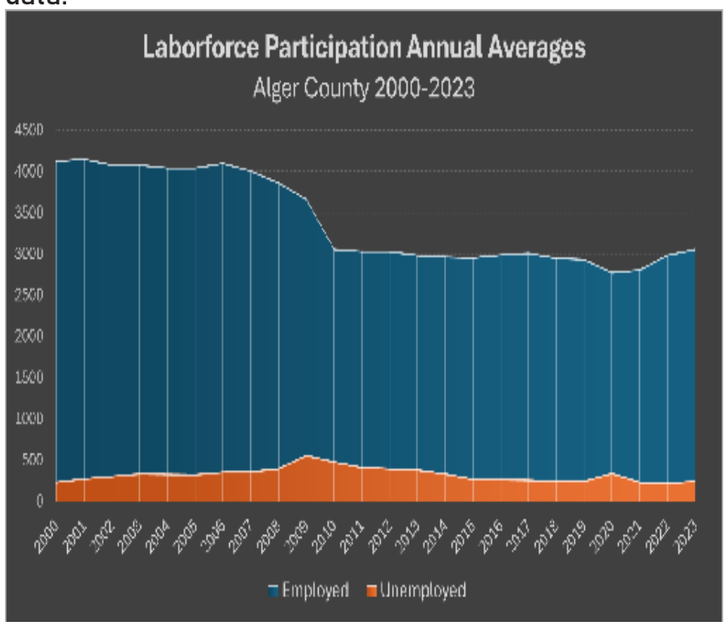
With the rise in remote working and the area's adoption of high-speed fiber internet connections, it is now possible for Munising's residents to find employment outside of the local labor market. This offers the possibility of finding employment in industries and geographies that pay greater wages. This prospect may enhance the economic resilience of the Munising area laborforce and bolster it from the effects on "brain drain", or an exodus of talent from the region.

Trends Shaping the City and Region

Community Economic Trends

Employment Status

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reports the most accurate and current labor force data. The BLS only provides city-level data for the top 50 most populous cities in the U.S., so the most relevant dataset for Munising is Alger County's annual labor force average data.



In 2000, the County's employment total was 4,150 with an average unemployment rate of 5.5%. The most recent total in 2023 indicates the employment total is 3,069 with an unemployment rate of 7.7%. The Great Recession, which lasted from about 2008 through 2009 can be observed as a steep drop in employment and an uptick in unemployed persons. Another smaller disruption occured during 2020, the result of the Covid-19 pandemic, but what followed was a more rapid recovery, returning to pre-pandemic levels by 2022.

Following the Great Recession, Michigan in particular experienced a longer recovery period than the rest of the nation as a result of having a less-diversified economy, heavily centered around manufacturing. Since this event, the employment numbers have never fully recovered to pre-recession the levels in 2016. 15 years later, the County has about 1,000 fewer employed residents, resulting in a decreased economic potential. This decline in employment does not match the fluctuations in unemployed persons during the same time period, suggesting that following the recession, many workers have permenantly left the local labor force; perhaps moved, retired, or are in disability status.

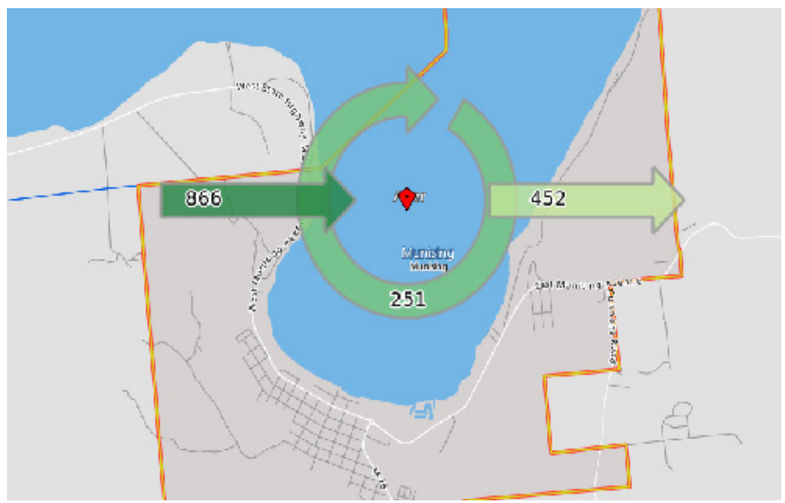
Employment by Industry

In terms of 2023 jobs, Alger County's top industries in order are Government (849), Accommodation and Food Services (472), Manufacturing (415), Retail Trade (210), Health Care (185), and Construction (110). Together, these sectors account for nearly 80% of total employment in the County. Government remains the single largest employer, reflecting the presence of federal, state, and local agencies, as well as correctional facilities and schools. The Accommodation and Food Services sector reflects the importance of tourism, with jobs concentrated in lodging, restaurants, and seasonal recreation.

Manufacturing, once a stronger pillar of the economy, continues to face long-term decline due to global competition, and reduced wood products activity. Projections indicate a 24% decline in manufacturing jobs over the next decade, suggesting that many of these positions may not be replaced. By contrast, Health Care is projected to grow by 19%, as an aging population drives demand for medical services and long-term care. Construction, though smaller in overall share, is expected to remain steady, supported by housing demand, infrastructure reinvestment, and seasonal building activity.

Work Locations and Commuting Habits

The Census Bureau's On the Map tool uses ACS survey data to determine where people work relative to where they live. In 2021 approximately 1,117 people were employed within the City of Munising. Among those people working in the City, an estimated 866 employees (77%) were non-residents, while the other 251 (23%) were full-time residents. Another 452 residents were employed outside of the City limits, with the top destinations for work being the Cities of Marquette, Escanaba, Manistique, Sault Ste. Marie, and Chatham Village.



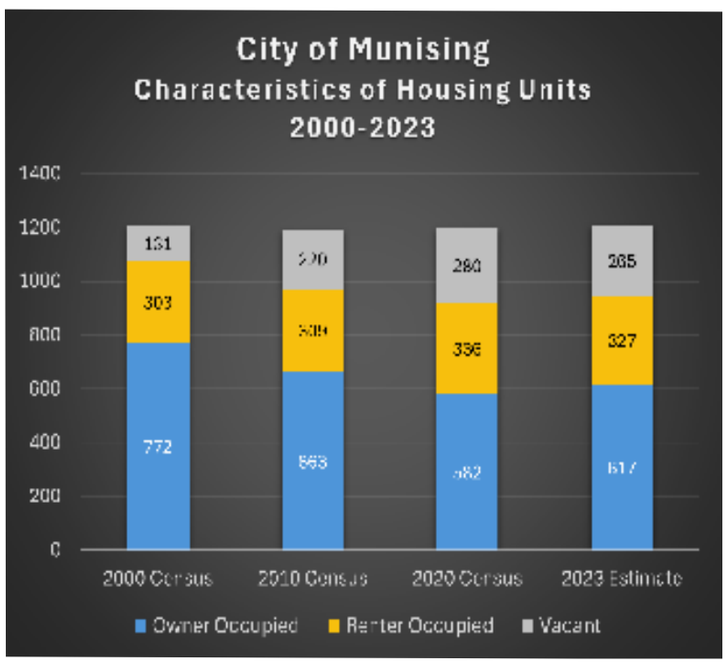
Commuting habits are identified in the 2023 ACS survey and indicate the most common method of travel for Munising residents is driving alone, with an estimated 63%. Another 7.4% of the population carpool, 0.6% use public transportation, 11.4% walked, 7.6% took a taxi or commuted by other means, and 9.4% worked from home. Potentially, City leaders could develop strategies to attact these locally-employed non-residents looking for shorter commute times. It is also observed that the share of residents who work from home has grown 7.1% in the past five year, since 2017, possibly indicating more residents are engaged in remote work.

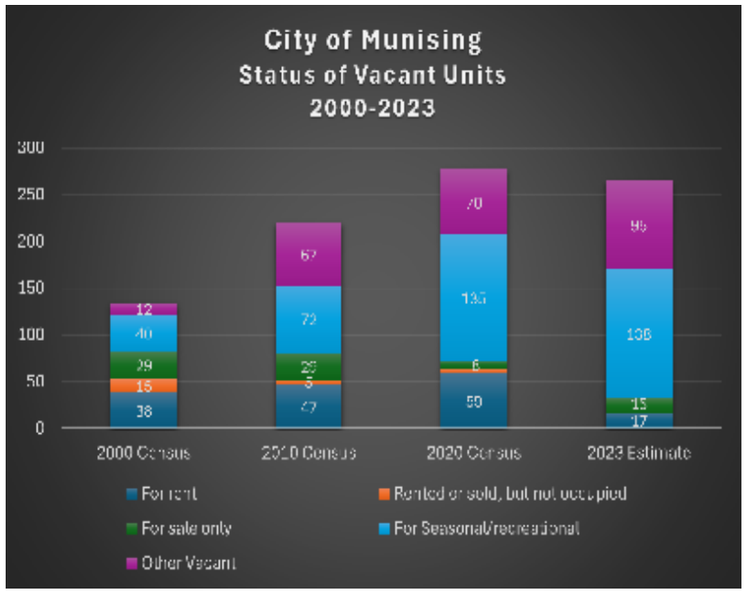
Housing Trends

Profile of Housing in Munising

Housing availability, type, and condition are all important factors contributing to the quality of life of Munising's resident population. This section assesses various housing characteristics using the 2020 Census data and the latest American Community Survey (ACS) data.

Per the 2023 ACS, Munising has 1,209 housing units with approximately 78% occupied and 22% in some form of vacant status. Owner-occupied units account for 65.4%, with renter occupied at 34.6%. Among the 265 units in vacant status 6.4% were for rent; 5.6% were for sale; 52% were for seasonal/recreational use, and the remaining 36% were classified as *other vacant*. . The total number of housing units since 2000 has not exerienced any significant change, hovering around 1,200 units.



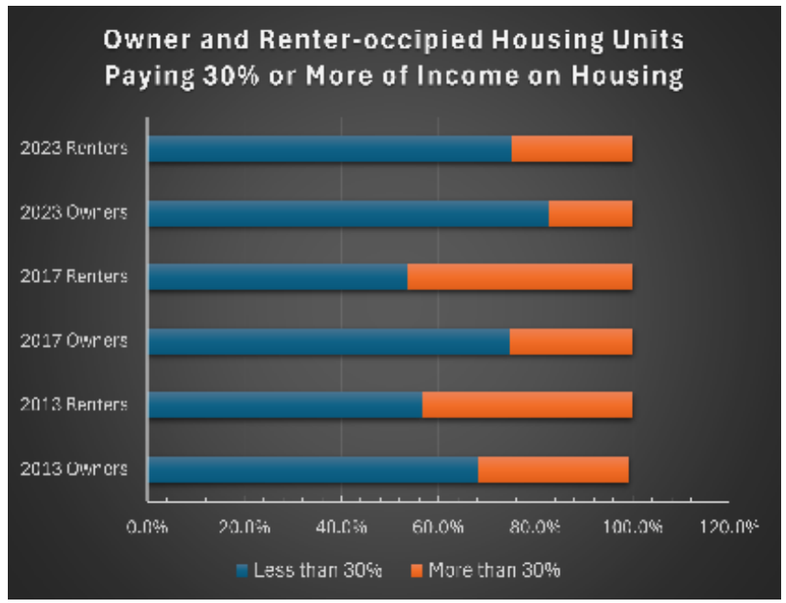


The graph above shows how much the dynamics of housing has changed in Munising between 2000 and 2020, as it experienced a 336% growth in the number of vacant units for seasonal/recreational use, while units for rent increased by only 12 over the 20 year period. It is reasonable to assume that the explosive growth in visitors to Pictured Rocks that was experienced since 2014 and the growing noteriety of the region's unique assets has contributed greatly to the market changes from long-term occupied units to vacant ones.

City leaders should be concerned with further losses to owner and renter occupied housing, as the naturally limited supply of developable land in the City will result in many renters being priced out of the market. Further growth in seasonal and short-term rental housing may lead to a growing shortage in the local workforce, which the tourism economy that the city heavily depends upon. The city should urgently target the development of affordable housing.

Housing Affordability

A common measure for analysing housing affordability is know as the *cost burdened* metric, which is an individual paying 30% of their income on housing. The following chart analyzes ACS data for households in the city, both owners and renters from 2013, 2017, and 2023 th determine the percentage of households that are financially burdened by their housing expenses and how that has changed over the 10-year timespan.



The data reports that owner-occupied housing has been on therise since 2013, while renter occupied housing saw a significant increase, or 21% from 2017 to 2023. This estimate could be positive news for residents in hopes of aaffordability, but these findings should be treated with a degree of caution as this is survey data which comes with a margin of error which could swing the results in the opposite direction. The decennical Census, which is conducted every 10 years and is next due in 2030, will provide the most reliable data for a city the size of Munising.

People and Community

Trends Shaping the City and Region provides an analysis of important facts and figures pertaining to demographic changes in Munising. An analysis of the data suggests that Munising, like the rest of the U.P., has been experiencing a slow, gradual decline in population since the 1980s and that trend is anticipated to continue for the forseeable future unless intervening factors, such as a growing birth rate or an in-migration of residents changes the trajectory of population loss.

Additionaly, the average age of the population is rapidly growing older as the Baby Boomer generation approaches retirement age, while family household sizes are declining and fewer family-building aged residents are moving to the community. A declining population which includes fewer working and school-aged residents suggests strategies to slow or reverse these trends are needed to ensure long-term sustainability of the community. Influencing these trends is a particularly important task as it relates to the local workforce (talent pool), school system (enrollment), and the provision of health care services (increased demand).

Retaining Our Residents

Population decline is a challenging issue for small cities to overcome, as many of the factors are beyond the control of the community and due to economics and demographic changes. However, small towns can take steps to mitigate population losses by embracing regional talent attraction and retention strategies, such as UP Michigan Works' WIOA plan or the Central UP's CEDS strategy. This plan includes local actions like placemaking efforts that enhance quality of life, among other actions. Maintaining the housing stock is another important feature for increasing in-migration and retention of residents, as quality of housing is a top feature when considering where to live.

Attracting Young, Talented Workers

Talent is the fuel for the economy and communities are in constant competition to attract workers, particularly young, highly mobile ones. Talented workers are looking not only for good jobs, but quality places to live that provide the types of amenities that support their lifestyles. Munising has an advantage in this regard, as the region's natural assets and beauty are authentic selling points for outdoor recreation enthusiasts, as is the access to high quality broadband. A successful talent attraction strategy should coordinate with local employers to highlight this point whenever possible.



Adapting to an Older Population

The population shift toward an older population is inevitable, which means there will be an increased demand on features and services the population commonly relies on. Healthcare and transportation services are two of the main considerations that will experience increased demand. Seniors may also be looking to downsize their homes and look for more accessible homes that accommodate aging in place.



Increasing Public Engagement in Development

Public participation is a critical element in the development of broadly inclusive communities that are responsive to their constituents. Participation can be a powerful force as it relates to civic matters; it can drive the support needed to bolster a public initiative to success, or in other cases, significant public opposition too late in the process can spell disaster for a project. Proactive communities recognize that harnessing early input from the public is an essential step for major projects, from master planning to physical development projects.



Meaningful engagement also has the additional benefit of cultivating a more informed citizenry when it comes to current City issues. When residents are aware of the facts and circumstances regarding changes in their community, they are more empowered to provide constructive feedback that can result in project modifications that better align with the needs and wants of the community. Consistently meeting the public's expectations for public engagement serves to build a sense of trust and understanding that enhances the bond between the City and its residents and often leads to better outcomes than if it did not. Through its work on obtaining Redevelopment Ready Communities certification in 2020, the City

developed a public participation plan which guides public engagement.

Goals for People and Community

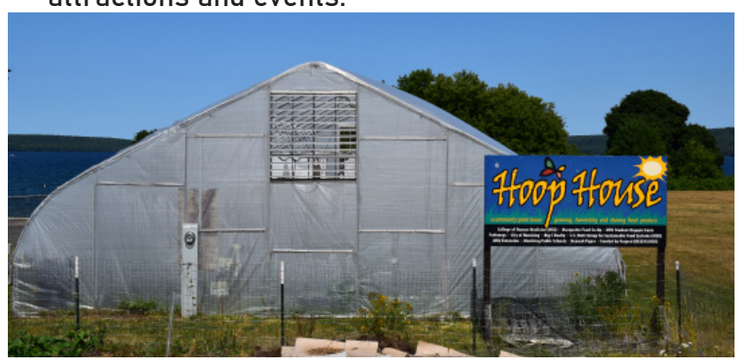
The Planning Commission recognizes the trends in culture, economics, and demographics and how those will affect the community in the future, therefore they recommend the following strategies be undertaken in the next five years:

Goal 1: Stop the decline of population over the next 20 years by developing strategies that encourage young workers and families to move to Munising.

- *Objective 1:* Enhance the appeal of living and working in Munising by coordinating with Economic Development Organizations and local businesses to provide the possibility of distance working and market this opportunity.
- *Objective 2:* Market the region's unique natural assets that enhance quality of life and target skilled workers and young families with an interest in four-season outdoor lifestyles.
- *Objective 3:* Ensure quality affordable and attainable housing options are available for families and individuals that meets the current demand by supporting the findings of the 2025 Housing Needs Assessment report.
- *Objective 4:* Maintain a reasonable balance between the tourism economy and the community-oriented commercial establishments, neighborhoods, and industries that support and appeal to year-round residents.

Goal 2: Make improvements that positively impact senior residents' ability to age in place.

- *Objective 1:* Facilitate community walkability and transportation mobility improvements that support a healthy and active lifestyle for seniors.
- *Objective 2:* Support programs and updates to zoning and building codes that enable home improvements for better access and living independently.
- *Objective 3:* Encourage and support local businesses in actions that improve facilities for barrier-free access.
- *Objective 4:* Provide more senior-friendly attractions and events.



Goal 3: Engage youth residents to learn about and provide for the types of amenities that are important to their enjoyment and experiences in Munising.

- *Objective 1:* Begin identifying and providing the amenities and opportunities that appeal to young people by holding workshops with young residents to gather information about key aspects of that enhance their quality of life, then develop a plan to provide these things over the next three years.
- *Objective 2:* Include young people, such as high school students, in projects and planning for quality of life, and potentially appoint a youth member or liaison to the planning commission by 2026. *Objective 3:* Include community involvement training and education in local school curriculum and local youth organizations.

Goal 4: Increase public participation in community development planning processes across a wide range of stakeholders.

- *Objective 1:* Within one year, the city will review its adopted public participation plan and make updates to adapt to changing circumstances, if needed.
- *Objective 2:* By 2027, provide welcome wagon services and an organization of local residents willing to be ambassadors to new residents by directing them to resources and answering questions and develop a brochure and a page on the city website for new residents that informs them of all that is available. Coordinate across the county on this activity.
- *Objective 3:* Each year, host multiple public engagement and input activities in coordination with local events to determine the interest of residents in seeing future community development activities.



Economic Development

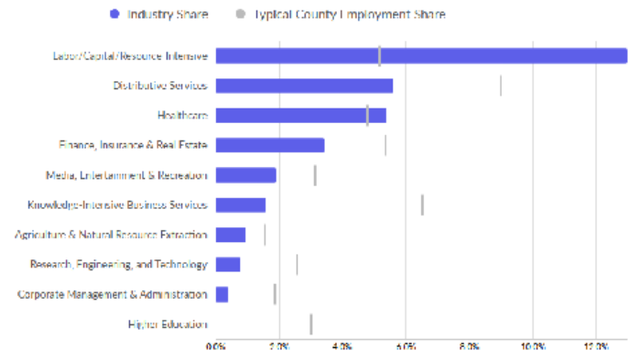
The field of Economic Development has traditionally focused on the strategies of business attraction, retention, and expansion to drive job growth and local prosperity. However, the evolution of our society, driven by factors like technology and globalization have changed the game of economic development significantly. Today, talented workers are the fuel of the economy and where they go and cluster, industries tend to follow and thrive. Skilled and talented workers are free to relocate to places where they can achieve a high quality of life, competetive salaries, and high quality housing options. Thus, the strategy for economic development has had to adapt in recent years; while traditional strategies are still needed, incorporating principles of community development that aim to create vibrant places where these workers want to be has become a necessity.

While the evolution described above is growing to be the norm for knowledge and skill-based industries, it should be noted that land-based industires such as fishing, forestry, and tourism are anchored to the locations in which the resources reside. The immediate region has a high reliance on these industries. This fact is a double-edged sword, as they ensure reliable living-wage jobs locally in good times, but the industries themselves are subject to broader market trends. The workforces of these industries also tend to skew more toward local labor and are not commonly targets for talent attraction. Heavy reliance on relatively few land-based industries may leave the community less resilient when faced with economic shocks, which suggests a significant effort should be put into cultivating an environment that supports entrepreneurs.

Industry Diversification

Industry diversification is a strategy that seeks to grow the output, workforce, and wages of new and emerging industries in regions where few larger industires dominate the economy. Diversification of industries, similar to investment planning, can result in reduced-potential for losses and greater potential for rapid recovery when impacted by shocks, such as the Great Recession in in 2008-2010, or the pandemic in 2020.

Industry Diversity Snapshot, Alger County

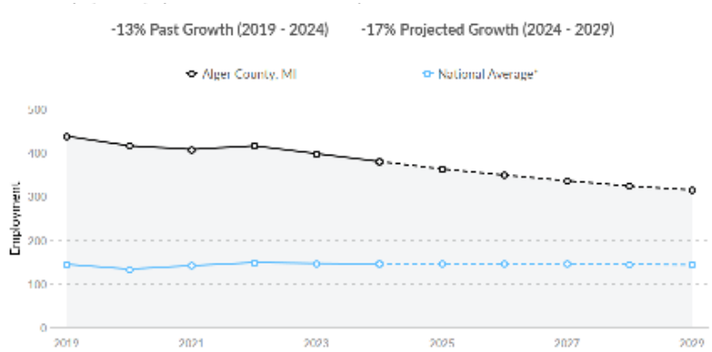


Industry Cluster	2024 Jobs	% of Total Employment	% of Typical County Employment
Non-Location Employment	1,965	66.9%	57.9%
Labor/Capital/Resource-Intensive	381	13.0%	5.1%
Distributive Services	165	5.6%	9.0%
Healthcare	159	5.4%	4.8%
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	100	3.4%	5.3%
Media, Entertainment & Recreation	56	1.9%	3.1%

Source: *Lightcast 2024 Data Set*

The graphic above shows the general makeup of the top industries in Alger County, indicating that there is a higher than average share of jobs in *Capital-Intensive Manufacturing* and *Government*. Presumably, the high share of government workers can be attributed to the National Parks Service as well as State workers related to natural resource protection and the prison. Capital-intensive manufacturing, which includes paper goods, woodworking, and industrial mechanics is eight points greater than the national average. Local employment in this industry was in a steep decline during the 2000s but has since plateaued, although projections indicate further decline over the next decade.

Capital-Intensive Manufacturing Regional Job Trends, Alger



Source: *Lightcast 2024 Data Set*

Five years prior, in the previous iteration of this plan, it was noted that the workforce in this sector was heavily dominated by workers an the upper end of the age spectrum, but the age breakdown appears to have balanced out in 2025. This is good news and suggests that, as workers age out of the laborforce, they are being replaced by younger workers at levels that can sustain the industry, assisted by automation.

Capital-Intensive Manufacturing Age Breakdown, Alger

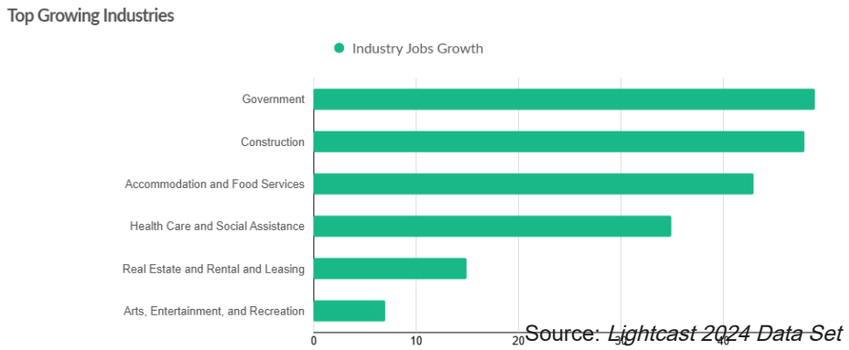


	% of Jobs	Jobs
14-18	0.7%	3
19-24	4.4%	17
25-34	20.4%	77
35-44	23.1%	87
45-54	24.7%	93
55-64	23.8%	90
65+	2.9%	11

Source: Lightcast 2024 *Data Set*

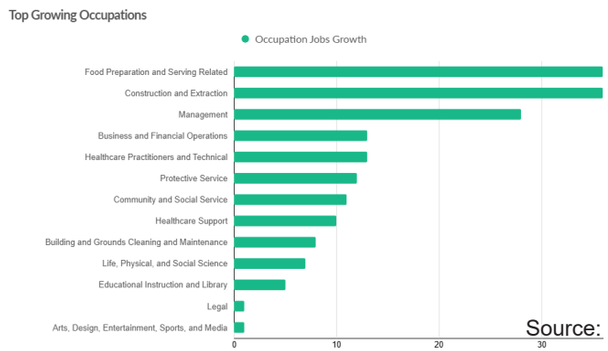
Potentially, economic and workforce development efforts could be targeted to growing industries, occupations, and in-demand skills that are relevant in the region. Graphics on the next page provide some recent intelligence about the trends occuring in the local economy with regard to growth and future needs.

Top Growing Industries - Munising, ZIP 49862



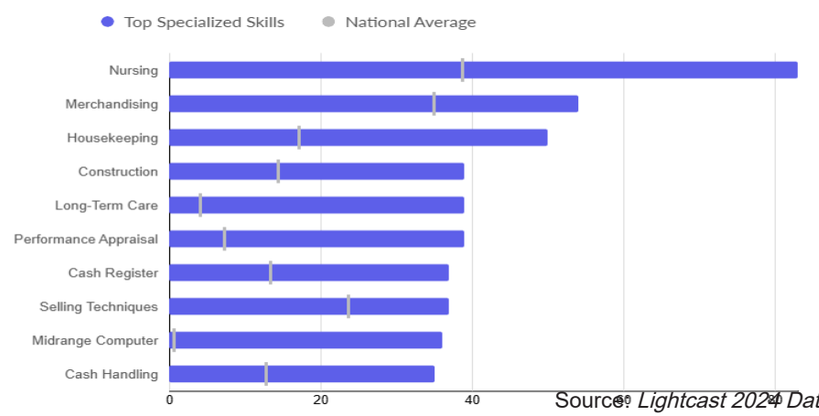
Source: *Lightcast 2024 Data Set*

Top Growing Occupations - Munising, ZIP 49862



Source: *Lightcast 2024*

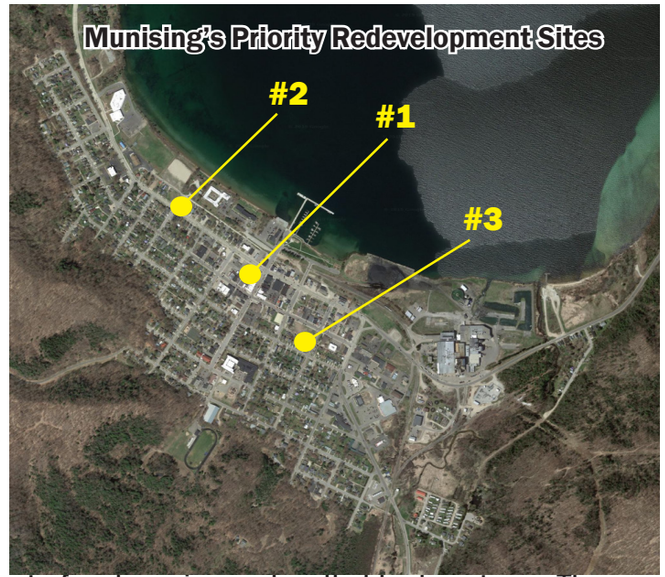
In-Demand Skills - Alger County



Source: *Lightcast 2024 Data Set*

Priority Redevelopment Sites

Redevelopment of vacant and underutilized properties is a high priority in the City of Munising. Reinvestment in these types of properties enhances a community's potential to attract business and talent by creating a stronger sense of place and catalzying future opportunities. Redevelopment visions should align with the future needs of the community, in Munsing's case, these visions should consider the possibility of strategies like increasing density, providing *missing middle* housing options, growing the tax base, utilizing the waterfront, and eliminating development barriers that impede the constructive and innovative use of land.



Priority Site #1: Former firehall and adjacent property

Location: Two large lots located on Munising Avenue, the mainstreet of the City's downtown.

Opportunity: This high-visibility site is located in the heart of a charming and walkable downtown. The future development could support a wide range uses of that complement a modern downtown.

Vision: The redevelopment of this lot will include a multi-story mixed-use building which uses the principles of traditional downtown design and a minimal parking footprint. Higher-density housing on the upper floors and commercial uses on the first floor would complement the overall vision of the downtown.

Priority Site #2: Cherry Street vacant lots

Location: Two vacant lots on the northeast and northwest corners of the Cherry St. and M-28 intersection.

Opportunity: Prime redevelopment sites located in the *Transitional* zoning district, allowing for a mix of residential and commercial development opportunities adjacent to a thriving downtown. The lots offer a view of the scenic Munising Bay, access to all city infrastruture services, and high-speed fiber broadband.

Vision: The use should blend well with the lower-intensity character of surrounding uses, which include both neighborhood commercial and larger single-family homes. The ideal development could include townhomes, rowhouses, or a similar housing type. Professional offices and business services, particularly of a high-tech nature would complement the area well, while providing nearby amenities to talented workers.

Priority Site #3: Downtown vacant lots on East Superior Street's 200-block

Location: Multiple lots along the south side of Superior St., between Maple and Birch in the *Downtown* district.

Opportunity: Nearly a full block in the *Downtown* zoning district, offering a wide-range of possibilities that would be compatible within a vibrant small town.

Vision: Traditional downtown development following the same build-to-lot-line placement of the two- or more story building. A mixed-use development with residential apartments on top and commercial retail below would be an ideal neighborhood fit.

Goals for Economic Development

The Planning Commission recognizes that proactive and well-coordinated economic development efforts are necessary if the city and region are expected to grow and thrive in the future. Commissioners recommend the following strategies:

Goal 1: Attract and grow modern light and small industries within the City.

- *Objective 1:* The Planning Commission will review the zoning code in 2026 to determine where possibilities exist for incorporating new light and small industry uses within zoning districts.
- *Objective 2:* Review contemporary data on locational advantages and possible opportunities for new industries, then work with the region's economic development organizations to entice new businesses to start up here.

Goal 2: Explore economic possibilities of Munising's deep water port.

- *Objective 1:* Maintain Munising's status as a deep water port and seize on future economic opportunities for using this designation.
- *Objective 2:* Work with regional and state economic development organizations to better understand the possibilities and private sector partners who may be interested in Munising's deep water port and what the barriers are to using it.



Goal 3: Promote the highest and best use of limited land and particularly vacant lots as the City considers redevelopment possibilities.

- *Objective 1:* Consider the taxable value of property of land in the downtown and along the waterfront when revising the zoning ordinance to support the growth of the local tax base.
- *Objective 2:* Consider incentives and possibilities for relocating the baseball field, church, and phone company away from the waterfront.



Goal 4: Maintain an appropriate balance of tourism-focused development and community-oriented commercial and service establishments.

- *Objective 1:* In 2026 and years following, assess the proportion of tourism-related businesses to community-oriented commercial and service establishments to determine if an appropriate mix exists and if not, provide zoning ordinance amendments to control for that.

Goal 5: Improve the diversity of industries and employment opportunities by building on existing strengths, locational advantages and emerging opportunities.

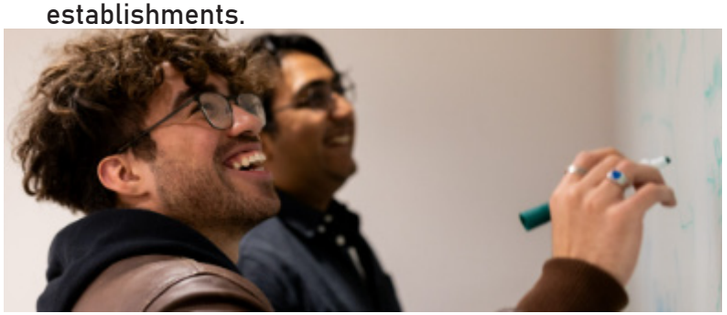
- *Objective 1:* Work with local economic development organizations to identify existing strengths and opportunities, then seize opportunities to develop and entice these industries.
- *Objective 2:* Use cluster strategies to build upon existing strengths in the tourism and wood/paper products industries.



Goals for Economic Development, Continued

Goal 6: Enhance Munising's entrepreneurial environment by supporting the growth of year-round businesses and encouraging new startups through improved access to resources, partnerships, and investment opportunities, ensuring that economic activity extends beyond the tourism season and provides stability for the community.

- *Objective 1:* Work with the region's economic development organizations to employ principles like Economic Gardening to grow and retain existing businesses.
- *Objective 2:* Coordinate with surrounding townships and the Greater Munising Bay Partnership for Commerce to determine regional strengths and opportunities, then form partnerships for successful business growth and development.
- *Objective 3:* Actively pursue new entrepreneurs and cultivate local entrepreneurs to create new businesses and fill vacant spaces using innovative strategies like pop-up storefronts.
- *Objective 4:* As economic development and business partners coordinate on local marketing campaigns, consider the development of a "local first" strategy that is supportive of locally-owned establishments.



Goal 7: Attract and retain skilled workers and talented people within key industries to cultivate new businesses and enhance the entrepreneurial environment.

- *Objective 1:* Meet with industry leaders to determine the types of amenities that are in highest demand among the talent that they employ and attempt to provide for them.
- *Objective 2:* Work with area businesses and economic developers to promote the possibility of working from home in appropriate circumstances as an incentive to offset the region's lower wage-scale as compared communities with more competitive wages.



Goal 8: Coordinate with the Munising Downtown Development Authority (DDA) on achieving common development objectives regarding the downtown.

- *Objective 1:* Consider the possibility of improvements to the blight code, zoning ordinance, or other design guidelines that could enhance the aesthetics and appearance of the Downtown.
- *Objective 2:* In 2026 and beyond, continue to meet annually with the DDA over a joint meeting to review strategies and coordinate on action steps relative to common objectives and work plan items found in the *Munising Downtown Development Plan*.
- *Objective 3:* Support land use planning that fosters the growth of the taxable value of properties within Munising's DDA TIF district and coordinate on investments that enhance infrastructure and structures in the downtown.



Goal 9: Work with property owners, developers, economic development organizations, and the State to redevelop commercial, industrial, and mixed-use properties.

- *Objective 1:* Beginning in 2026, coordinate with the DDA, economic development organizations, local developers and property owners to focus on a list of redevelopment sites and offer appropriate incentive tools and flexibility in the process of redevelopment for these projects.

Goal 10: Coordinate with regional partners and neighboring jurisdictions to enhance economic competitiveness and alignment of strategies.

- *Objective 1:* Beginning in 2026, participate in regional planning and economic development initiatives, such as the Regional Housing Partnership (RHP) and Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to address issues like regional affordable housing, community public health, and infrastructure asset management.

Natural Resources & Environment

Munising is fortunate to have an abundance of unique and impressive natural features that make the region a draw for outdoor enthusiasts of all types. Seemingly endless possibilities exist all four seasons of the year, due to the regional climate and the variety of landscapes. It is no wonder the local tourism industry is experiencing a surge, as images of its scenic vistas are circulated globally. But with this newfound attention come challenges and responsibilities to manage the sustainable growth of the tourism industry so it may be enjoyed for many generations into the future. Even before the boom of tourism, the



natural resources of the region, particularly the bay and forests, were the assets that originally allowed the region to be settled as a center for logging and commercial fishing. These industries, although smaller today, still employ a fair share of residents, and these occupations still play a major role in shaping the identity of Munising. As the global economy and climate changes, industries like these are particularly vulnerable to the shockwaves that occur, making it more important than ever to adopt sustainable practices and develop new markets to ensure the heritage and culture remain intact.

The Gateway to Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore

The Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, Munising's greatest claim to fame, welcomed 910,939 visitors in 2023. The number of visitors has decreased approximately 30% from it's peak in 2021, which saw an estimated 1.3 million visitors. By the most recent estimate, Pictured Rocks creates $45.8 million in economic benefits in the region and supports 544 jobs in the local economy. Improvements in marketing and promotion are major factors for the recent growth in tourism.

However, success also comes with the challenge of maintaining this unique resource which can become degraded by those who do not take the proper care. As the nearest urbanized area, Munising has the unique ability to leverage its geographic location to become the gateway to the park; not only capitalizing on the benefits, but also educating its visitors on the history and the proper etiquette to be used when visiting the Park. By coordinating with the National Parks Service on this responsibility, Munising will grow its reputation as a leader in sustainable ecotourism and foster a sense of apprecation for all.

Growing the Region's Renewable Energy Capacity

As the cost to produce and distribute energy from non-renewable sources grows higher and the the efficiency and prices of renewable energy technologies improves, it suggests that the City should begin taking proactive steps to facilitate the generation of renewable energy locally. UPPCO, the City's electric provider, now projects reaching approximately 50% renewable generation by 2028 and has announced a commitment to deliver 100% renewable and clean energy by 2040; these targets align with Michigan's statewide standards of 60% renewables by 2035 and 100% clean energy by 2040. To reach this goal, the City should consider its ordinances to determine where small-scale renewable energy sources, such as solar pannels, may be installed. Some possibilities include on the roofs of homes and businesses, vacant lots, and parking lots.



Low-Impact Approaches to Development

Low-Impact Development (LID) is a term that refers to the development precautions and structural best practices when engaging in the development of land which attempt to allow a site to function in a state as close as possible to its pre-development conditions. For example, existing soils, vegetation, and mature trees may be protected from encroachment on unused portions of the development site to ensure healthy stormwater drainage occurs.

In other instances, it may include a reduction in the amount of impervious surfaces like parking lots, which increase runoff. LID is not a "one size fits all" approach, nor is it a solution to every environmental problem, but in considering it for the right applications, LID can be a helpful tool to make communities more resilient in the face of extreme weather.

Goals for Natural Resources & Environment

Based on the input and content generated at focused workshops, we will generate goals related to areas of significant interest and provide them here. They will be referred to later in the action plan.

Goal 1: Encourage, incentivize, and remove barriers to the implementation of renewable energy technologies.

- *Objective 1:* Review building and zoning ordinances for potential barriers to the development of renewable energy technologies and improve upon any outdated or overly burdensome regulations, as appropriate.
- *Objective 2:* Work with utility providers and the Michigan Energy Office to provide incentives for energy efficiency and the installation of renewable energy technologies.
- *Objective 3:* Encourage residents, local establishments, and public sector organizations in Munising to consider cost savings from improved energy efficiency upgrades.
- *Objective 4:* Consider and develop policies and ordinance changes that allow for the development and expansion of electric vehicle charging infrastructure on public and private property.





Goal 2: Adopt a low-impact approach regarding natural resources and development for improved environmental health and enjoyment of the natural landscape.

- *Objective 1:* Create zoning ordinance standards for green infrastructure and low-impact development options to provide additional possibilities for the on-site management of stormwater.
- *Objective 2:* Work with Superior Watershed Partnership to implement best practices for improving water quality by 2027.
- *Objective 3:* Identify and develop tools for preserving sensitive environmental areas, greenways, and other desirable places for natural resource protection and recreational activities.
- *Objective 4:* Encourage the National Park Service to attend Planning Commission meetings and work with the city to plan future projects that might help reduce visitor impact on sensitive areas, such as providing a biking/ walking path to Sand Point, placing electronic speed signs on Sand Point Road and possibly moving the Visitor Center downtown to lower traffic impact.

Goal 3: Embrace the concept of being a "gateway community" to the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, as well as other notable places, and incorporate this concept into community marketing activities.

- *Objective 1:* Continue to promote the City's proximity to unique recreational opportunities within the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, Grand Island, Hiawatha National Forest, the Alger Underwater Preserve and additional public and private attractions.
- *Objective 2:* Find ways to draw tourists to a variety of viewpoints and natural areas to reduce pressure on prime places.
- *Objective 3:* Establish regular dialogue and discuss opportunities of working with the National Park Service to plan future projects that might help reduce visitor impact on sensitive areas.
- *Objective 4:* Consider the possibility of working with MSU Extension on a First Impressions study of Munising to better understand the opportunities and improvements that the city could take action on to improve its appeal as a gateway community.



Housing & Neighborhoods

The resiliency of small towns directly relates to the health of neighborhoods that support their adjacent downtowns. Munising is fortunate to have a historic pattern of development that has resulted in relatively dense, walkable neighborhoods built around the City's downtown core, providing excellent access to employment, goods, and services.

These conditions have allowed Munising to weather its share of economic challenges and the City continues to be Alger County's center of economic strength. However, neighborhoods may deteriorate over time due to lack of investment, blight, and deterioration of residential character, so it is important to take steps to maintain the integrity of these residential zones.

Finding the Right Balance

Providing the right balance of owner-occupied, renter-occupied, and seasonal housing is a challenge for small tourism-focused communities because the results are largely dependent on market factors beyond the control of local government. Overall housing supply in Munising has decreased by approximately 72 units over the past five years. This may be due to the deterioration of older homes, but may be attributed in some part to the Census' margin of error on surveys.

The availability of rentals however, has decreased by an estimated 130 units, for a nearly 30% decrease since 2010. This decrease in supply results in greater demand for rental housing, which can be observed as rental costs increase signficantly over this same timeframe. For those lacking the financial ability or unwillingness to become homeowners, options are greatly limited as there is a lack of comparable housing options and urban amenities in outlying communities. This creates a secondary problem for the sustainability of the tourism industry, as jobs in this sector are typically service sector positions that offer lower than average wages that cannot keep pace with market rate rental prices.

Munising is a rapidly growing tourist destination and while that fact may contribute to positive economic growth for the local industry, it may also contribute to some undesireable conflicts with everyday life. For example, if the City were to continue its trend of fewer long-term residents and families living in the City, the K-12 school system could continue to see declining enrollment, which could then lead to reductions in services. Encroachment of vacation rentals in residential neighborhoods may result in changes to the character of neighborhoods during times of peak tourism, making it less desireable for families looking for tranquility.



These examples can lead to a cascading effect that disrupts the sustainability of small town life if growth were left unmanaged. This suggests City policy-makers should determine the limit individual districts and the City overall can bear with regard to vacation rentals and second homes, then develop strategies and enforce regulations that ensure this balance is not compromised. It is recommended that vacation rentals be permitted on a limited basis in the Downtown, Transitional, and Lakefront Commercial zoning districts, while restricting them from Residential districts.

Improvements to Housing Stock

Improving the quality of housing stock in Munising is vitally important, as new housing is unlikely to be developed on a large scale within the City limits. According the the 2023 ACS, nearly one third of all housing units in Munising were built in 1939 or earlier. Older homes typically require more investment and considerations as they undergo improvements than modern homes, and energy efficiency updates, utilities, roofs, and exteriors are relatively common needs among these older structures. Home improvement grants and loans are an excellent way to keep the existing stock of housing in good condition and City or County leaders are in an ideal position to help facilitate a program that could support this objective. Neighborhood redevelopment through the support of homeowner rehabilitation is also an effective strategy for combating blight, which has a corrosive effect the aesthetic and social value of neighborhoods.



Missing Middle Housing and Neighborhood Infill

Missing Middle is a term that refers to housing types that are not commonly present in Michigan communities, and typically include such forms as mixed-use loft apartments above commercial, townhouses and row houses, duplexes, fourplexes, and other structures that fit well into the fabric of a moderately dense urban neighborhood. These types of housing developments are practical for small towns with traditional downtowns and in adjacent downtown neighborhoods where density and walkable urbanism is desired. In Munising's case, *missing middle* housing development should be strongly considered as it redevelops vacant downtown lots or blighted commercial and public buildings.

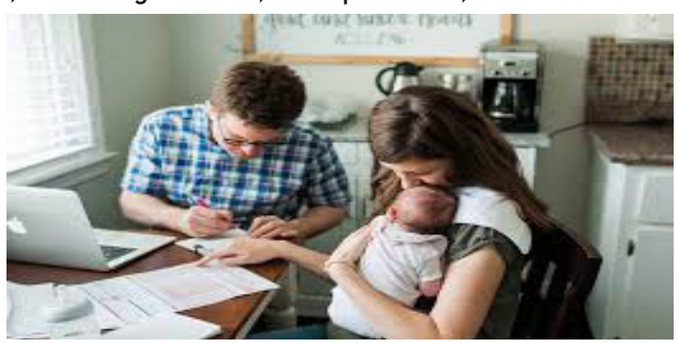


Missing middle housing types are exceedingly in-demand in today's housing market, as people of all ages and income levels are in search of housing. Smaller living spaces that are typical in downtown settings are ideal for retirees looking to downsize, empty-nesters, and young professionals looking for living spaces in a vibrant downtown near the services and amenities they tend to use.

City leaders should consider the redevelopment opportunities that exist in the downtown and transitional zones and engage the community and decision makers on the future uses of these potential redevelopment sites. The City could support this activity, while the city reviews its ordinances and development processes to remove barriers that create unnecessary hurdles for development of *missing middle* housing.

Housing Affordability

Contemporary measures suggest housing affordability is determined as a ratio of housing expenses to household income. This can be measured in monthly rent for rental units or a monthly housing expenses for owner-occupied units. Monthly housing expenses above 30% of a household's monthly income are more likely to be unaffordable when factoring in other necessities of life, such as groceries, transportation, and medical care.



According to the 2023 ACS Estimates, 22.8% of households with a mortgage and 25.1% of rental households are spending above 30% on housing costs in Munising. The data indicates monthly housing expenses have increased across both types of tenure from 2010 to 2023; yet the proportion of households paying 30% or more of their income have decreased by 14% for households with a mortgage and fell by 12% for rental households for this same time period. This is likely due to a recent uptick in income growth following the 2020 pandemic.

To better combat the situation of unaffordability, City leaders should consider actions that could increase the supply of affordable and workforce housing when opportunities arise. The demographics most likely to be impacted by unaffordable housing situations in Munising are seniors, young adults, and also service sector workers which are vitally important to the growing service economy in Munising.



City of Munising 2025 Housing Needs Assessment

The City's 2025 Housing Needs Assessment identifies a strategy centered on infill, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse to meet documented needs and market realities (no new construction since 2019; 22.7% of units vacant. Priority housing should focus on practical, small-scale formats that fit Munising's existing pattern. This includes adaptive reuse of vacant or underused buildings into residential units, upper-story housing above downtown storefronts, and mixed-use infill with housing over commercial space. It also includes missing-middle housing such as townhouses and small apartment buildings on infill sites, along with accessory dwelling units like garage apartments or small backyard cottages that can support aging in place.

The assessment identifies a need for roughly 250 additional housing units over the next 20 years, or about 13–14 units per year. These units should be distributed to match local incomes, with about 100 units for lower-income households, 100 for middle-income households, and 50 for higher-income households. Meeting this need will require changes to zoning to allow these housing types, especially adjustments to setbacks, lot sizes, and lot coverage. It will also require expanded rehab programs, tools to support affordability, partnerships with employers on workforce housing, and efforts to shift some short-term rentals into long-term housing so new and existing units remain available to year-round residents.

Goals for Housing & Neighborhoods

The Planning Commission recognizes that developing a strong policy on local housing is critical to the long-term sustainability of Munising and recommends the following strategies be undertaken in the next five years:

Goal 1: Maintain the appeal and character of Munising's neighborhoods to ensure small-town character is not compromised.

- *Objective 1:* The Planning Commission will make recommendations to the City Commission to focus on blight remediation of vacant residential properties by reviewing and updating the property maintenance code while ensuring responsibility falls to the property owner.
- *Objective 2:* The Planning Commission will make recommendations to the City Commission regarding long-term and short-term rentals to ensure a high level of livability and compatibility exists by starting a rental property registration program and limiting the placement of short-term rentals to appropriate neighborhoods.

Goal 2: Increase the stock of quality affordable, attainable, and market rate housing that meets the needs and incomes of the workforce in Munising.

- *Objective 1:* In 2026, the Planning Commission will consider the findings of the *City of Munising Housing Needs Assessment* and determine what steps could be taken to enhance support for housing development in a manner that addresses the challenges identified, such as reviewing minimum lot size/width, parking, and setbacks.
- *Objective 2:* Support mixed-use and *missing middle* housing redevelopment projects in and around the
- *Objective 3:* Develop a rental education program for assisting landlords and tenents to achieve better communication, understanding, and outcomes.

Goal 3: Support home improvements focused on assisting seniors and persons with disabilities to live independently in their homes.

- *Objective 1:* Develop local capacity or work with Alger County to manage and support programs focused on accessibility improvements to housing for the benefit of seniors and persons with disabilities.
- *Objective 2:* Pursue funding programs from State and Federal agencies that provide funds for improvements to accessibility in homes and businesses.
-



Goal 4: Provide new options for the development of *missing middle* housing types, where they are deemed appropriate.

- *Objective 1:* In 2026, review the zoning ordinance to determine if new *missing middle* housing types could be included and amend the ordinance to make this type of housing format possible.
- *Objective 2:* Create a vision for the future of redevelopment sites where *missing middle* housing is wanted, then market this possibility to both large and small-scale developers.



Goal 5: Control the proliferation of blight in neighborhoods through the consistent enforcement of ordinances, volunteer assistance, and community placemaking efforts to encourage investment in adjacent properties.

- *Objective 1:* Work with the DDA to continue successful placemaking initiatives like Art in the Alley and support grant opportunities focused on creating an enhanced sense of place.
- *Objective 2:* Review zoning and general law ordinances related to blight and nuisances to determine if updates are necessary to improve community appearance.
- *Objective 3:* Coordinate with the Alger County Land Bank Authority to assist with remediating vacant and blighted properties in the community.

Goal 6: Establish a regulatory framework for permitting short term rentals that does not adversely affect the long-term residents of Munising.

- *Objective 1:* In 2026, review best practices of other communities as they attempt to regulate short term rentals while giving additional consideration to the decreasing availability of long-term rental housing in the community and attempt to find a balance.
- *Objective 2:* Provide an opportunity for residents to give input on the potential options for regulation.







Quality of Life

This section of the Plan addresses the features, amenities, experiences, and conditions that collectively make Munising a desireable place to live for year-round residents. What makes Munising a place where new residents would want to locate? How can we create a great place that Munising's college-bound youth would want to move back to after graduation? What can we do as a community to make the overall population more happy, healthy, and safe? These are the big questions that we should attempt to find solutions to as we engage in community development over the coming years in order to maintain a vibrant and livable place.



Enhancing Walkability & Outdoor Recreational Assets

Walkable places deliver strong economic returns. In major U.S. metros, housing in walkable urban areas commands about a 90% higher value per square foot, with rents also significantly higher than in auto-oriented areas . Beyond economics, walkable environments support physical activity, reduce car dependence, and strengthen social connections. Munising is well positioned to build on this advantage, with its compact scale and close connections to regional trails and natural assets supporting a highly ble, recreation-oriented community.

Improving the Access and Availability of Local Foods

Imagine Munising as a regional hub for fresh and locally grown produce, where a thriving movement of entrepreneurial growers in the region provide healthy foods to schools, farmers markets, restaurants, and stores with community gardens and backyard gardens to help sustain our residents. As we seek out new ways to diversify our economy, enhance community resilience, and improve food system security, a vision as descibed above is a realistic and attainable proposition.

According to the findings of the 2023 *U.P. Health Needs Assessment*, only 7.7% of Alger County residents eat the recommended *five or more* daily servings of fruits and vegetables. Improving this statistic is important for community health, and could have a positive impact on the local economy, if there was more demand for locally sourced agricultural products. Improving the availability of locally grown and raised food products requires a vision and commitment to implement a variety of policies and regulatory tools. It also requires the community support to promote cultural changes in eating habits and local sourcing preferences. Munising should consider steps it can take locally and make connections regionally to achieve a thriving local food hub.



Public Spaces and Community Aesthetics

When maintained and well-used, public spaces can contribute signifcantly to community vitality and vibrancy. By enchancing and investing in public spaces, these actions tend to have the effect of encouraging private investment in nearby properties. As Munising has learned from its successful *Art in the Alley* campaign, enhancements to under-used public places can have a dramatic effect on community aesthetics while drawing residents and tourists alike to areas that were once avoided. Businesses tend to thrive in areas of high foot traffic, so traditonal downtowns with their open store fronts, ground floor windows, and sidewalk amenities are the ideal places for these types of placemaking efforts.



A concept known by community developers as the *Power of 10* suggests that a place needs ten major destinations in the region, ten places within each destination, and ten things to do in each place. This concept provides local leaders with a target for creating a transformational placemaking strategy that includes incremental and tangible goals. City leaders and the DDA should work together and attempt to map the placemaking assets it currently has, then determine where and how it can be enhanced to achieve the *Power of 10* principles.

Goals for Quality of Life

The Planning Commission recognizes that quality of life issues affect the health and wellness of the community, but also serves as an important tool for attracting and retaining talent, therefore they recommend the following strategies be undertaken in the next five years:

Goal 1: Improve walkability, walk appeal, and pedestrian connectivity city-wide.

- *Objective 1:* Coordinate with the National Park Service to provide a biking and walking path along the Washington Street corridor up to Sand Point to improve recreational opportunities for residents and visitors by 2027.
- *Objective 2:* Develop a strong network of pedestrian connectivity from residential areas to key points of interest, such as schools, the downtown, public parks, regional trails connections, and grocery stores.

Goal 2: Improve the health of Munising's residents



through increased access, affordability, and consumption of local foods.

- *Objective 1:* Work with the school system to identify opportunities for developing more farm to school activities to begin building healthy habits among Munising's youth.
- *Objective 2:* Encourage the establishment of season extension facilities, such as hoop houses and controlled environment agriculture.
- *Objective 3:* Explore the possibility of amending the zoning ordinance to permit activities like small scale agriculture in residential areas.
- *Objective 4:* Cultivate champions of local food and agriculture to assist with building regional partnerships, initiatives, and pursuing grant opportunities.

Goal 3: Improve wayfinding and community marketing to attract visitors and help them explore the region and spend money at local establishments.

- *Objective 1:* By 2027, develop a community marketing and branding strategy and apply it to community wayfinding signage and other materials.
- *Objective 2:* Work among community stakeholders to determine the attractions and points of interest that would be most important to identify in wayfinding signage.

Goal 4: Explore the possibility of enhancing or creating new public spaces throughout the City, particularly along the waterfront.

- *Objective 1:* Promote and enhance the waterfront by increasing access to improve quality of life and enhancie the unique character of the City, to draw residents who will become permanent.
- *Objective 2:* Potentially approach owners of waterfront land uses like the school, ballpark, phone company, and Lutheran Church about coordination on public access and future land redevelopment plans.

Goal 5: Provide more opportunities and amenities year-round to create more excitement and build upon a sense of pride in Munising.

- *Objective 1:* Hold seasonal festivals to attract tourists and to enhance the quality of life for local residents.
- *Objective 2:* Meet the active and passive recreational needs of all segments of the population, keeping in mind the developmental needs of children and youth.
- *Objective 3:* Coordinate with governments county-wide to ensure that there are public facilities to serve as gathering places to meet recreational needs of all ages.

Goal 6: Consider social inclusion in relevant city decisions so that people of all economic classes are encouraged to live here.

- *Objective 1:* By 2027, consider the findings of the 2025 Central U.P. Regional Housing Study to explore equity issues in housing, including the supply of senior housing options.



Downtown Development

Munising's downtown is the heart of the City and naturally forms a focal point of commerce and activity in the community. Nestled in along the picturesque Munising Bay, it is a significant contributor to the community's identity. Many factors over the past century have shaped growth and uses in the downtown; however, in recent times city leaders have taken greater interest in creating a highly livable downtown while maintaining a balance with authentic small-town character. The availability of redevelopment sites, developer interest, and how city leaders plan for the future will be the key factors that determine what our downtown will become.



Downtown Development Authority

In Michigan, a DDA is a public body empowered to support the growth and development of the downtown, typically by capturing growth in tax revenues and reinvesting in downtown businesses and infrastructure. The Munising DDA's boundaries cover the entire Downtown zoning district, but also parts of the Transitional, Commercial, and Lakefront Commercial districts.

The DDA is guided by the *Development and Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Plan*, amended in 2022 which includes a list of priority projects for the use of captured tax revenue. In 2018 the DDA and Planning Commission held a joint meeting to discuss coordination on overlapping priorities and identified additional possibilities for redevelopment within the district. Coordinating joint meetings between these two bodies each year ensures that priorities within each of their work plans are mutually attainable and supportive of the other's efforts.

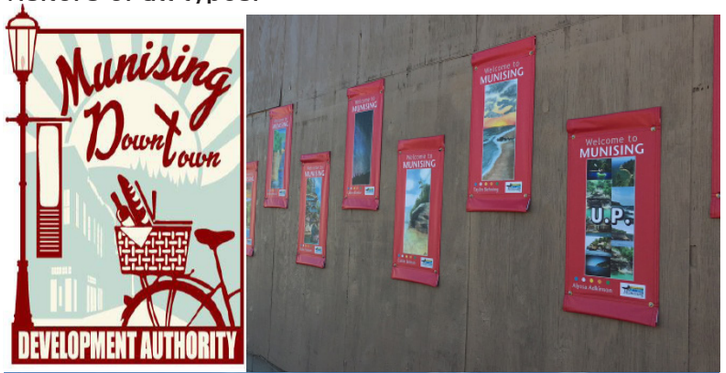
As the body charged with proposing ordinance language and the development of a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP), the Planning Commission can support the DDA's objectives by creating a regulatory framework that supports a vibrant downtown and by referencing the DDA's priority projects in the CIP for future City budget considerations. Shared interests such as placemaking, walkability, mixed-use development, and *missing middle* housing present opportunities that will improve quality of life for residents and create a more economically prosperous downtown.

A questionnaire was provided to downtown stakeholders in preparation of the 2018 DDA/Planning Commission joint meeting and identified topics. The items of interest included: infrastructure needs, public space enhancement, improving housing stock, and the redevelopment of vacant lots. Likewise, the joint meeting that followed identified specfic projects like improvements to the H-58/M-28 intersection which was completed prior to this plan update, planning for mixed-use development projects at the old firehall, UPPCO site, and on the vacant lots at the intersection of Cherry St. and Munising Ave., and the creation of a public beach.



Placemaking in the Downtown

Placemaking is the process of building quality places where people want to live, work, and spend time. It encompasses a range of activities from the redevelopment of historic buildings into new residential-commercial mixed uses, to small-scale enhancements to public spaces that improve the aesthetics of the surroundings. Downtown Munising is the core of placemaking investments in the community and each year invites area artists to display their works around the City through banners, posters, and a mesmerizing *Art in the Alley* project, that attracts residents and visitors of all types.





Goals for Downtown Development

The Planning Commission recognizes that its downtown is an important asset as its relates to community and economic development, and so it recommends the following strategies be undertaken in the next five years:

Goal 1: Enhance coordination among the Planning Commission, DDA, and City Commission on redvelopment activites.

- *Objective 1:* By 2026, organize an annual joint meeting between the Planning Commission and DDA to discuss shared objectives in work plans.
- *Objective 2:* By 2026, the Planning Commission will review the DDA's priorities and incorporate any capital needs from the DDA Plan into the City's CIP.
- *Objective 3:* By 2026, the DDA will provide support in marketing and promoting the availability of redevelopment opportunities.
- *Objective 4:* By 2027, the Planning Commission, DDA, and City Council will collaborate on hosting a public forum to present opportunities and envision possibilities for future public spaces, including the possibility of a public beach.

Goal 2: Address ordinance changes that will support the growth of a vibrant and prosperous downtown.

- *Objective 1:* In 2026, the Planning Commission will review the zoning ordinance to determine the appropriateness of uses, including contemporary uses.
- *Objective 2:* Beginning in 2026, the Planning Commission will review provisions in all City ordinances to identify barriers to placemaking actvities, such as sidewalk dining.
- *Objective 3:* In 2026, the Planning Commission will review and make changes to ordinances to protect the traditional design of the downtown and features that enhance the appeal of walking and non-motorized transportation.



Infrastructure & Community Facilities

Infrastructure and community facilities are the assets that make modern life possible in our communities. It includes our transportation networks, water and sewer assets, government buildings and public spaces, private utilities, and community services that operate oftentimes unnoticed when in working order. However, when any of these essential services become interrupted, City leaders are quick to find out from the public how much of an inconvenience it can be. In the worst cases, the failure of infrastructure can lead to consequences for public health and safety, economic setbacks, and legal liability. It is critical that the City and its partners properly maintain these assets for the resilliency of the community and to mitigate the potential for consequences that result from their failure.



Asset Management & Capital Improvements Planning

What are the assets that we own? What condition are they in and what is their remaining life? How will we budget for their repair and replacement in the future?

These are the questions we ask as we develop a holistic approach to the managment of infrastructure. It may be hard to believe, but this is a relatively new concept in Michigan. When the anticipated life of a sewer pipe is greater than the lifespan of your average person, it is reasonable that the party who was responsible for its installation overlooked the fact that it may eventually need to be replaced. Nearly a century later following the rapid growth that gave rise to our cities, we are experiencing challenges that come with the end-life of many infrastructure assets, particularly water and sewer pipes that have been hidden from view for decades.



The cost to replace these assets is significant, but with modern tools like Geographic Information Systems (GIS), we can begin to develop a comprehensive system for understanding the conditions and needs, embodied in a document known as an Asset Managment Plan. From this plan, we are able to extract, plan, and budget for the more near-term projects. Infrastructure projects requiring repair or replacement within the following six years should be included in the City's annually updated Capital Improvements Plan (CIP); a plan that provides details on the cost and general considerations of capital projects relative to other budgetary items identified in the CIP. Each year, as the City Commission approves the annual budget, it can refer to the priorities and recommendations found in the CIP to guide decision making.

Complete Streets and Walkability

Complete Streets is a concept that recommends roads are designed and operated so they are safe, comfortable, and convenient for all practical users, which may include pedestians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities. This type of policy is *not intended* to place additional requirements on road redesigns where compatibility is not appropriate, but to simply enhance considerations for incorporating improvements for users who may typically be present in an area where it may be feasible. Such an example could include the placement of a high visibility crosswalk in an area where pedestrians are common, or eliminating curbing in areas where wheelchair access may be desired.

Walkability and *walk appeal* are similar concepts that address the community's potential for pedestrian mobility and desireability. The quality of walkability is often considered what is located within a five or ten-minute walk of one's surroundings to acquire basic needs like groceries. Walk appeal addresses the quality of the walking environment, as some 5-minute walks may be unpleasant due to factors like proximity to high-speed traffic. A complete streets policy may provide some flexible recommendations that can enhance the prospect of non-motorized mobility in and around Munising. It is well-documented that these types of improvements enhance the value and marketability of real estate in a community, while enhancing quality of life for residents.



Infrastructure Assets and Community Services

Transportation and Connectivity

The City of Munising's transportation network serves far more than the movement of vehicles. Roads, sidewalks, shared-use paths, trails, bridges, and public spaces collectively connect residents to schools, neighborhoods, parks, downtown businesses, the waterfront, and employment centers while supporting one of the City's most important economic sectors- outdoor recreation and tourism.

Because regional public transit options remain limited, walking and bicycling play an important role in everyday travel for many residents. At the same time, visitors rely on the City's transportation network to access downtown businesses, waterfront amenities, campgrounds, and trail systems. As a result, transportation investments are planned to improve safety, accessibility, connectivity, and economic vitality rather than simply increasing roadway capacity.

Roads

The City of Munising manages its roadway network with a focus on long-term preservation, coordination, and fiscal responsibility. Street reconstruction projects are coordinated with water, sewer, and stormwater improvements whenever practical so that newly reconstructed roads are not disturbed by future underground utility work. The Washington Street Corridor project demonstrates this coordinated approach by combining roadway reconstruction, utility upgrades, and non-motorized improvements into a single capital investment.

Munising maintains a defined network of major streets and local roads that support daily travel, emergency response, freight movement, and tourism. State gas and weight tax revenues provide the foundation for routine maintenance while federal and state transportation programs support larger capital improvements. Annual pavement preservation, bridge rehabilitation, and corridor reconstruction projects are prioritized through the City's Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) based on pavement condition, safety, and opportunities to coordinate with utility improvements.

Transportation projects are also viewed as opportunities to improve pedestrian safety and accessibility. When roadways are reconstructed, sidewalks, crossings, lighting, drainage, and traffic-calming measures are evaluated alongside vehicle travel lanes. This approach supports the City's Complete Streets policy while strengthening connections between neighborhoods, downtown, parks, schools, and the waterfront. Rather than expanding its roadway network, the City prioritizes reinvestment in existing transportation assets, extending their useful life while maintaining predictable long-term capital costs.



Road

Bridges and Culverts

Bridges and culverts are essential components of Munising's transportation system, providing safe crossings over rivers, streams, and drainageways while maintaining natural water flow throughout the community. Failure of these structures can disrupt transportation networks, threaten public safety, and cause significant property damage during extreme weather events. A recent example of such a failure can be drawn from another U.P. community when, during the 2018 Father's Day storm, Houghton County experienced a thousand-year rain event that overwhelmed the infrastructure system, resulting in washed out roads and millions of dollars in property damage.

As climate patterns continue to produce more frequent and intense rainfall events, proactive asset management has become increasingly important. The City works closely with county, state, and regional partners to inspect, maintain, and replace aging bridge and culvert infrastructure as part of its ongoing Capital Improvements Planning process.



Repair work being completed on the Anna River Bridge

The Anna River Bridge along H-58 remains an important transportation asset and has benefited from previous rehabilitation and preventive maintenance. Likewise, the City's culvert inventory and assessment completed by CUPPAD provides the foundation for prioritizing future replacement projects, including undersized culverts identified along Sand Point Road. These investments improve resiliency while reducing future maintenance costs and flood risks.



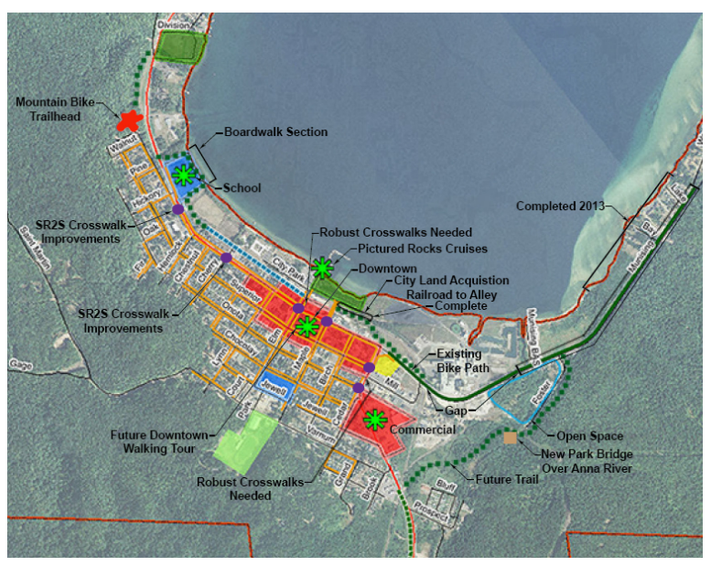
Mountain Bike Park trailhead built and funded by the Munising Bay Trail Network

Non-Motorized Assets Pathways and Sidewalks

Walking, bicycling, and trail use are fundamental components of Munising's transportation system. The City's network of sidewalks, shared-use paths, and recreational trails serves both transportation and recreation by connecting neighborhoods, schools, parks, downtown businesses, waterfront destinations, Tourist Park Campground, and regional recreation assets. These connections also strengthen Munising's identity as the "Gateway to Adventure" while supporting local businesses that rely on outdoor tourism. This dual role of transportation and recreation is consistently emphasized throughout the City's Recreation Plan. The City adopted a Non-Motorized Transportation Plan in 2026 to guide the maintenance, expansion, and long-term development of its sidewalk, shared-use path, and trail network. The plan identifies improvements that enhance mobility for residents while expanding recreational opportunities and supporting economic development.

Priority investments include:

- Completing missing sidewalk segments;
- Improving ADA accessibility throughout the pedestrian network;
- Expanding shared-use paths and regional trail connections;
- Strengthening connections between neighborhoods, schools, downtown, Tourist Park Campground, H-58, and recreational destinations;
- Improving pedestrian-scale lighting, wayfinding, and trailhead amenities; and
- Supporting year-round maintenance of key pedestrian and bicycle routes.



The Master Plan supports implementation of the adopted Non-Motorized Transportation Plan and recognizes it as the City's primary policy document for future pedestrian and bicycle investments.

These priorities closely align with the Downtown Development Authority's long-term investment strategy, which includes sidewalk replacement, bike path improvements, streetscape lighting, placemaking, downtown beautification, parking improvements, and implementation of the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan.

Opportunities suggested include developing more public transit stops along the non-motorized system, year-round maintenance on key pedestrian routes, improved pedestrian-scale wayfinding signage, improvements to alleys so they may be used as connectors to the existing multi-use path, and development of an east-west pathway along M-28.

The recommendations included in this non-motorized plan, in coordination with the City's adopted *Complete Streets* policy and Capital Improvements Plan ensure that Munising is taking appropriate measures to develop a more appealing and walkable environment for pedestrians of all abilities.



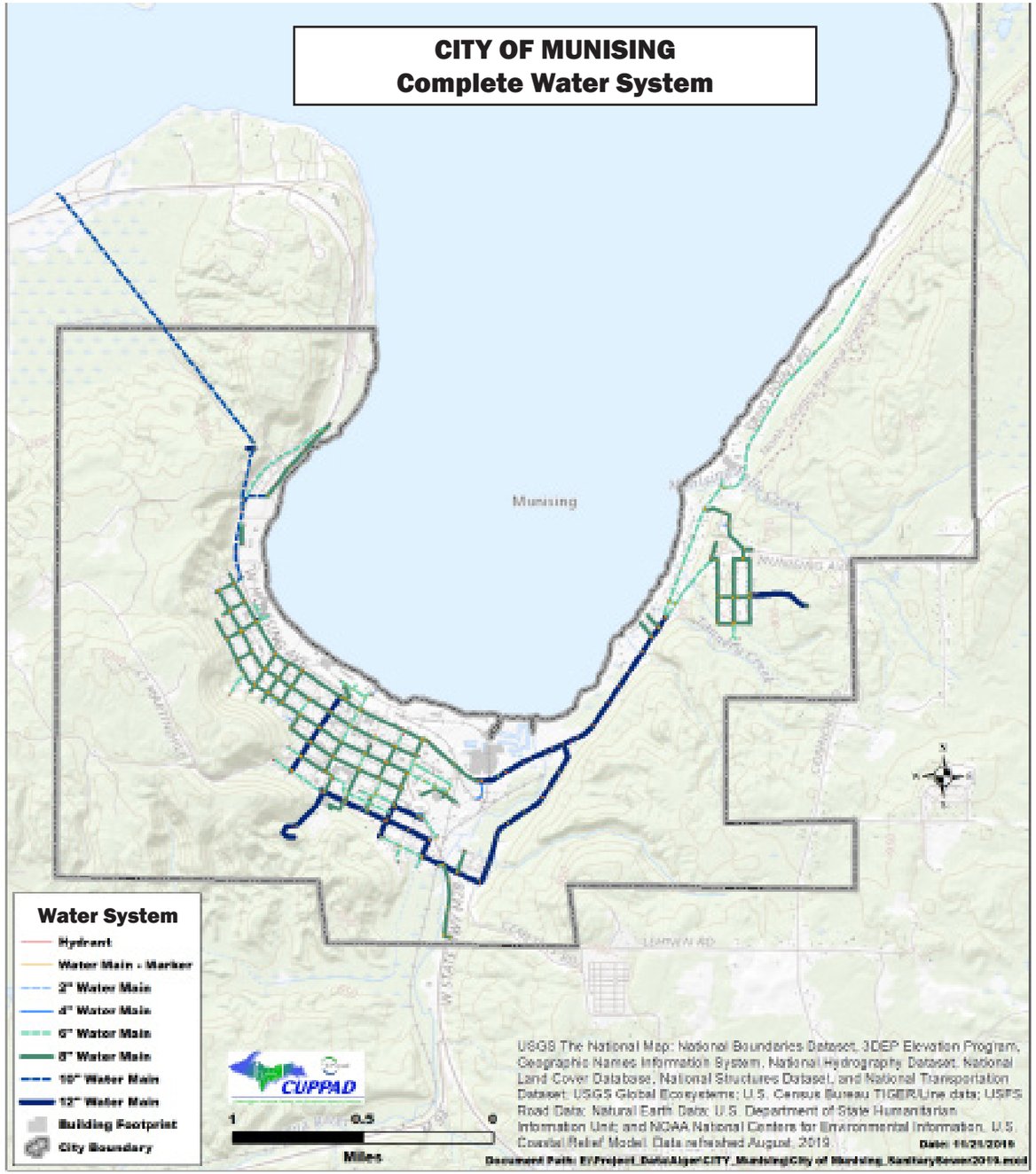
Sewer, Water and Storm Drainage Infrastructure

The City of Munising's water, sewer, and storm networks were mapped and assessed in 2018 through Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) SAW grants. A basic overview of these assets follow.



Sewer and Wastewater Infrastructure

The results of SAW Asset Managment Plan reports that the overall sanitary sewer system is in good condition, although isolated areas underground must be addressed. Three projects from this report have either been completed, are underway, or are planned near-term for replacement or improvement. Currently in progress, the H-58 sewer main and structure will be replaced to meet current standards. Over the years 2020-2021, the MDOT M-28 reconstruction project will replace sanitary sewer pipe from Legion St. to Cherry St. and also from the H-58 intersection (new roundabout) to Cedar St. Plans are also in place for upgrading the City's wastewater treatment plant, including installing a system and controls for an aerobic digester. This will build on recently completed upgrades to the plant's blowers and aeration systems in 2018. Through this work, the City will be better equipped to protect the quality of local water from contamination.

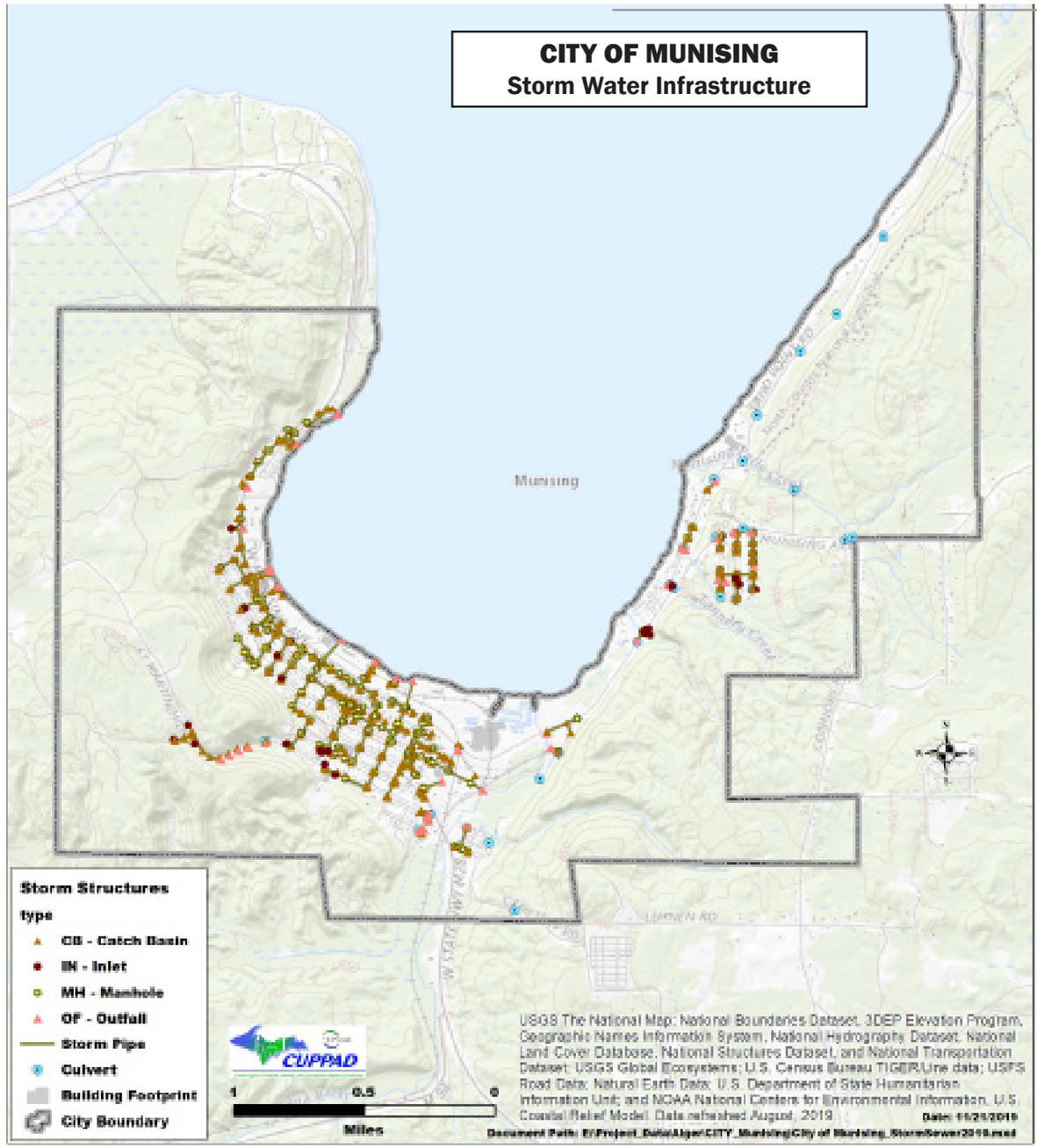


Water Distribution System
Likewise with the water distribution system, the findings of the SAW report indicated the City's infrastructure is in good condition, overall. The system connects over 1,000 water meters to households and businesses throughout the city, in addition to more than 100 fire hydrants.

The City's water department maintains these assets and participates in the annual Capital Improvements Planning (CIP) process by submitting future year projects when construction or replacement is anticipated. The City's 2019 CIP indicates one major project occuring over 2020-2021 in coordination with the M-28 road reconstruction project. This project included the replacement of a significant water main at the cost of $4.3M, which is expected to be paid for through a combination of USDA grants and bonds.

Storm Sewer and Ditch Network
The City's storm sewer system consists of approximately 54,000 feet of pipe, 452 catch basins and 143 manholes primarily located along and within roadways. The City's stormwater asset management plan was developed in November 2018 by Coleman Engineering and provides an assessment of assets, including data on their location, condition, remaining useful life, and estimated replacement cost. The plan concludes that 95% of the system is considered at "low business risk" and indicates no capital improvements projects are schedulued for the near future.





Community Facilities

A variety of public facilities which serve the everyday needs of residents are located within the City limits. Some of these facilities are owned and operated by entities, such as Alger County and the National Parks Service, while others are City-owned and maintained. An inventory and basic assessment of these City-owned facilities are identified in the map to the right and described below.

Buildings and Grounds

City Hall - The cheif administrative building of Munising's City government. City Hall is the primary location for public meetings on City business. City Hall anticipates a parking lot rehabilitation project over 2020-2021.

Police and Fire Station - Built in 2012, Munising's Police and Fire Department is a modern facility that supports the public safety and emergency response needs of the City and immediate region. The police department is staffed by a Police Chief and three full-time officers. The Fire Department is a paid on-call department comprised of 24 volunteer fire fighters. No significant facility upgrades are anticipated in the near future.

Wastewater Treatment Plant - Munising's wastewater treatment plant treats and disposes of sewage from the City and also the Alger Max Correctional Facility. The facility was recently upgraded in 2008 to add a number of improvements that modernized the system and improved local water quality.

Public Works Building - The Department of Public Works operates out of the Munising Industrial Park. Twelve trucks are stored in the public works facility in addition to smaller equipment such as welders, mowers, etc. Heavy equipment such as the city's grader, front end loaders, and backhoes are stored outside.

Industrial Park - The city's 37-acre industrial park is located in Munising Township. Lease amounts vary according to the property size involved. A current stipulation for a lease agreement is the creation of a minimum of on site jobs. There are twelve lots at the Industrial Park, eight of which are currently being leased. Seven of the sights are active and one is being utilized for storage.

Water and sewer service are provided at the industrial park, as well as natural gas. The water supply for the facility, as well as the Alger Maximum Correctional Facility, is pumped from two wells located at the site that serve these two facilities exclusively. Each well is 158 feet deep. A three-phase power supply is also available at the industrial park.

Parks, Public Spaces, & Waterfront Assets

Bayshore Park & Pavilion - The central waterfront park of Munising, where the Farmers Market and annual community events are held. There are no planned improvements to this facility scheduled over the next six years; however some community members have expressed that a new public swimming beach is needed.



Brown's Addition Baseball Field - The baseball field on the City's west side is anticipating lighting and bathroom upgrades over 2021-2023, supported by the City's DDA and the Parks and Recreation Department.

Munising Bay Trailhead - The Munising Bay Trail Network received a significant investment from the City and DDA over 2018-2019 to complete a Universally Accessible bike trail, which supports the recreation interests of city residents and visitors alike.



Bayshore Marina - The Bayshore Marina is a major economic asset for the City, providing access for commercial and recreational users. The marina building's shingles were replaced in 2018 and no additional near-term upgrades are identified.

Brown's Addition Boat Launch - This boat launch provides public parking and access to the Munsing Bay on the City's west side. The City anticipates a parking lot repair project in 2021 and dock upgrades over 2022-2023 in order to meet the increased demand at this facility.

Anna River Fishing Pier - The fishing pier was rehabilitated in 2016 on land leased from the DNR and includes a accessible kayak launch and vault toilet facility. No future upgrades are planned.

Alger Centennial Ice Arena - Located at Varnum and Park, the 24,000 square foot Alger Centennial Arena was constructed in 1985. During the months when no ice surface is being maintained, the facility is rented for large gatherings such as receptions, reunions, conventions, etc. The city is responsible for the management of the arena.

Tourist Park - Located in Grand Island Township on Lake Superior, Tourist Park has 127 camp sites, including several sites with water, electric, and sewer hookups, as well as free WiFi. 23 rustic tents sites on Lake Superior are also available. The lakefront provides a beautiful sand beach. An office for registration and snacks, a pavilion structure and a building housing restrooms and showers serve the park's visitors.





Goals for Infrastructure and Community Facilities

The Planning Commission recognizes that improvements to infrastructure systems and management of assets are necessary steps for building community resiliency and recommends the following strategies be undertaken in the next five years:

Goal 1: Develop and maintain plans for the management of public assets and capital improvements as supportive tools for the City's annual budget process.

- *Objective 1:* Maintain a local Asset Management Plan and CIP that includes transportation, water, wastewater, and storm water infrastructure and provide updates as new infrastructure is added to the system, or as capital assets are re-assessed.
- *Objective 2:* Increase knowledge of asset management practices and priorities by taking advantage of training programs offered to officials and staff.
- *Objective 3:* Stay updated with the Asset Management Readiness Assessment Scale then make progress toward improving mastery in areas that are lacking.

Goal 2: Support the development of improved roadway designs and configurations that improve safety, access, and flow of traffic across and throughout the city.

- *Objective 1:* Coordinate with area road agencies and neighboring jurisdictions to consider development and access management policies along the M-28 corridor.
- *Objective 2:* Improve safety along the Washington Street corridor by incorporating traffic calming measures and access management techniques.
- *Objective 3:* Incorporate *Complete Streets* design elements as streets are improved and redevelopment happens.







Land Use and Zoning Plan

The *Land Use and Zoning Plan* section is one of the most integral components in the development of a master plan. The Michigan Planning Enabling Act of 2008 specifically requires the plan to address land use issues and recommendations for the physical development of the community 20 years or more into the future. As proposals for development are considered, the Planning Commission, City Commission, and City administrators should refer to this section to ensure that the vision, principles, and intent of districts are followed as closely as possible, or amended when a new direction is determined to be necessary.

A Modern Community with Contemporary Land Uses

Munising's roots in the fishing and forestry industries are still visible today; however the landscape of the City and its employment base are now quite a bit different than they were before the turn of the 21st century. The City has transformed into a bustling hub of tourism and recreation and is rapidly growing to become an all-seasons destination, while healthcare and a range of professional services accommodate the needs of residents across Alger County.



As time goes on, what other types of new land uses might be possible in Munising? Uses like breweries, short-term rentals, marijuana facilities, and renewable energy generation infrastructure grow more common across Michigan as the market provides for growing demand. Munising leaders recognize that it is essential to carefully consider the pros and cons of each new land use type relative to the impact it will have on compatibility in the community and make their best judgment of where and if such uses may be located. Leaders should periodically assess the need to add new permitted and conditional uses that could locate here,



Growing Inward, Not Outward

The City of Munising's available developable land is limited due to its surrounding natural features and landscapes; the bluffs on the City's east, west, and south sides, with the Munising Bay to its north. These factors mean Munising must consider development strategies that focus on redevelopment and efficient uses of space as future opportunities present themselves. *Missing middle* housing types, like row houses and fourplexes, could be compatible within the city's neighborhoods while increasing density and improving property values.

Similarly, large parking lots designed for peak parking events and auto-oriented configurations create a lower-density use of land that reduce walkability and a lower taxable value per square foot.

Strategies That Enhance The Waterfront

Among the assets Munising comprises, the waterfront is arguably the most valuable and offers the greatest potential for the attraction of new development. Due to the built-out landscape of the community and the existing industries situated around the shores of the Munsing Bay, opportunities to redevelop are not presented often, so it is important to take a strategic approach to planning for the highest and best use before those opportunities arise.

Uses that provide waterfront views and public access while bringing in greater tax revenues through increased densities are qualities that provide the highest public benefit. However, any future development should also incorporate measures that ensure the ecological value of the shoreline is maintained in a sustainable manner.



Goals for Land Use

The Planning Commission recognizes that development patterns shape the function and appeal of the community. Through sound planning and pursuit of the following goals, Munsing will become a more prosperous, sustainable, and equitable community.

Goal 1: Maintain a modern, predictable, and flexible zoning ordinance that protects neighborhood character, supports compatible development, implements the Future Land Use Map, and encourages investment consistent with the City's vision.

- *Objective 1:* Improve the compatibility of future land uses, traffic safety, and connectivity along the Washington Street corridor.
- *Objective 2:* The Planning Commission will review and consider amendments to the zoning ordinance that ensure the Washington Street corridor's residential character is preserved by rezoning key areas to Lakeshore One along Washington Street and West Shore Drive by 2021.
- *Objective 3:* The Planning Commission will review and consider amendments to conditional land uses and development review procedures to improve the compatibility of uses and to streamline the permitting process.

Goal 2: Explore the possibility of an increased density of housing units within the Transitional district.

- *Objective 1:* In 2026, the planning commission will consider the findings of the *2025 City of Munising Housing Needs Assessment* to determine the need for various housing types and price points within the City, then assess the possibilities for new *missing middle* housing typologies in the Transitional district, where increased densities may be appropriate.

Goal 3: Promote the highest and best use of limited waterfront and downtown real estate while taking into consideration the taxable value of property.

- *Objective 1:* In 2026, the DDA, in coordination with the Planning Commission, will review a map of State Equalized Values (SEVs) of properties in the downtown and along the waterfront to understand where opportunities are for growing the City's tax base, then make land use decisions accordingly.
- *Objective 2:* Explore strategies for reducing congestion and double parking situations near the City docks.



Goal 4: Explore the potential of tools for increasing the amount of buildable property within the City's jurisdiction.

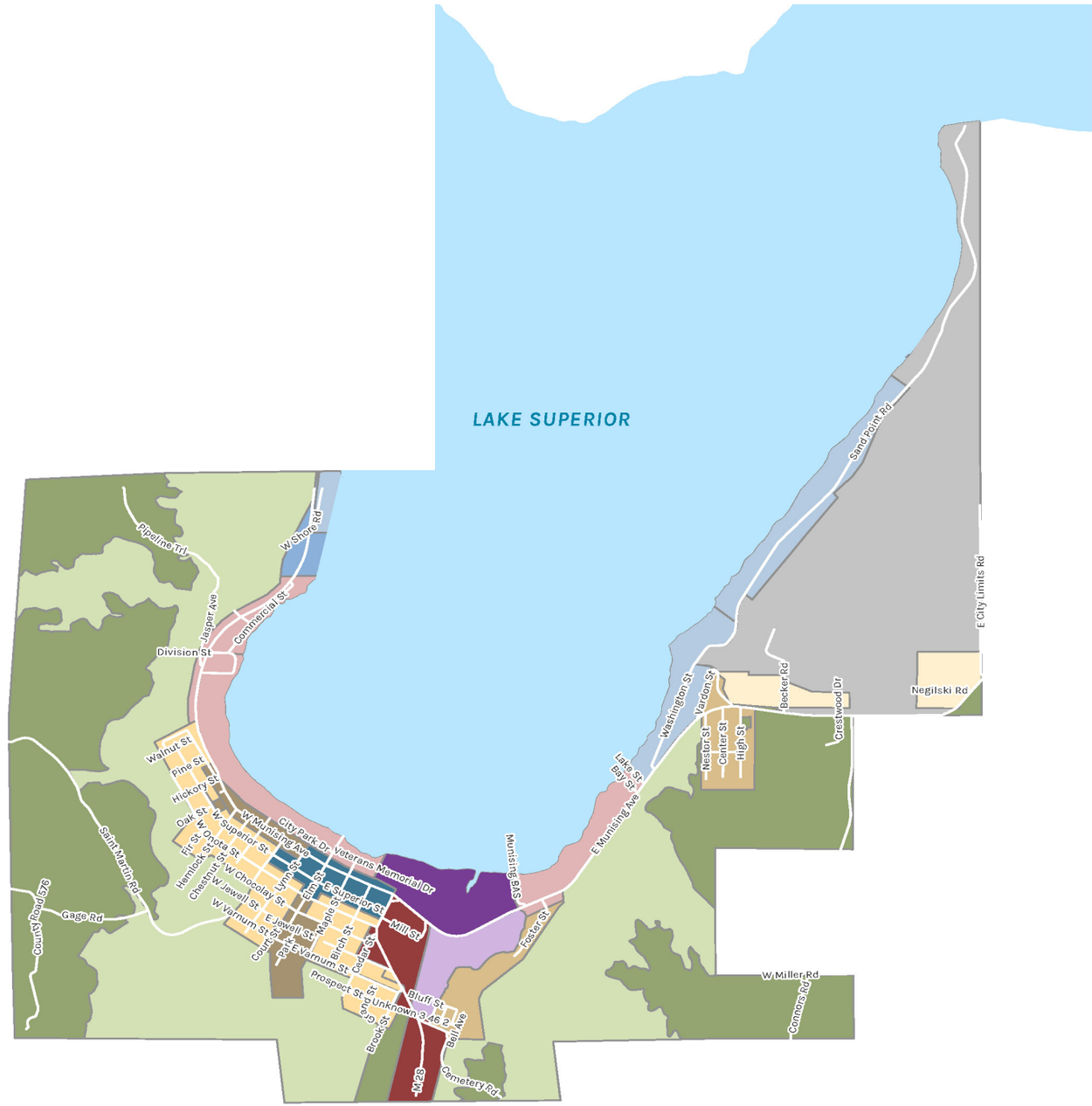
- *Objective 1:* Cooperate with governmental units across the county to identify sites suitable for expanding businesses or new businesses looking to locate in the area.
- *Objective 2:* Consider the use of 425 Agreements as a possibility for expanding the availability of taxable residential and industrial property in the City.

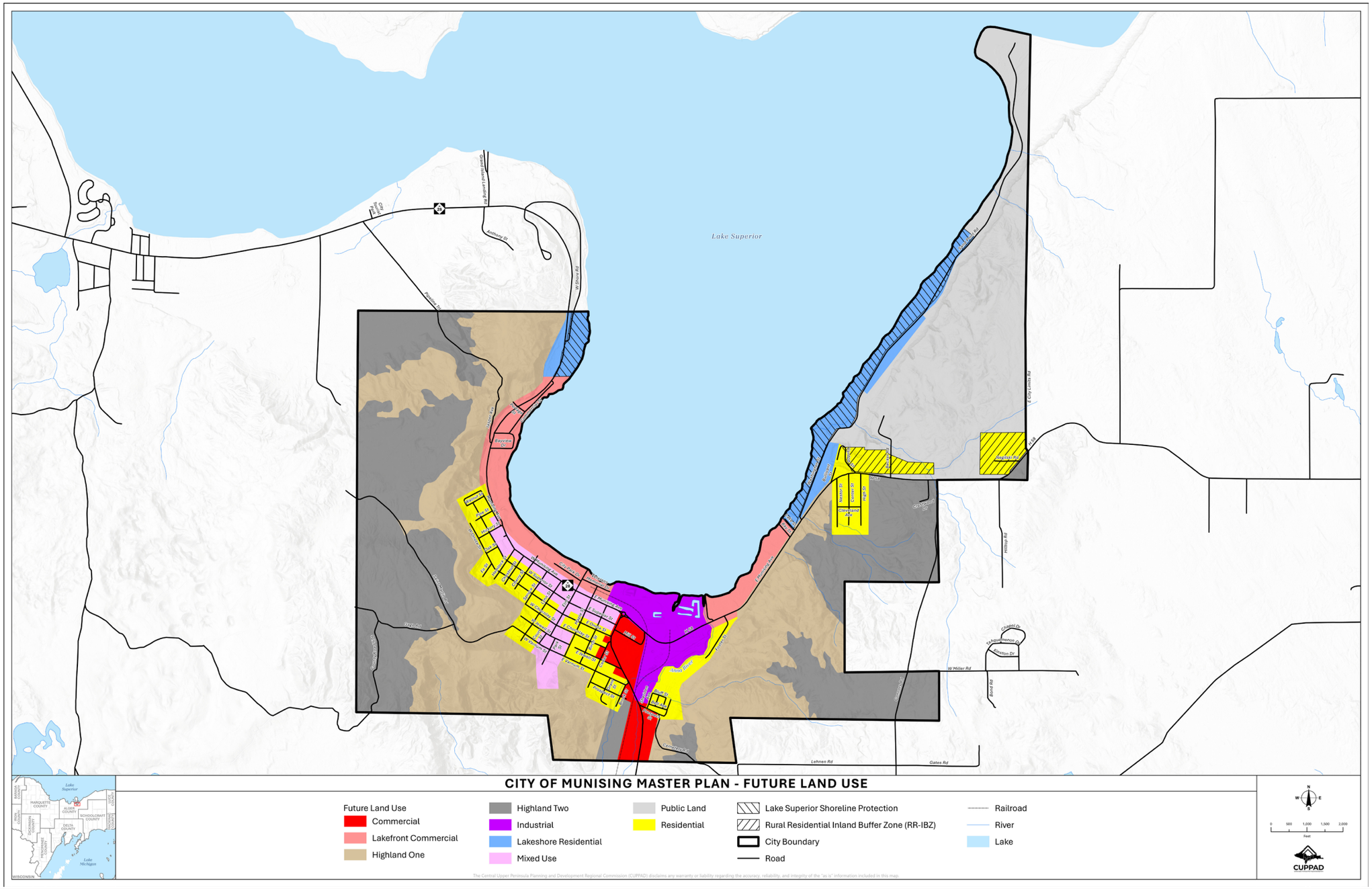


Existing Land Use

MUNISING ZONING

- Lakefront Commercial (LC)
- Commercial (C)
- Downtown (D)
- Highland One (H-1)
- Highland Two (H-2)
- Light Industrial (I-1)
- Heavy Industrial (I-2)
- Lakeshore One (L-1)
- Lakeshore Two (L-2)
- Rural Residential - Inland Buffer Zone (RR-IBZ)
- Residential One (R-1)
- Residential Two (R-2)
- Transitional (T)
- Public Lands (PL)




Lake Superior
CITY OF MUNISING MASTER PLAN - FUTURE LAND USE
Future Land Use
Commercial
Lakefront Commercial
Highland One
Highland Two
Industrial
Lakeshore Residential
Mixed Use
Public Land
Residential
Lake Superior Shoreline Protection
Rural Residential Inland Buffer Zone (RR-IBZ)
City Boundary
Road
Railroad
River
Lake
N
W
E
S
0
500
1,000
1,500
2,000
Feet
CUPPAD
The Central Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Regional Commission (CUPPAD) disclaims any warranty or liability regarding the accuracy, reliability, and integrity of the "as is" information included in this map.

Zoning Plan

The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act of 2006 is a State law that provides the authority for communities in Michigan to use zoning as a tool for the regulation of land. This law states that local zoning regulations in a community must be based upon a plan and this means particularly a *zoning plan*. A zoning plan describes the ways in which the current existing land uses in the community may change in the future by relating those changes to the aspirations described on the Future Land Use Map and discussion of zoning districts.



This zoning plan is the legal basis for the zoning ordinance of Munising, which means any decisions contrary to what is stated in this plan could lack legal defensibility. The zoning plan is intended to guide all future rezoning activities and discreationary land use decisions in the community, so leaders should consult this section whenever these topics are under consideration. The table that follows describes the anticipated changes or lack thereof across districts in Munising.

Future Land Use	Existing Land Use and Zoning	Strategies & Potential Zoning Changes
Commercial: A commercial district accommodating retail, services, restaurants, offices, and other businesses serving residents and visitors. Intended to stay the same.	The Commercial District (C) is designed to provide an area for general commercial establishments that serve community-wide shopping and service needs, including motorists using the M-28 corridor. This district is intended to create cohesive commercial areas that take advantage of access provided by the City's roadway system but also provide convenient vehicular access between businesses in attractive settings, thereby ensuring the safety and discouraging undesirable commercial development.	**Primary Strategy:** Maintain and Enhance **Secondary Strategy:** Preserve and Protect **Zoning Changes:** • No changes
Lakefront Commercial: Intended to stay the same but with an increase in short term rentals.	The Lakeshore Commercial District (LC) is intended to provide an area within the city for commercial use along or in close proximity to the lakeshore. The district includes services and retail sales catering to the community and to tourist traffic with the intent of preserving, developing or enhancing a "commercial fishing village atmosphere." The district shall include more public spaces along the waterfront and waterfront trails for walking and biking. Residential use may be permitted in the district.	**Primary Strategy:** Maintain and Enhance **Secondary Strategy:** Preserve and Protect **Zoning Changes:** • Increase in Short Term Rentals • No significant changes

Future Land Use	Existing Land Use and Zoning	Potential Zoning Changes & Strategies
Highland One: Rural hillside district intended to preserve scenic ridgelines and natural resources while allowing carefully designed residential and compatible commercial development. The future intent is the same as existing.	The H1 Highland One (H1) District is designed to establish and maintain residential use in areas of rural character where development has not taken place and to preserve the scenic character of the ridge lines and hillsides that surround the City of Munising. Because tourism, recreation, and environmental integrity are major aspects of the City's development situation, it is deemed vital to the general welfare of the City that natural resources and scenic assets be preserved. It is the intent of the district to allow development uses with appropriate regulations that will retain the area in much of its natural condition as possible. The district will allow for a mix of residential and compatible commercial uses. This may be accomplished through a Planned Unit Development (PUD). Planned Unit Developments (PUD) are strongly encourage to preserve the sensitive environment of the district.	**Primary Strategy:** Maintain and Enhance **Secondary Strategy:** Preserve and Protect **Zoning Changes:** ▪ No changes
Highland Two: Intended to stay the same.	The H-2 Highland Two (H2) District is designed primarily for residential use in areas of rural character where development previously has not taken place. The larger sized lots are to ensure safe, potable water supply and treatment of wastewater on the same lot, since such municipal services may not be extended entirely within this District. Commercial uses permitted are compatible with the residential setting, as the large lots may tend to screen such uses from adjoining residential use. Planned Unit Developments (PUD) are strongly encouraged.	**Primary Strategy:** Maintain and Enhance **Secondary Strategy:** Preserve and Protect **Zoning Changes:** ▪ No changes

Industrial: Supports manufacturing, warehousing, repair, wholesale, and other industrial uses that provide employment opportunities while minimizing impacts on surrounding neighborhoods. Includes areas suitable for light and heavy industrial development, with appropriate buffering from residential and other sensitive land uses.	The I-1 Light Industrial District is designed to accommodate establishments where the finished product generally consists of small machine parts, small electronic equipment, or similar items. All manufacturing operations within this District will have less than 90 decibels emanating from the building. The I-2 Heavy Industrial District is designed to accommodate wholesale activities, warehouses, major repair operations, manufacturing operations and other industrial uses whose external and physical effects are such that require them to be separated from residential uses. The location of the industrial uses may be located on individual lots or as part of an industrial park.	**Primary Strategy:** Maintain and Enhance **Secondary Strategy:** Preserve and Protect **Zoning Changes:** ▪ No significant changes
Lakeshore Residential: Lakeshore Residential District is intended to preserve neighborhood character while allowing development compatible with the visual quality and accessibility of the Lake Superior shoreline. Primarily residential with public greenspaces.	The L1, Lakeshore One, and L2, Lakeshore Two District, are designed to establish and maintain residential use lots in areas with frontage on or in close proximity to Lake Superior that are suitable for residential development. The Lakeshore districts permit development along the shoreline but takes into consideration the visual appearance and accessibility to the lakefront. Preservation of the neighborhoods and environment, enhancing greenspace and public access to the lakeshore, improving traffic safety, particularly on Washington St. where speeds often exceed the limits, are important. L2, Lakeshore Two District, additionally, must protect and preserve the environment and residential nature of the district from the adjacent commercial development. Applicable building type: single-family detached, duplex.	**Primary Strategy:** Preserve and Protect **Secondary Strategy:** Expand and Grow **Zoning Changes:** ▪ Accessibilty of Lake Superior is at the forefront ▪ Duplexes allowed

Mixed Use: Replaces the Downtown designation and Supports Munising's walkable, mixed-use downtown as the community's commercial and civic center, encouraging concentrated commercial development, shared parking, and upper-story residential uses.	The Downtown District (D) is designed to establish and maintain an area for intensive commercial development to occur in the business-oriented center core of the City. The District shall provide for a traditional mixture of small office buildings, specialty retail stores, entertainment, public spaces, and related activities that are mutually supporting and serve the needs of both the City and surrounding communities. The intent of these district regulations is to encourage a lively social environment and economically viable downtown with a wide variety of uses in a pedestrian-oriented, unified setting, with common, shared parking areas. Residential uses are generally not permitted in this District however, the district makes special provisions for vertical zoning, allowing the upper floors to be used as residential dwellings. The Transitional District (T) is intended to serve as a buffer between downtown commercial uses and the traditional downtown neighborhoods of Munising, in order to preserve the character of neighborhoods. A balanced mixture of residential uses and lower-intensity, neighborhood-oriented commercial uses will be supported, but it is critical that housing is not lost in this district. Non-residential uses permitted are limited to those uses which are compatible with residential uses in that they do not involve high traffic volumes, excessive lighting, noise, smoke, fumes or outdoor storage or sales. This district will support no more than ten short-term rental permits in order to maintain the character of the surrounding area.	**Primary Strategy:** Preserve and Protect **Secondary Strategy:** Maintain and Enhance **Zoning Changes:** ▪ Designations of Downtown District and Transitional District are combined ▪ More emphasis on pedestrian accessibility ▪ Reflects true downtown usage

Residential: Supports primarily single- and two-family residential neighborhoods while preserving neighborhood character, accommodating compatible housing options, encouraging context-sensitive infill development, and maintaining safe, walkable neighborhoods.	The R1, Residential District is primarily intended for small lot, single-family residential use, but may include duplexes, townhouses, and multi-family dwellings as Special Land Uses. With the intention to remain homeowner occupied with year-round occupancy, the permitted limited uses in this district will keep the neighborhoods relatively quiet and free of unrelated traffic influences and commercial activities. Expanded and redeveloped housing options will fit within the existing character of the neighborhood. The R2 Residential District is designed to establish larger (than R1) lots for single and two-family residential neighborhoods. The uses in this district are intended to keep the neighborhoods relatively quiet and free of unrelated traffic influences and commercial activities. The district will allow for a mix of residential and compatible commercial uses. The lots are slightly larger than found in the R1 District. Expanded and redeveloped housing options will fit within the existing character of the neighborhood. Owner-occupied housing is the preferred model in this neighborhood, but the inclusion of affordable and workforce housing is also an interest. Preservation of greenspace is important for this area. Applicable Building Type: Single-family detached, duplex, townhouse, manufactured homes.	**Primary Strategy:** Maintain and Enhance **Secondary Strategy:** Expand and Grow **Zoning Changes:** ▪ Combines designations of R1 and R2 ▪ Allows for single family homes, duplex, townhouse, and manufactured homes

SCHEDULE OF ZONING DISTRICT REGULATIONS

District		Minimum lot size (area)	Minimum lot width [A]	Minimum setbacks from property lines[B]			Maximum height	Maximum lot coverage ratio
				Front [C]	Side	Rear		
C - Commercial		20,000 ft.^{2}	150 ft.	25 ft.	10 ft.	12 ft.	40 ft.	62%
D - Downtown		None	None	None	4 ft.	6 ft.	40 ft.	100%
H-1	Hotel, motel, & restaurant uses	4 acres	300 ft.	150 ft.	75 ft.	75 ft.	40 ft.	6%
	All other uses	2 acres	200 ft.	100 ft.	50 ft.	50 ft.	35 ft.	7.5%
H-2 - Highland Two		3 acres	200 ft.	100 ft.	50 ft.	50 ft.	40 ft.	7.5%
I-1 - Light Industrial		None	None	12 ft.	10 ft.	12 ft.	30 ft.	90%
I-2 - Heavy Industrial		25,000 ft.^{2}	125 ft.	50 ft.	25 ft.	50 ft.	40 ft.	30%
L-1 - Lakeshore One		20,000 ft.^{2} [F]	100 ft.	50 ft. [D]	10 ft.	25 ft.	30 ft.	25%
L-2 - Lakeshore Two		10,000 ft.^{2} [F]	100 ft.	50 ft. [D]	10 ft.	25 ft.	30 ft.	20%
LC	Water lot	5,000 ft.^{2}	50 ft.	50 ft. [E]	10 ft.	12 ft.	30 ft.	23%
	Land lot	5,000 ft.^{2}	50 ft.	50 ft. [E]	10 ft.	12 ft.	30 ft.	46%
PL - Public Lands		None	None	None	None	None	None	N/A
R-1 - Residential One		3,300 ft.^{2}	33 ft.	12 ft.	4 ft.	12 ft.	30 ft.	58%
R-2 - Residential Two		5,000 ft.^{2}	50 ft.	12 ft.	6 ft.	12 ft.	30 ft.	58%
RR-IBZ - Rural Residential		2 acres	200 ft.	50 ft.	30 ft.	30 ft.	30 ft.	7.5%
T - Transitional		5,000 ft.^{2}	50 ft.	25 ft.	10 ft.	10 ft.	30 ft.	40%
LSO - Overlay Zone		Refer to the underlying district's regulations, then the regulations of this overlay zone. The most restrictive shall apply. Principal and accessory structures should be no less than 75 ft. from the ordinary highwater mark. An exception for new homes may be made to reduce that number to 50 ft. at the discretion on the Zoning Administrator, depending on the existing pattern of development in the area. Lots on coastal wetlands shall be setback at least 75 ft. from the wetland with a 25 ft. natural buffer maintained from the ordinary high water mark shoreward.						

Footnotes:

A. Lot width shall be measured at front setback line and shall not include any encumbrances, such as easements or other such restrictions.

B. Cornices, eaves, and gutters may project two feet into the required yard. Attached or unattached decks and porches shall comply with required front, side and rear setbacks.

C. The front setback shall be measured from the road right-of-way, except where a parcel abuts a water body. In that case, the front setback shall be measured from the ordinary high water mark to the nearest facing side of the structure.

D. Where a parcel abuts a water body, the front lot line setback shall be 50 feet from the ordinary high water mark. Where a parcel does not abut a water body, the front lot line shall be measured 25 feet from the road right-of-way.

E. Where a parcel abuts a water body, the front lot line setback shall be 50 feet from the ordinary high water mark. Where a parcel does not abut a water body, the front lot line shall be measured 12 feet from the road right-of-way.

F. Prior to installation of a septic system on lots within L-1 and L-2, the local health department must be consulted to determine minimum lot size needed.

Implementation Strategy

Proactive application of the master plan is supported by the use of a well-coordinated implementation strategy. It includes the actions necessary for the achievement of goals and objectives expressed in previous sections, as well as other statutorily-required duites that local leaders should expect to accomplish relative to the plan. Accountability for this strategy is reinforced though the identification of responsible parties, estimated costs, and by budgeting for time and deadlines for these actions. The tool provided in this section is a five-year workplan that should be reviewed and updated each year along with the Annual Report. For best results, commitments from responsible parties should be secured when coordinated actions are identified.



2026

Follows goal(s)	Action	Responsible party	Estimated cost	Timeframe to complete	Completed
General	Complete Annual Report on Master Plan progress	Planning Commission			
General	Develop and adopt annual CIP program	Staff, PC, and City Commission			
People & Community #3	Include young people in projects and planning	Staff, PC, and City Commission			
Land Use #1	Overhaul of zoning ordinance for modernization	Staff, PC, City Commission			
Land Use #3 Econ Development #9	Begin marketing high priority redevelopment sites	Staff, DDA, GMBPC, MEDC			
Econ. Development #5	Initiate conversations about growing cybersecurity industry locally	City Comm., Munising Schools, NMU Tech & Occupational Science, GMBPC			
Natural Resources #1	Explore possibilities of electric vehicle charging stations	Planning Commission			
Natural Resources #1	Explore possibilities for clean energy generation and storage	Planning Commission			
Natural Resources #2	Update street lights to be “dark sky” compatible	Planning Commission			
Housing #6	Establish regulatory framework for short term rentals	Planning Commission			

2027

Follows goal(s)	Action	Responsible party	Estimated cost	Timeframe to complete	Completed
General	Complete Annual Report on Master Plan progress	Planning Commission			
General	Develop and adopt annual CIP program	Staff, PC, and City Commission			
Quality of Life #4	Explore possibility of new public spaces along waterfront	Staff, PC, and City Commission			
Housing #2	Address the lack of quality affordable housing units	City Commission, Lenders, Developers, Staff			
Nat. Resources #3 Quality of Life #1	Coordinate with National Park Service to create a pathway from Sand Pt. Rd. to enhance safety and rec opportunites	NPS, City Commission, GMBPC			
Natural Resources #3	Encourage NPS to attend PC meetings and discuss reducing impact on sensitive sites	NPS, PC			
Natural Resources #1	Continue to audit and benchmark community facilities for energy efficiency				
Natural Resources #1	Discuss possibilities on incentivizing energy efficient design and development	PC, Zoning Board			

2028

Follows goal(s)	Action	Responsible party	Estimated cost	Timeframe to complete	Completed
General	Complete Annual Report on Master Plan progress	Planning Commission			
General	Develop and adopt annual CIP program	Staff, PC, and City Commission			
Quality of Life #1 Infrastructure #2	Analyze and create recommendations for pedestrian connectivity from residential areas to points of interest	Staff, PC, and City Commission			
Natural Resources #1	Through communication and outreach, educate public on benefits of energy efficiency upgrades				
Housing #5	Develop list of redevelopment ready and vacant properties	Alger County Land Bank, Planning Commission, City Staff			

2029

Follows goal(s)	Action	Responsible party	Estimated cost	Timeframe to complete	Completed
General	Complete Annual Report on Master Plan progress	Planning Commission			
General	Develop and adopt annual CIP program	Staff, PC, and City Commission			
Natural Resources #2	Implement best practices for improving water quality	Superior Watershed Partnership and PC			
Econ. Development #2	Initiate conversations about using Munising Bay as a deep water port	State, Regional orgs., & City Commission			
Housing #3	Develop a plan to assist local homeowners with repairs and accessibility improvements.	Invest UP, CUPPAD, City staff			
Housing #2	Develop an educational program to assist renters and landlords understand obligations.	Invest UP			

2030

Follows goal(s)	Action	Responsible party	Estimated cost	Timeframe to complete	Completed
General	Five-year review of the Master Plan. Update or affirm.	Planning Commission & CUPPAD			
General	Develop and adopt annual CIP program	Staff, PC, and City Commission			
Downtown #2	Improve the appearance of downtown through updates to blight code and zoning ordinance	Staff, PC, and City Commission			
Housing #6	Hire a blight/zoning/rental enforcement officer	Staff, City Commission			

Appendix A: Planning Commission Annual Report

Report Year	

I. Membership

Planning Commission Member	Term Expiration	Attendance %
Chair:		
Vice Chair:		
Secretary:		

II. Meeting Schedule

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

Quorum	Cancelled	Not Scheduled	Special Meeting
Q	C	NS	SM

III. Master Plan Review

☐	Review goals and recommendations of the plan and indicate progress, include goals of the commission that may not be included in the master plan.
☐	Include the implementation plan items from the plan and indicate progress, actions completed, and next year's priorities.
☐	Identify any potential plan amendments to work on for the upcoming year that can be prepared and adopted then incorporated at a later date.
☐	Use master plan update review table (refer to the last page of this appendix) to decide whether the plan needs to be amended.

Notes regarding master plan review:

IV. Zoning Ordinance Amendments

☐	Document the section numbers amended and indicate any work in progress.
☐	Review rezoning requests; indicate location, request description, and status.
☐	Identify any zoning ordinance updates to undertake in the upcoming year.

Notes regarding zoning ordinance amendements:

V. Development Application Reviews

Project Type	Location	Description	Status		Date

Appendix A: Planning Commission Annual Report, Continued

IV. Zoning Ordinance Amendments

☐	Document the section numbers amended and indicate any work in progress.
☐	Review rezoning requests; indicate location, request description, and status.

Notes regarding zoning ordinance amendements:

V. Development Application Reviews

Project Type	Location	Description	Status	Recommendation to Legislative Body	Date of Action

VI. Variances and Interpretations **(Summary of actions taken by Zoning Board of Appeals)**

Action Type	Location	Description	Status	Date of Action

Appendix A: Update Review Table

Criteria	Y/N	Documentation/ Comments
Have development patterns changed significanly since the plan was written and adopted?		
Does the adopted zoning ordinance align with the goals of the plan?		
Have there been any major changes, such as utility lines, major road improvements, etc?		
Have there been instances when the planning commission or elected body has departed from the plan?		
Are the goals and priorities of the plan in sync with the goals and priorities of appointed and elected officials?		
Does the plan address the location and types of land uses frequently requested?		
Have there been other studies completed that change the relevancy of the plan?		
Have community goals or vision changed since the plan was written?		
Are recent best practices integrated? (i.e. Complete Streets, Placemaking, Missing Middle Housing, Sustainability, Local Food)		
Is the background data relevant and reference the most recent decennial census data and up-to-date local data?		
Is it user-friendly with clear organization and graphics?		

Criteria	Y/N	Documentation/ Comments
Does it reference goals and objectives for a downtown area?		
Is there an implementation plan including a CIP plan?		
Are a zoning plan and zoning objectives included?		
Is a redevelopment strategy provided?		
Are priority sites for redevelopment and a strategy for implementation included?		
Has there been changes along the community borders?		
Is there upcoming major (re) development (corridor, transportation, university/hopital, utility)?		
Do policy and recommendations support a safe, efficient multi-modal transportation system?		
Do permitted uses support the job market and reflect the local talent pool?		