Bruce Township

Chippewa County, Michigan

Master Plan
2026-2046



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Introduction

The Bruce Township Master Plan is a culmination of thoughtful conversations, public feedback through the community survey, and an assessment of the community's available resources. This Plan is a visioning document for future growth and development over the next twenty years. The concepts presented in this Plan take a steady approach to new development and encourages growth that is compatible with existing land uses. This Plan seeks to support current residents and landowners while encouraging new uses, especially those that bring economic opportunity to the community. The community has set the following goals:

Goal 1: Guide Growth That Strengthens Bruce Township's Rural Character and Local Economy
Goal 2: Strengthen Township Facilities and Services to Meet Community Needs
Goal 3: Protect Natural Resources and Historic Features for Future Generations

Vision Statement

A vibrant rural residential community with limited commercial and industrial development, family-oriented farming and agriculture, attractive river frontage with convenient recreational access, good roads, adequate community services, and a desire to maintain its traditional lifestyle.



Community History

Bruce Township was established on March 29, 1884 (July 2, 1883 as shown in the book, *River of Destiny*). Prior to that date, it was part of St. Mary's Township and, as originally established, including what is now Dafter Township. Dafter Township was created as a separate entity in 1893 when the current Bruce Township boundaries were established.

The Bruce Township name is generally attributed to a suggestion of a settler named Andrew J. Smith who had been a tenant of Lord Bruce of the Shetland Islands. One source suggests that the location of the Andrew J. Smith homestead is the reason for the jog in the Bruce Township – Dafter Township boundary (and the jog in M-129 south of 9 Mile Road).

The Homestead Act of 1862 generated much of the early settlement of the area. The majority of the early settlers came from England and Scotland by way of Canada. The first homestead was recorded in 1871 between 13 and 14 Mile Roads along what is now M-129. By the mid 1880s, Rosedale, Donaldson, Parkerville, McCarron, and Barbeau were recognized crossroads. Francis Palms and Arthur Hill were important persons in early Bruce Township who owned thousands of acres of forestland. This brought about a prosperous timber trade and several sawmills were operating in the township in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Farming and logging formed the base of the area's economy.

Records collected in, "A Century of Settlement: Bruce Township 1848-1948," indicate early homesteaders in Chippewa County were successful farmers. Farmers raised Cotswold and Shropshire sheep, Durham cattle, and thoroughbred Holsteins. Agriculture products such as potatoes were also successful.

By 1900, thirteen country schools and several churches had been established. Parkerville School was the first school built in 1877 by Geo and Will Splan. This was closely followed by Rosedale School in 1879 with a church planned soon after. Similarly, Ransonville School began operation in 1879 followed by the operation of a Methodist Church at Ransonville in 1881. Schools and churches benefited the families of nearby homesteaders and continued to expand until the mid 1920s.



Most early transportation to and from the township was via the Charlotte and St. Marys Rivers. Later a road along what is now M-129 became the principal township access and was the connection between Sault Ste. Marie and Pickford.

Electricity became available in the township in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The township's country schools were consolidated in 1957 in a new school on 12 Mile Road for grades K-8. In 1975, grades 7 and 8 were moved to the District of Sault Ste. Marie. The Bruce Township School was closed in 2005 and students were relocated to either Sault Ste. Marie or Pickford.

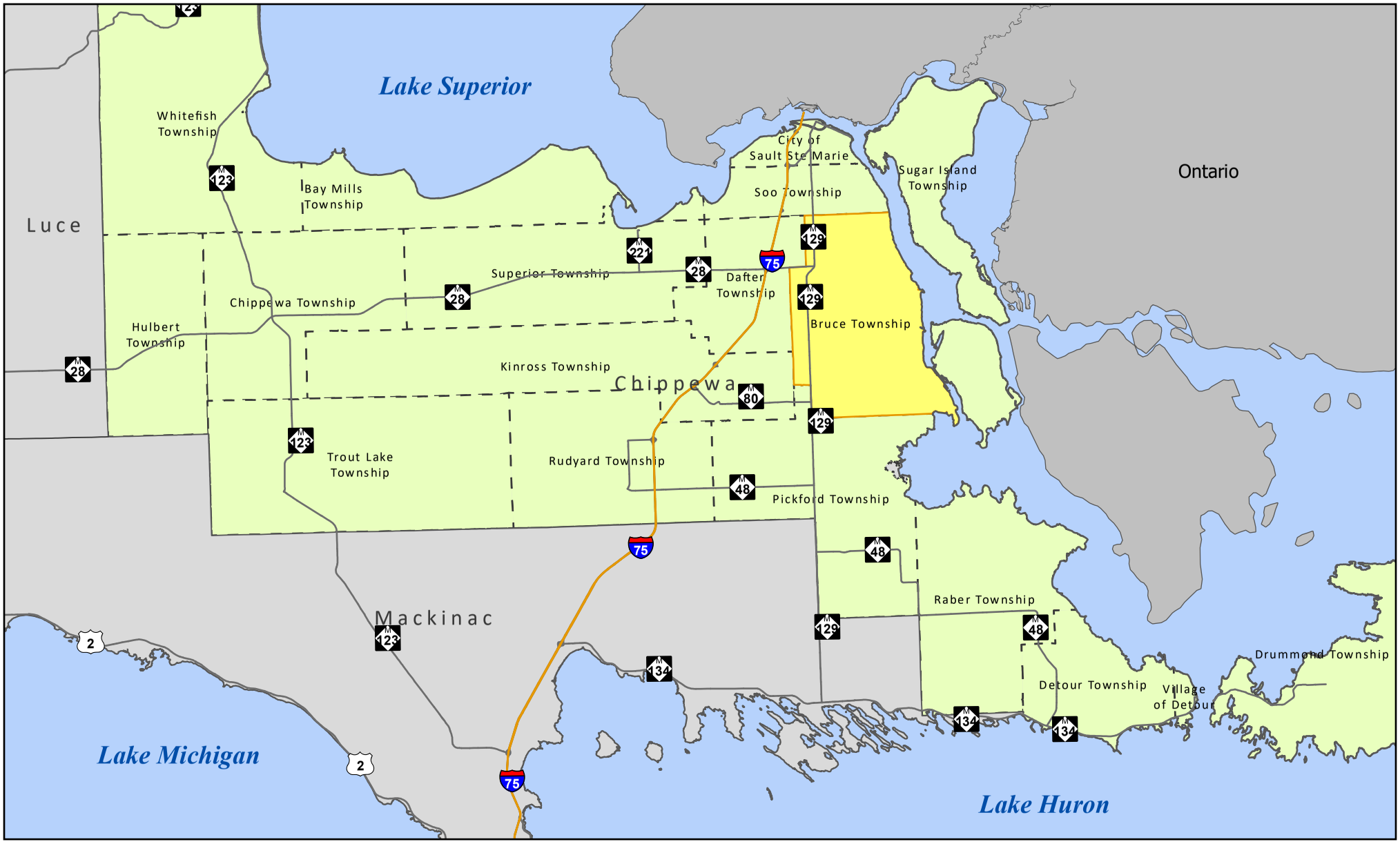
Farming in the township began a decline in the 1930s. Principal farming activities in recent years have been hay farming and cattle.

Location

Bruce Township is located in Chippewa County of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. The township is bordered by the St. Marys River on the east and Dafter, Kinross, and Pickford Townships on the west. The township's northern border with Soo Township is 6 Mile Road and the southern border with Pickford Township is 18 Mile Road. The township measures twelve (12) miles long and generally about six (6) miles wide. The township's land area is approximately 87 square miles. The Location Map shows the township relative to Chippewa County overall.

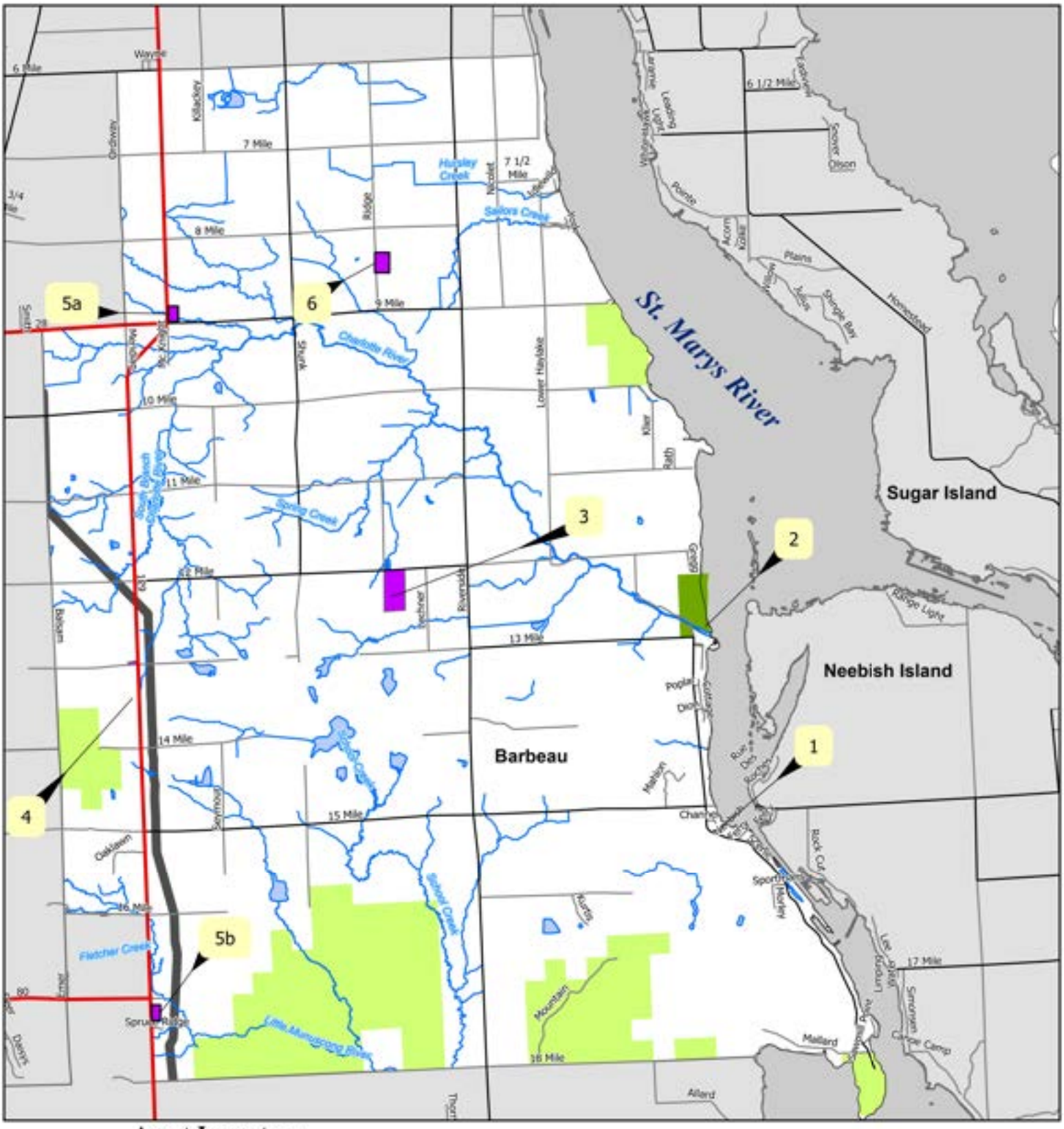
Access
M-129 is a state highway which runs north to south through the western part of the township. Neebish Island on the St. Marys River, while located in Soo Township, has access through Bruce Township at the Neebish Island Ferry Dock operated by the Eastern Upper Peninsula Transportation Authority (EUPTA). EUPTA is a public transportation provider for Chippewa and Luce Counties and operates vehicle and passenger ferries, public bussing, and on demand response pick up service. State-owned park and ride parking lots are located at 9 Mile Rd. and M-129 and 17 Mile and M-129. Transportation amenities located in the township are shown on the Transportation and Municipal Assets Map. Additional municipal assets are discussed below.

The township has easy access to I-75 which connects Sault Ste. Marie in the north and St. Ignace and the Mackinac Bridge in the south, runs north to south adjacent to the township in the west. On and off ramps are located at 9 Mile/M-28 and M-80 to S. Gaines Highway near Kincheloe. Chippewa County International Airport is also located in nearby Kincheloe. Flights include regular service to DTW – Detroit, MI and MSP – Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN.



Bruce Township Location Map

The information and data provided herewith has been compiled from various sources, and is used by the EUPRPD Commission for its own general purposes. EUPRPDC does not warrant or guarantee that this information and data is accurate or current, nor does EUPRPDC warrant or guarantee that this information and data is fit for any particular use or purpose other than intended. More specifically, EUPRPDC warns that this information and data is not intended to be, and should not be, used to determine individual ownership, lot lines, or lines of occupation with respect to real estate. Any receipt of this information and data should independently verify its accuracy before relying on it for any purpose. EUPRPDC and its officers, agents, employees, boards, and commissions shall not be liable for any inaccuracy or omission in this information and data



Asset Inventory

1. Neebish Island Ferry
2. Dunbar Park/MSU Forest Experimental Land
3. Township Hall/Fire Dept./Library/ Playground
4. Donaldson Cemetery
5. Park + Ride
6. Zion Cemetery

Bruce Township Owned Property
State Land
Lakes
Rivers
ATC Transmission Lines
Dunbar/MSU Experiment Station

N
W
E
S

0 1 2 4 Miles

Transportation & Municipal Assets Bruce Township

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Socio-Economic Profile

Bruce Township is first and foremost a community of residents, families, friends, farmers, laborers, students, service men and women, who work together to create a place where people may enjoy the community's natural resources, do business, and live safely. The character of the community is rural in nature and includes large areas of open space, residences, agriculture uses and farm buildings, community facilities, small businesses, and other recreation facilities which make up the built environment that is Bruce Township.

Population

The data presented in this report is collected using both the U.S. Decennial Census (collected every ten years) and the American Community Survey (ACS) (5-year estimates) (United States Census Bureau, 2026). Mandated by the U.S. Constitution, the United States started its first federal population census in 1790. This is the most accurate and consistent counting system available and thus the most reliable information for demographic and housing estimates. All Census and ACS information is available at data.census.gov. Other sources are used to collect information such as school enrollment, which is available at mischooldata.org, employment sector information, which is available through the U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics (bls.gov), and ALICE studies which stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed provided by the United Way.

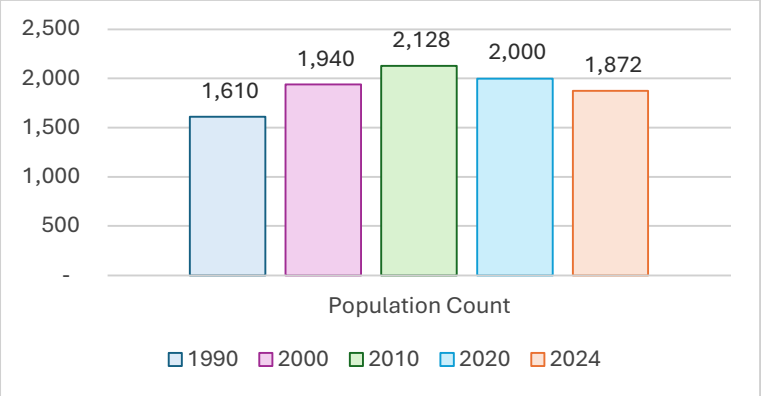
Through many decades the population of Bruce Township has been steadily increasing and reached its peak in 2010 with 2,128. In the 2020 Decennial Census the population decreases by 6% to 2,000. ACS 5-year estimates data indicate the township's population continues to decline through 2024. Table 1: Bruce Township Population, below, provides the number of full-time residents and the percent of growth and decline.

Table 1: Population

	Population Count	**Population Change**
1990	1,610	
2000	1,940	20%
2010	2,128	10%
2020	2,000	-6%
2024	1,872	-6%

Source: US Census, American Community Survey 2024 5-Year Estimate

Figure 1: Population



Source: US Census, American Community Survey 2024 5-Year Estimate

Age

The age breakdown of the total population estimated in 2024 provides detail about the makeup of the population and offers a glimpse of the expected future population. Based on a population's age structure, or the distribution of people across different age groups (cohorts), demographers can predict its future growth. Census data (Table 2) and the Township's voter registration data (Bruce Township, 2026) (Table 3) are available and grouped into cohorts. Census data is more wholistic and indicates Bruce Township has two age groups with the highest population. The first are those persons 25 to 44 years (35% of total) and the second are those persons 60 years and older (28% of total). The incomplete, but localized voter registration data supports the indication that there is a largest percentage of the population are those 60 years and older (39% of total). The Voter Registration Report can be found in Appendix A. For planning purposes, these two age groups require support from different amenities and services. Those in the 25 to 44 years cohort are often referred to as the "family-forming" cohort where growing as a family and in a career are priority. Those aged 60 years and older are often referred to as "empty nest" and "senior." They are often retired from their career but looking to enjoy new or underutilized recreation opportunities.

Table 2: Age Cohort

Age Breakdown	**2024**
Under 5 years	81
5 to 9 years	112
10 to 14 years	156
15 to 19 years	75
20 to 24 years	45
25 to 34 years	319
35 to 44 years	337
45 to 54 years	134
55 to 59 years	94
60 to 64 years	191
65 to 74 years	210
75 to 84 years	111
85 years and over	7
TOTAL	1,872

Source: American Community Survey 2024 5-Year Estimate

Table 3: Age by Registered Voters

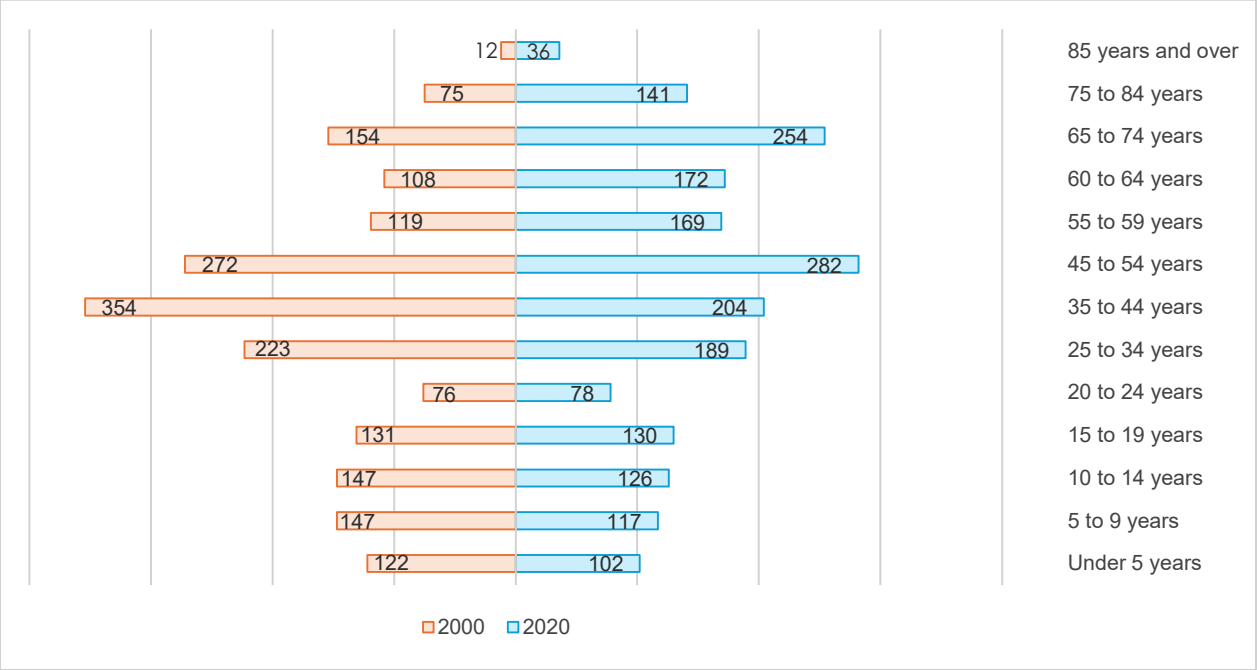
Age Breakdown	**2026**	**Percent**
Under 18 years		
18 to 21 years	97	5%
22 to 30 years	198	11%
31 to 40 years	291	16%
41 to 50 years	248	13%
51 to 59 years	285	15%
60 years and older	720	39%
TOTAL	1,839	

Source: Bruce Township Voter Registration, 2026

The stacked bar chart below (Figure 2) is used to compare the value of each age cohort that contributes to a total population. The chart shows the change between each age cohort from 2000 to 2020. With a twenty-year separation, the population in any given age cohort from 2000 would generally move up 20 years to become the 2020 age cohort populations. In 2000 the median age was 38.2; this is represented in the chart where the longest bars represents those 35 to 44 years. In 2020 the median age was 47.6; this is represented in the chart where longest bars represents those 45 to 54 years.

This stacked bar chart or population pyramid as its commonly called, fall into three general shapes that indicate whether a population is expanding, stable, or declining. The proportion of people in pre-reproductive (0–14 years), reproductive (15–44 years), and post-reproductive (45+ years) age groups is key to these predictions. Because the largest population of Bruce Township residents are aged 25 to 44 years it is likely the township's population will stay relatively young and continue to grow. However, it should be noted current generations of young people are choosing to delay marriage and forego children. Factors in the economy such as lack of good paying jobs, housing, and access to childcare services can deter young people from starting a family and supporting the birthrate.

Figure 2: Age Breakdown



Source: US Census, 2000, 2020

In the 2020 Decennial Census the township's median age was 47.6, but has decreased to 39.6 in the 2024 American Community Survey data. The increase may be due to older seasonal residents staying in Bruce Township during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic. In the years following 2020, ACS data decreases to the 2024 figure. The median age for Chippewa County is 41.6. In 2024, Bruce Township is tied for the third lowest median age in the county (tied with Pickford Township). The City of Sault Ste. Marie has the lowest median age (34) and Kinross Charter Township has the second lowest median age (37.8). Each of the comparison communities are immediately adjacent to Bruce Township and then the representation of Chippewa County overall.

Table 4: Average Household Size, 2014-2024

Location	**2014**	**2024**
Bruce Township	2.5	2.35
Dafter Township	2.81	2.75
Kinross Charter Township	2.94	3.02
Soo Township	2.51	2.54
Chippewa County	**2.37**	**2.26**

Source: American Community Survey 2024 5-Year Estimate

In addition to population and age, housing units, households/occupied housing units, and median household income are also included in the community comparison. Bruce Township is smaller in population and housing units than its neighbors but also has a younger median age and a higher median household income. These statistics for Bruce Township are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Table 5: Socio-Economic Profile Comparison

Location	**Population**	**Median Age**	**Housing Units**	**Households**	**Median Household Income**
Bruce Township	1,872	39.6	1,000	796	$85,950
Dafter Township	1,399	44.7	561	504	$65,588
Kinross Charter Township	6,784	37.8	1,264	1,133	$61,250
Soo Township	2,986	49.3	1,507	1,175	$79,107
Chippewa County	**36,295**	**41.6**	**20,348**	**14,080**	**$ 62,217**

Source: American Community Survey 2024 5-Year Estimate



Bruce Township is located in the Eastern Upper Peninsula Intermediate School District. School enrollment numbers provide a look at a specific sector of the population, school-aged (Kindergarten-grade 12) children. The enrollment numbers for the school year 2014-2015 and then this past school year, ten years later, 2024-2025, where data is publicly available, is provided for a historic comparison (State of Michigan, 2026). There is a contrast between the three traditional public schools and the two academies shown in Table 6 below. The Pickford, Rudyard, and Sault Ste. Marie Schools each saw a decrease in enrollment, however, both Joseph K. Lumsden Bahweting Anishnabe Academy and Lake Superior Academy saw an increase in enrollment. Note: data for Lake Superior Academy is publicly available starting in the 2016-2017 school year.

New enrollment at Public School Academies, other non-secular, and online learning opportunities are impacting enrollment at traditional public schools in the area.

Table 6: Schools, Total Count

	2014-2015	2024-2025	% Change
Eastern Upper Peninsula ISD	**6,985**	**6,042**	**-14%**
Pickford Public Schools	504	430	-15%
Rudyard Area Schools	706	603	-15%
Sault Ste. Marie Area Schools	2,370	1,810	-24%
Joseph K. Lumsden Bahweting Anishnabe Academy	489	601	23%
Lake Superior Academy	38 *(2016-2017)*	93	145%

Source: mischooldata.org

The racial makeup of the community is predominantly White (73.9%), American Indian or Alaskan Native (10.8%), Asian (3.3%), Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (0.6%), Some Other Race (3.6%), and Two or More Races (7.9%).

Members of the Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians and the Bay Mills Indian Community are an integral part of the community supporting community services such as schools and natural resource preservation. The Sault Tribe has been instrumental in the growth of the walleye fish population through the fish hatchery located on 15 Mile Road.

The diversity of our multi race and multi religious communities has grown with the addition of many Amish families to the community. The Amish farm their lands and raise/sell non-GMO foods and offer other services and products at their farms.

Housing

As a primarily residential community, it is important to understand the make up of the housing stock in Bruce Township. Detailed information about the housing occupancy, structure type, age, and cost are provided below. Data from Chippewa County is provided for comparison. There are 1,000 housing units in Bruce Township of those 796 are occupied units and, therefore, 796 households, and 204 units are vacant or occupied on a limited basis.

Table 7: Housing Occupancy

	Chippewa County	**Bruce Township**
Total housing units	20,348	1,000
Occupied housing units	14,080	796
Owner-occupied	10,564	781
Renter-occupied	3,516	15
Vacant housing units	6,268	204

Source: American Community Survey 2024 5-Year Estimates

The average household size is an important piece of information to note when talking about households and housing. Nationally, there is a housing crisis, and locally in Michigan, the key statistic is the decrease in the average household size, less people living in homes together. Chippewa County, Bruce Township, and Dafter Township saw a decrease in the average number of people living together as a household. This drop in household size has kept up demand for housing units even while the population has steadily decreased since the 2010 peak.

Table 8: Average Household Size, 2014, 2024

	2014	**2024**
Bruce Township	2.5	2.35
Dafter Township	2.81	2.75
Kinross Charter Township	2.94	3.02
Soo Township	2.51	2.54
Chippewa County	**2.37**	**2.26**

Source: American Community Survey 2014 and 2024 5-Year Estimates

The ACS provides a description of the types of housing units. 1-unit, detached units are single-family homes. 1-unit, attached units are single units with a shared wall such as townhomes. 2 units are two-family units or duplexes. 3 or 4 units are a single building with 3 or 4 units, also known as a tri-plex or quadraplex. Structures with more units are small or large apartment buildings. The breakdown of the units in Chippewa County and Bruce Township is as follows in Table 9. In Bruce Township, 85% are 1-unit, detached, or single-family homes, 2% are two-family units or more and 13% are mobile home units.

Table 9: Units in Structure

	Chippewa County	Bruce Township	Dafter Township	Kinross Charter Township	Soo Township
Total housing units	**20,348**	**1,000**	**561**	**1,264**	**1,507**
1-unit, detached	15,896	854	460	676	1,338
1-unit, attached	893	0	3	451	19
2 units	494	10	2	40	0
3 or 4 units	388	9	32	3	50
5 to 9 units	125	0	0	0	0
10 to 19 units	405	0	20	0	61
20 or more units	483	0	0	0	8
Mobile home	1,664	127	44	94	31
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0	0	0	0	0

Source: American Community Survey 2024 5-Year Estimates

In addition to the number of structures and the type, it is also important to consider the age of the structure. The time period in which a structure is built can impact the accessibility of the structure in terms of number of floors and space in which to maneuver, safety of materials such as the use of lead-based paint, and construction methods that might consider weather related hazards. Age and condition of the structure often go hand-in-hand. 56% of homes in Bruce Township were built before 1989 while 64% of homes in Chippewa County were built before 1989.

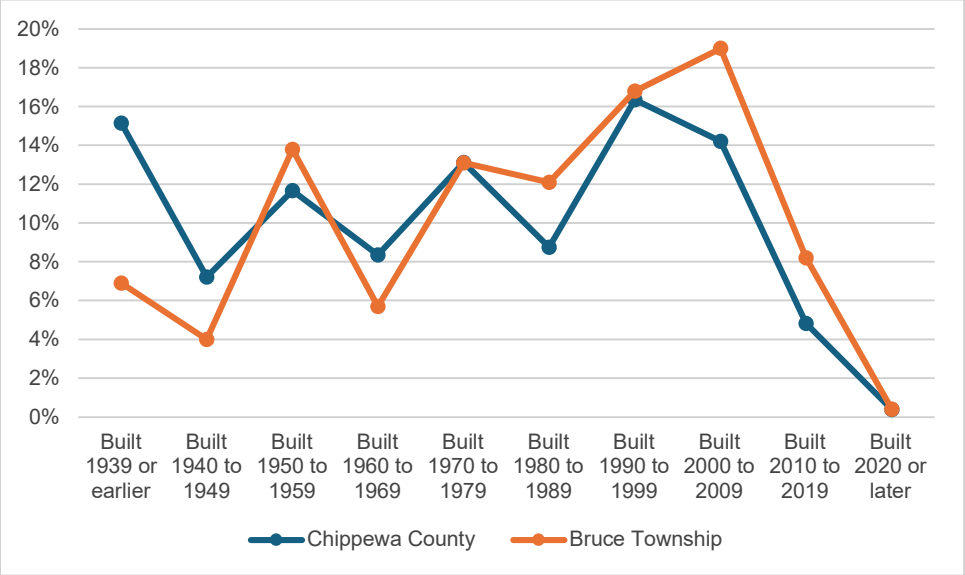
This data describing the year structures were built also highlights the state of the housing crisis locally. The types of housing units and the number of units available in the community dictate whether or not people in the community are able to move to a home that best fits their needs and if new people are able to move into the community. It is important to keep in mind the two largest population groups in the township, persons 25 to 44 years and persons 60 to 84 years, and the types of housing they desire to live in. As shown in Figure 3 below, since the Great Recession, the number of units being built continues to drop drastically. Units built in 2020 or later in Chippewa County and Bruce Township both represent 0.4% of the total.

Table 10: Year Structure Built

	Chippewa County	Bruce Township
Total housing units	**20,348**	**1,000**
Built 2020 or later	78	4
Built 2010 to 2019	980	82
Built 2000 to 2009	2,891	190
Built 1990 to 1999	3,328	168
Built 1980 to 1989	1,778	121
Built 1970 to 1979	2,670	131
Built 1960 to 1969	1,700	57
Built 1950 to 1959	2,374	138
Built 1940 to 1949	1,468	40
Built 1939 or earlier	3,081	69

Source: American Community Survey 2024 5-Year Estimates

Figure 3: Year Structure Built



Source: American Community Survey 2024 5-Year Estimates

Households and Income

And finally, when discussing housing units, the economics of the housing market is a crucial piece of information. Table 11 below compares the percent change of the median household income of Chippewa County and Bruce Township from 2014 to 2024 to the percent change of the median value of owner-occupied units over the same time period. In Chippewa County, the percent change of median household income was less than that of the median value of owner-occupied units. In Bruce Township, the percent change of median household income was much more than that of the percent change in median value of owner-occupied units. In other words, household income in Bruce Township outpaced the median value of owner-occupied units. This also indicates a relatively stable housing market compared to the increase in the median value of units in Chippewa County.

Table 11: Household Income and Value Comparison, 2014, 2024

	2014	2024	Percent Change
Median Household Income			
Chippewa County	$ 40,828	$ 62,217	52%
Bruce Township	$ 49,702	$ 85,950	73%
Median Value of Owner-Occupied Units			
Chippewa County	$ 101,500	$ 161,900	60%
Bruce Township	$ 148,800	$ 184,300	24%

Source: American Community Survey 2024 5-Year Estimates

Table 12 below provides a breakdown of the income categories for Bruce Township residents. 22% earn less than $49,999. Additionally, the breakdown of employment industries is provided in Table 13. According to the American Community Survey, the primary sectors for resident employment are public administration and education services, and health care and social assistance.

Table 12: Household Income and Benefits

		Percent
Total households	**796**	**100%**
Less than $10,000	6	1%
$10,000 to $14,999	15	2%
$15,000 to $24,999	32	4%
$25,000 to $34,999	46	6%
$35,000 to $49,999	72	9%
$50,000 to $74,999	125	16%
$75,000 to $99,999	220	28%
$100,000 to $149,999	161	20%
$150,000 to $199,999	80	10%
$200,000 or more	39	5%

Source: American Community Survey 2024 5-Year Estimates

Table 13: Employment Industries

		Percent
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	**978**	**100%**
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	14	1.43%
Construction	152	15.54%
Manufacturing	111	11.35%
Wholesale trade	8	0.82%
Retail trade	71	7.26%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	84	8.59%
Information	64	6.54%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	19	1.94%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	23	2.35%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	161	16.46%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	34	3.48%
Other services, except public administration	73	7.46%
Public administration	164	16.77%

Source: American Community Survey 2024 5-Year Estimates

Bruce Township was founded by residents who supported localized agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting economy. Residents today have shifted to a commuter workforce with transportation requirements to employment locations in Sault Ste. Marie and Kincheloe. The rise of tele-services and remote work has reduced the need for transportation with availability of online resources. As discussed in later sections, the Township continues to consider new opportunities for fiber and broadband internet connectedness to allow residents access to services not currently provided in or near the township.

Natural Features

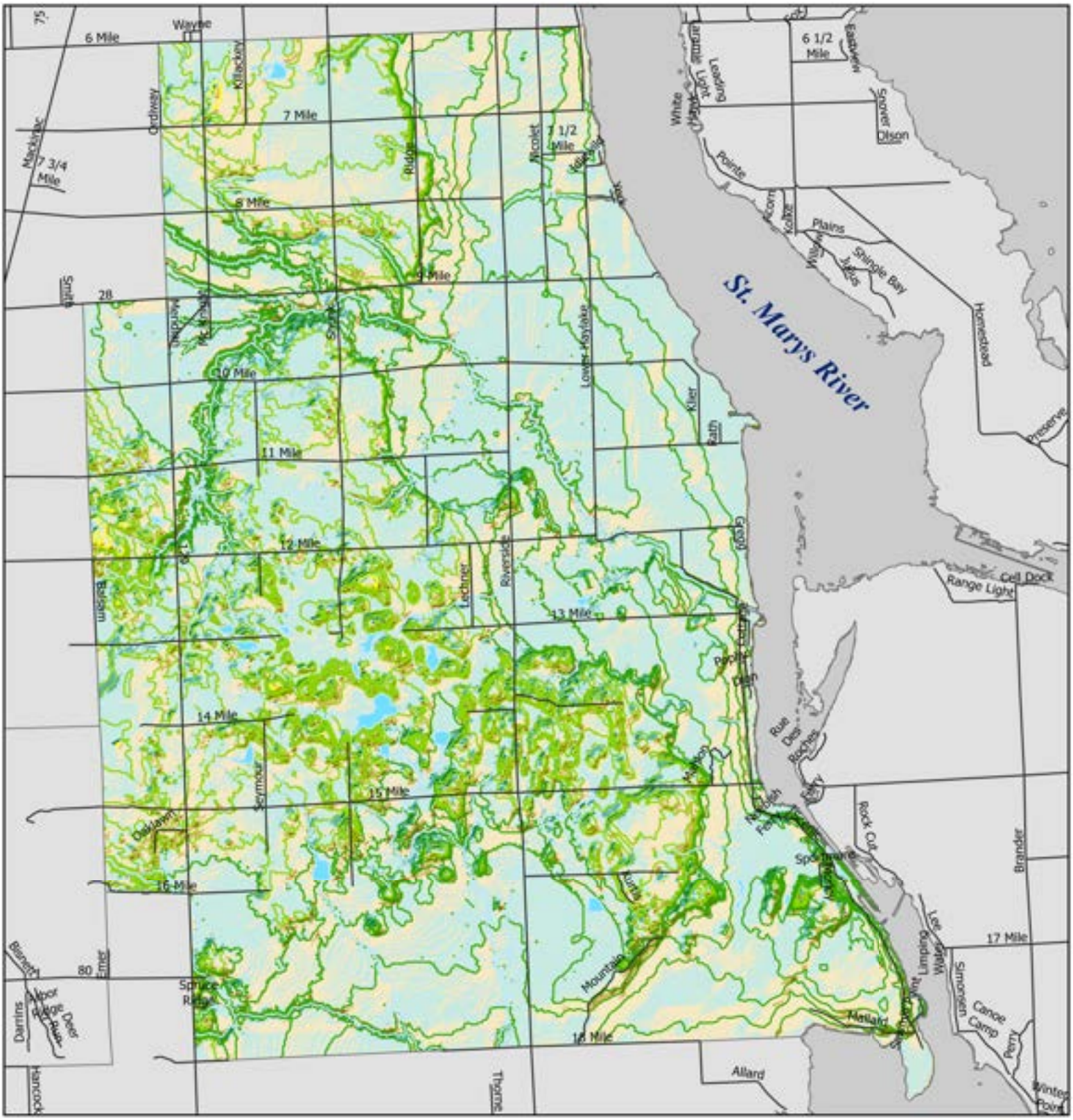
Climate
The township experiences all four seasons, however the climate can be generally described as cool and humid. Summer temperatures occasionally reach the mid – 90s (F) and mid winter temperatures can sometimes reach -20 to -30. Summer temperature highs from June to August generally average in the mid 70s while the lows average in the low 50s. Winter temperature highs in January and February usually average in the low to mid 20s and winter lows are normally in the low single digits.

Based upon Sault Ste. Marie data, mid-afternoon relative humidity averages about 67% and increases at night to an average of about 85% at dawn. Freezing temperatures are rare after early June or before mid-September. Average annual precipitation is generally average between 100" and 115" with heaviest accumulations in December and January.

Topography
Bruce Township has a wealth of natural features throughout the township. The topographical landscape is a result of glacial action that occurred 10,000 to 20,000 years ago. The township lies primarily in the lake plains of two major glacial lakes, one of which has remnant shorelines still visible along Ridge Road. The township's isolated hills, knobs, and ridges are moraine deposits of mixed material of medium to course texture. Organic deposits occur as bogs and swamps. The topography and elevation of the township varies from 580 feet at its lowest point along the St. Marys River coast to 980 feet at its highest point in the western portion of the township (shown on the Elevation Map).

The Slope Gradient Map shows areas of the township with slope steepness. The map indicates steep slope locations along the north and west branches of the Charlotte River as well as the Little Munuscong River towards the southern end of the township. Steep slope areas and areas with ridge lines create fantastic viewsheds and oftentimes development pressure. Limiting development on ridgelines and steep slope areas help sustain environmentally sensitive areas and reduce the chances of environmental and/or property damage from erosion.





Contours (Feet)

- 580 - 650
- 651 - 710
- 711 - 770
- 771 - 870
- 871 - 980

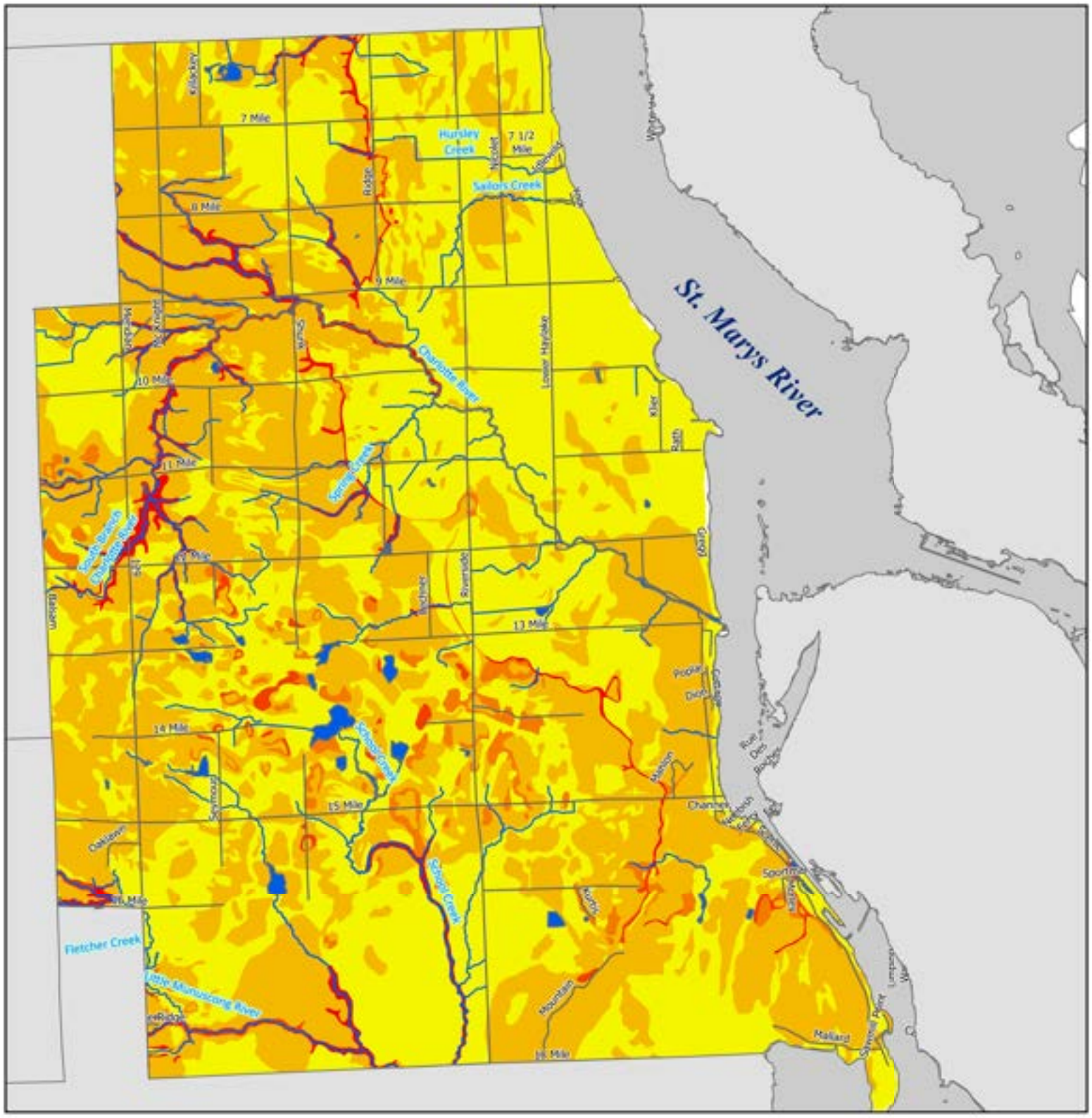
N W E S

Bruce Township Elevation

0 1 2 4 Miles

Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning & Development

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Slope Steepness (Percent)

- 0 - 1.5
- 1.51 - 5
- 5.1 - 17
- 17.1 - 33
- 33.1 - 53

Lakes

Rivers

N

W E

S

Bruce Township
Slope Steepness

0 1 2 4 Miles

Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning & Development

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Soils
As indicated in the topography section, the township lies primarily in the lake plains of glacial lakes. Soils in these areas are generally deep, level, and poorly drained. Surface runoff is generally slow to very slow and some ponding is common. Most of these areas are used as crop and pasture land or are woodlands. Areas with very poorly drained sandy or loamy soils with high levels of organic matter are generally located in drainages, depressions, and some shoreline areas. These areas are usually marshland and serve primarily as wildlife habitat.

The moraine deposits that form most of the township's hills and ridges are mixed materials of varying quality. The Soil Types Map shows the soil types throughout the township. Some examples of the township's more common soil types are:

- Rudyard silty clay loam
- Pickford silty clay loam
- Wega very fine sandy loam
- Ermatinger silt loam
- Hisotsoils and Aquents (ponded)
- Markey and Carbondale mucks
- Dora muck
- Burleigh loamy fine sand

Woodlands
According to the Existing Land Use Map, forested land in the primary form of land cover in the township. Approximately 68.5% of land is identified as forested land. Upland species including sugar maple, red maple, beech, yellow birch, and aspen. Sandy soils are dominated by jack pine, red pine, and white pine. Wet soils support white spruce, balsam fir, red maple, balsam poplar, and aspen. Wooded swamps contain white spruce, balsam fir, northern white cedar, black spruce, and tamarack.

Wetlands
Significant areas in the township are defined by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) as wetlands or areas that include wetland soils. The Existing Land Use Map shows a breakdown of land uses present in the township. Wetlands are estimated to cover 7.1%. Wetlands may include forested and non-forested wetland areas. Official wetland categorization is done by completing a wetland delineation survey on land suspected to be wetlands. Wetlands are shown on the Existing Land Use Map.

Surface Water
A portion of the St. Marys River forms the eastern boundary of Bruce Township. The Charlotte River drains the middle portion of the township emptying in the St. Marys River. Tributaries of the Little Munuscong River drain the southwestern portion of the township while Hursley and Sailors Creeks drain portions of the northeast area. Deer Lake, Muskrat Lake, and Roach Lake are located in southeastern Bruce Township. Beaver ponds, man-made ponds, and flooded areas are also found in various locations.

Normal spring rainstorm runoff generates a fairly heavy silt load that is carried by rivers in the township. Surface water contaminants are generally attributable to agriculture fertilizer, animal wastes, and some lawn fertilizers.

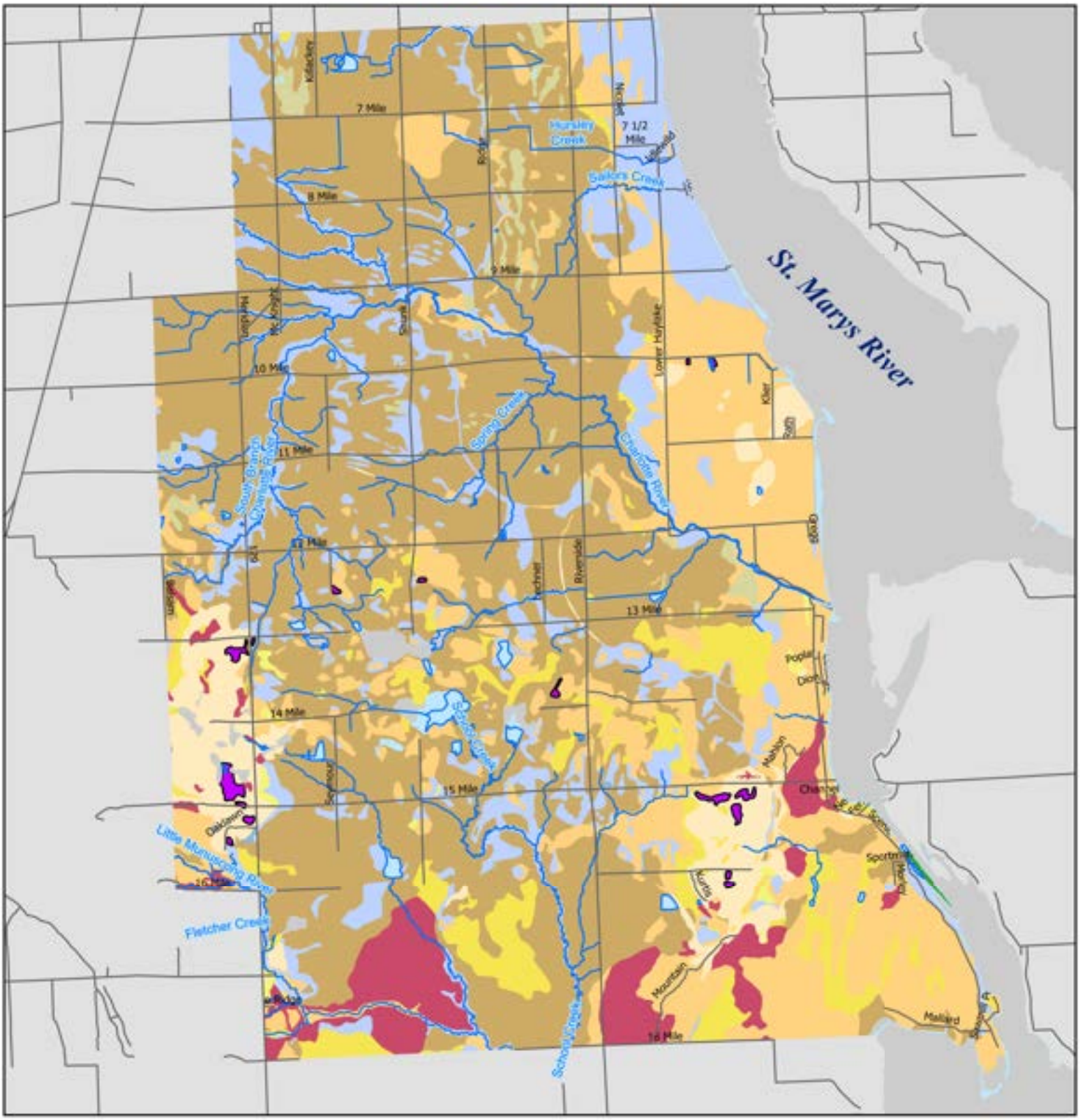
Groundwater
Groundwater is the source of essentially all water for domestic and public uses in the township. Quality is generally good although some wells produce water of undesirable quality. Some wells in the township are considered low capacity (less than 8 gallons per minute) resulting from both aquifer and well issues.

Fish and Wildlife
The St. Marys River provides convenient high-quality sport fishing for both residents and visitors. Game fish include trout, salmon, muskellunge, northern pike, walleye, smallmouth bass, whitefish, yellow perch, rock bass, bluegill, herring, crappie, and a short, limited season for sturgeon. A significant amount of state-owned land borders the Charlotte River and branches of the Munuscong River that also provides good fishing access.

Large areas of forests and woodlands in the township (including 6,500 acres of public land) provide excellent and convenient opportunities for hunting. Whitetail deer and limited numbers of black bears are the available big game species. Small game found in the township include ruffed grouse, woodcocks, squirrels, rabbits, and many species of ducks and geese. The township is a destination location for hunting sharp-tailed grouse due to the availability of its preferred habitat in the township's many hayfields. Many other protected wildlife species are also found in the township such as bald eagles, sandhill cranes, an occasional moose, and limited numbers of gray wolves.

Furbearers such as beaver, otter, mink, muskrat, coyote, red fox, porcupine, skunk, groundhog, and raccoon are also found in reasonable numbers.





Soil Types

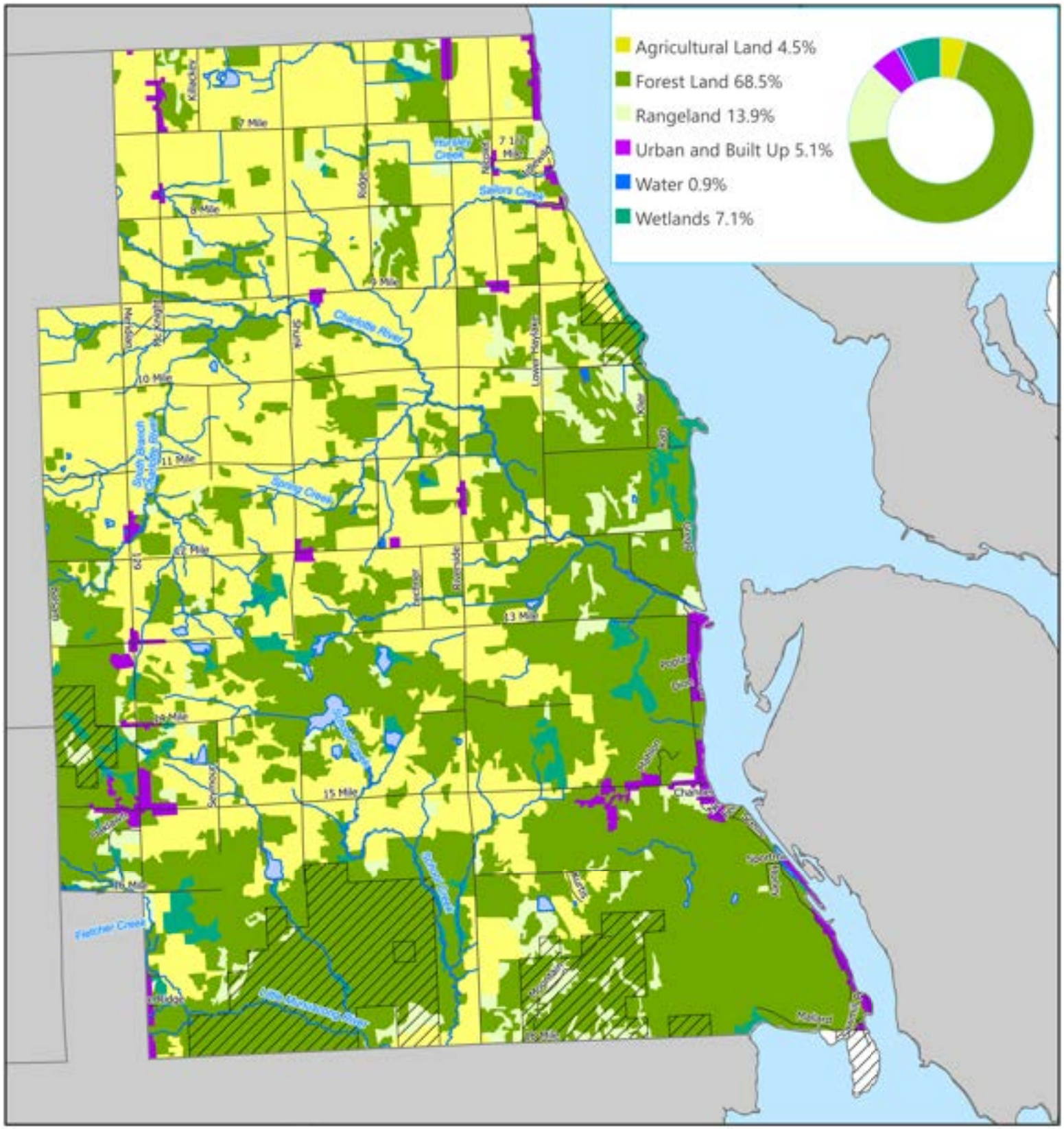
- Sandy Stony Loam
- Sand
- Muck
- Silty Clay Loam
- Silty Loam
- Sandy Loam
- Loam Primary
- Excavation Sites - Gravel Pits
- Saturated soils & Organic Material
- Duel-Rock outcrop complex
- Limestone
- Complex Composition (Mix)
- Floodplains (Entisols)
- Fine Sand complex
- Disturbed Soil (Udorthents)
- Water
- Rivers

N W E S

Soil Types Bruce Township

0 1 2 4 Miles

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Bruce Township Existing Land Use

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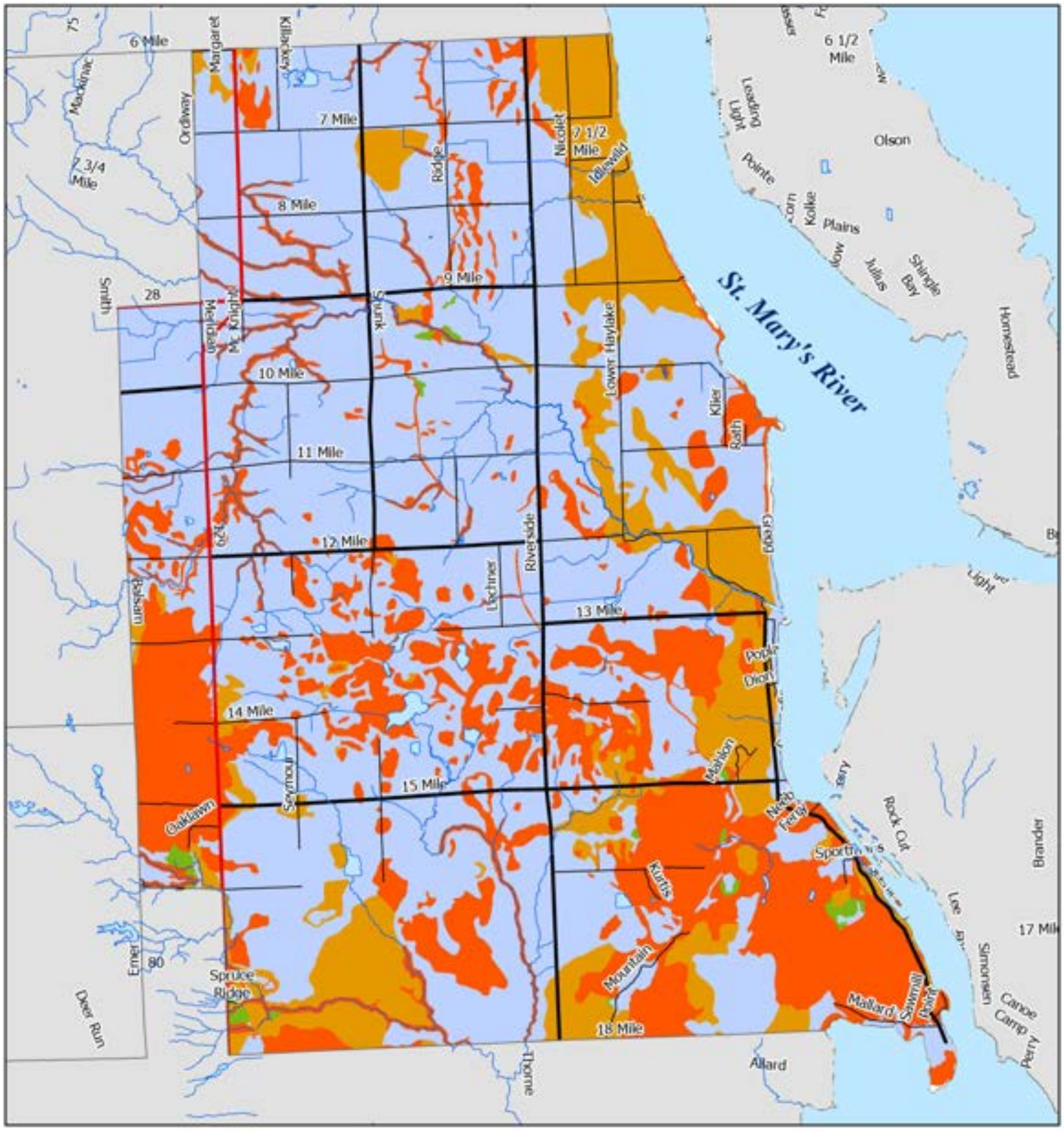
Current Land Uses

Bruce Township has seen growth and change throughout its history based on the location of natural features, the productivity of the soils, and the need for goods and services. Those patterns, in turn, have brought about the current agricultural, residential, and non-residential land uses in the area.

Agriculture
Agriculture uses in the area can begin to be described by the 2022 Census of Agriculture County Profile for Chippewa County (United States Department of Agriculture, 2026). Chippewa County has 335 farms and 84,200 acres of land in farms, and 35% of farms are 50 to 179 acres in size. The predominant use for land in farms is cropland with 51,959 acres. The number of farms declined by 22% since 2017 and the amount of land in farms reduced by 5%. According to the Existing Land Use Map agriculture land use designation occupies 4.5% of land in Bruce Township. 13.9% of land is designated rangeland land.

Hay farming and cattle are the principal non-residential uses of private township land. A significant amount of township acreage is devoted to agriculture, but agriculture use is and has been in decline over the past 25 years. Comparison shows that a significant amount of land classified as agriculture in 1978 has been allowed to revert to a natural state and is no longer used for agricultural purposes. Agricultural land uses such as farms, pastures, and woodlands are essential to the scenic and rural character of the township. Protecting farmland, especially in areas with prime farmland and farmland of local importance as shown on the Farming Suitability Map.





Bruce Township Farming Suitability

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Residential
The township has slowly been shifting from agriculture and forestry-based uses to residential and commercial land uses. The township's natural resources and its location convenient to the Sault Ste. Marie and Kinross employment centers make the township a desirable place to live. The Existing Land Use Map estimates 5.1% of land is Urban and Built Up. This use includes residential development along the St. Marys River, M-129 and S. Riverside Dr. north of 7 Mile Rd., and both residential and commercial uses in other areas throughout the township.

Riverfront residential development along Scenic Dr. and S. Cottage Rd. is typically single-family detached homes located on narrow lots (compared to the rest of the township). Compact waterfront development may experience flooding and erosion issues when melting snow and spring rains are unable to soak into the ground due to saturated soils and impervious surfaces. Additionally, limiting the amount of impervious surface and restricting shoreline hardening can improve the shoreline's ability to be resilient in face of changing water levels, changing wave strength, and cleaning and maintaining good water quality.

Non-riverfront residential development scattered along township roads and properties vary greatly in size. Many of these lots are splits from larger pieces of farmland or previously timbered land. There are no traditional neighborhoods or cluster housing developments in the township. The steady decline of the average household size and the stagnation of housing development is generating a demand for residential property and raising property values.



Commercial/Industrial
Commercial and industrial uses of land in the township are primarily located in the M-129 corridor on the west side of the township and in the Barbeau riverfront area on the east side of the township. Commercial activity in the Barbeau area generally focuses on the recreational opportunities provided by the St. Marys River. The Barbeau riverfront area is the location of several small resorts and the township's only restaurant/bar. Other business establishments located along M-129 and in the interior of the township are auto repair facilities, gun shops, a septic tank service, a propane supply service, and retail water service company. The township has a burgeoning economy of small businesses related to handmade goods, farm and produce, and landscape and nursery items. These are cottage industries using roadside stands and home-based businesses to sell locally produced food and other goods.

Industrial activity is light and limited to construction companies, trucking, topsoil supply services, and excavation and mining uses for sand and gravel.





Source: Google Map

Community Facilities
Community facilities land uses consist largely of publicly owned buildings, other facilities, or open lands that are owned by the township, another government entity, or not-for-profit agency providing a resource for the general public.

The Bruce Township Hall, located at 3156 E. 12 Mile Road, Dafter, MI 49724, is the center of township government activities. It is an operational building where Township staff have regular office hours and are available to the public to answer questions and concerns. In addition to offices, the building has a community gathering space for township meetings and may be used for both public and private events.

Also located on the site of the Township Hall is the Bruce Township Park, Bruce Township History Library, recycling trailer, and the Bruce Township Fire Department. The Township Park includes a pavilion, swings, play structure, basketball court, horseshoe pits, and baseball diamond. Picnic tables and trash cans in the pavilion make this a nice outdoor location to gather.

In addition to the Township Park located next to the Township Hall, Bruce Township also leases and maintains Dunbar Park, a recreational facility located at 12875 S. Scenic Drive, Barbeau, MI 49710. This is a day-use park with access to the St. Marys River. Onsite facilities include picnic and barbeque areas, pavilion with picnic tables and trash cans, and boat and kayak launches. Shade trees and grassy areas make this a nice place to spend the day.



Conely Point Boat Access Site on the St. Marys River is owned and operated by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. It is located at 18214 S. Scenic Drive, Barbeau MI 49710 and offers a boat launch, parking for cars and trailers, a viewing area for river traffic, picnicking, and other types of family-oriented recreation.



The Dunbar Forest Experiment Station is just north of the township park, Dunbar Park. It began as a school in 1910. The property has steadily expanded and extends into Soo Township on Neebish Island. The location and facilities of the Dunbar forest enable the tract to serve many phases of forestry:

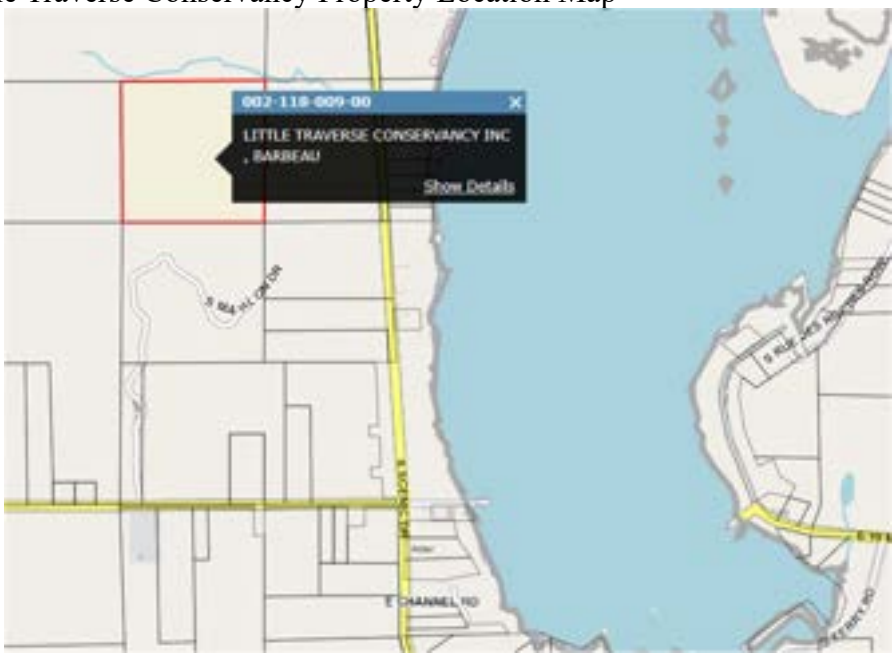
1. As a research station
2. As a summer camp for instruction in forestry to the students of the forestry department of Michigan State College from 1925-1966
3. As a forestry nursery in cooperation with the Federal Government under the Clarke-McNary law to produce forest tree seedlings as cost for sale to farmers
4. As a demo forest where the public may see the proper management of a forest for various uses on a sustained yield basis
5. As an area where the management of wildlife associated with the forest may produce its share of forest benefits
6. For forest recreation, the Charlotte and St. Marys Rivers being facility fishing, swimming, and recreation grounds

The history of the Dunbar Forest Experiment Station first began with the property's first owner, Edward Shawnano, who owned the area now occupied by the Dunbar Station when the first government deed was issued. Harris Dunbar owned it from 1902-1910. He gave the tract to Chippewa County for the location of a county agricultural school. The Dunbar School of Agriculture operated from 1911-1924 and graduated 50 students.

Later, Michigan State College acquired the Dunbar property from the County as a gift in 1925, and it became Dunbar Forest, home of summer camps for Michigan State College forestry students from 1925-1966. In 1946, a course for forestry technicians was added to the Michigan State College curriculum, with summer and fall terms being held at Dunbar. Dunbar Summer Camp experience was required of all students after their sophomore year, with a record high attendance in 1949 of 163 students. Michigan State College was forced to shut down the facility because of low enrollment and high costs ($2.50/week for room/board with free tuition for Michigan residents).

The Chippewa County Working Forest Reserve #6 is owned and operated by the Little Traverse Conservancy. It is located south of the MSU Dunbar Forest Experiment Station and north of 15 Mile. This 40-acre property is unmarked, but open to the public for appropriate and respectful use. The site does not include formal parking areas or trails. Working forest reserves are open to hunting and other activities as allowed through the Commercial Forestry Act Program.

Figure 4: Little Traverse Conservancy Property Location Map

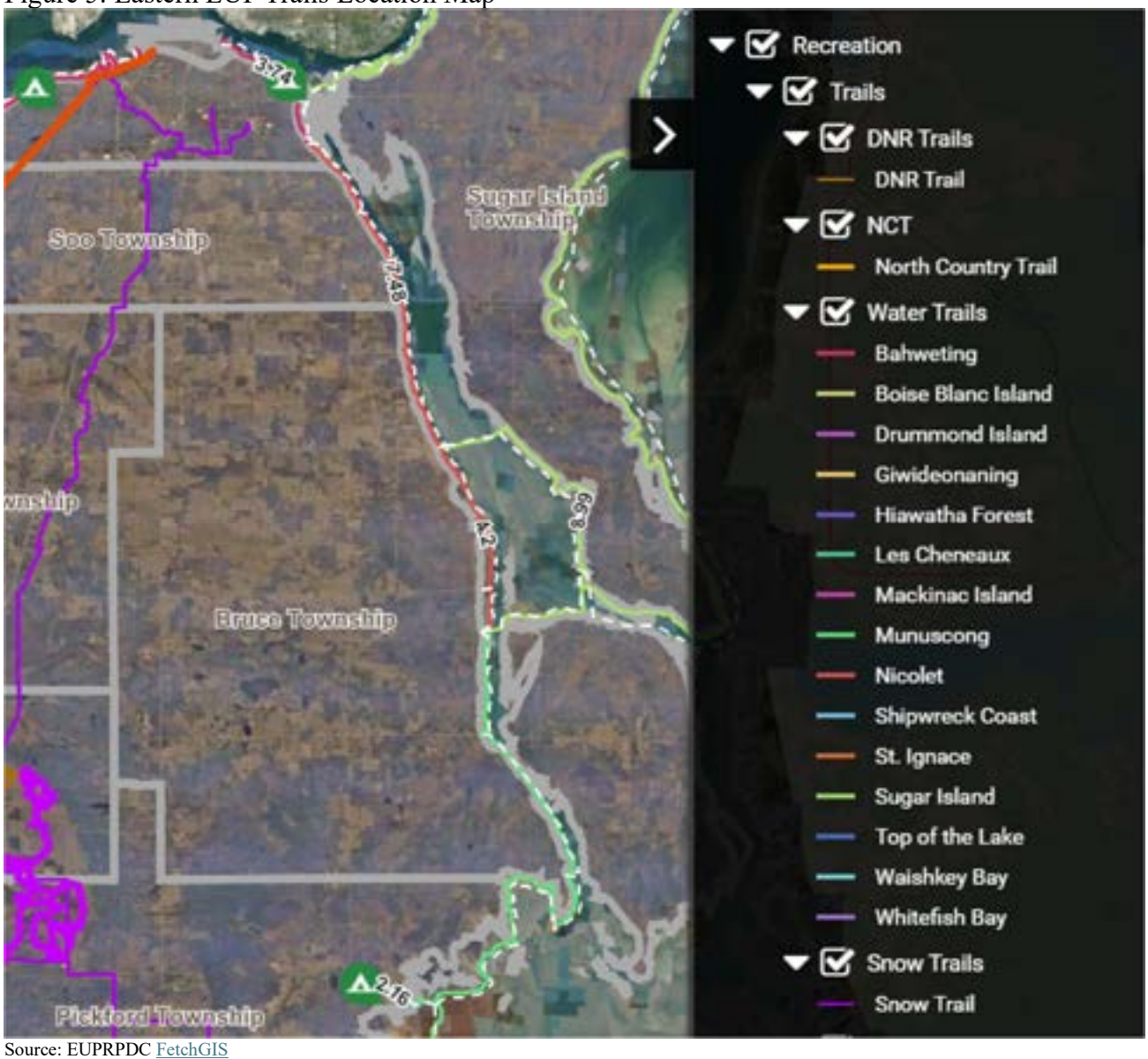


Source: EUPRPDC FetchGIS



Bruce Township residents also have easy access to summer and winter trails immediately adjacent to the township. The UP 49 snowmobile trail was extended to the north and west, starting in the City of Sault Ste. Marie, going south through Soo Township, into Dafter, Kinross, and Pickford Townships in 2026. Trail 491 from the corner of 15 Mile Road and Scenic Drive to the corner of Pennington Road and 22 Mile has been approved by the DNR for expansion. This part of the trail is about 20 miles long and extends east and west into the broader region. The DNR is considering expansion of the trail to the south into the Les Cheneaux area. To the east, in Lake Nicolet of the St. Marys River, is the Nicolet Water Trail located along the coast of Soo Township and Bruce Township from 4 Mile Beach to the 12 Mile Road end. Across the St. Marys River and along the coast of Sugar Island is the St. Marys River Island Explorer Water Trail.

Figure 5: Eastern EUP Trails Location Map



Source: EUPRPDC FetchGIS

Libraries
Bruce Township is located in the Superior District Library system with eight locations across the Eastern Upper Peninsula and provides a variety of resources, including free wi-fi access 24/7, computers, books and magazines, in print and electronic formats, printing, copying, free notary service, and programming for all ages. Township residents have access to the Bayliss Public Library and the library at Lake Superior State University, both of which are located in Sault Ste. Marie.

The Bruce Township History Library is owned and operated by Bruce Township. It is located in the building in the parking lot and south of the Bruce Township Hall. The library has a large collection of Township artifacts, history and genealogical data. It is open to the public on Tuesdays from 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. The Bruce Township history book "A Century of Settlement" is for sale at the Library.

Churches
The township is served by three local churches – Rosedale Community Church (non-denominational) located at the intersection of Shunk and 9 Mile Roads, Holy Family Church (Catholic) located on 15 Mile Road east of Riverside Drive, and Donaldson Presbyterian Church located on M129 at 13 Mile Road. Churches serving other denominations are available in adjacent townships and Sault Ste. Marie.

Cemeteries
Bruce Township has five cemeteries. Oaklawn Chapel Gardens located on M129 south of 15 Mile Road, Zion Cemetery on Ridge Road at 8 Mile Road, Donaldson Cemetery on M129 at 13 Mile Road, and two Catholic cemeteries – one on M129 at 15 Mile Road and one adjacent to Holy Family Church.



Schools

School enrollment data is discussed in the socio-economic profile of the township with data provided for the Eastern Upper Peninsula Intermediate School District overall, Pickford Public Schools, Rudyard Area Schools, Sault Ste. Marie Area Schools, Joseph K. Lumsden Bahweting Anishnabe Academy, and Lake Superior Academy. Bruce Township is in the Sault Ste. Marie Area School District except for a relatively small area in the southwest that is in the Pickford Public Schools District. Additionally, students have the option of attending schools outside their district of residence under Michigan's School of Choice Program or attending an online learning school. Population decline and shifting school options are changing the traditional school enrollment model with impacts on such things as public school funding and transportation services. School bus service is provided in both the Sault Ste. Marie and Pickford School Districts as well as separate services for the Anishnabe Academy and Maplewood Baptist Academy in Kinross.

Figure 6: Eastern EUP District and School Location Map



Source: https://michigan.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=438dc453faf749d786e0c6e8be731cfd

Community Services

Unlike community facilities discussed in the section above, community services are resources for the general public that may be publicly or privately owned. The service may or may not be supported by Bruce Township taxpayer dollars, but it has demonstrated a public good for the community at large. In this section, the nature of the service is prioritized above the land use aspect and whether the service has a physical presence in the community. The following is brief description of services that are available to residents of Bruce Township and the general public.

Fire Protection
The fire department is volunteer run and supports emergency services in the township and surrounding communities through mutual aid agreements. The fire department has a modern fire truck with current fire suppression capabilities and also has equipment and training in ice rescues. The fire department participates in training exercises with Chippewa County Sherriff's Department. This service is supported financially by the Township's general fund and available grant programs.





Solid Waste
Green For Life Environmental Services provides weekly trash pick up service throughout the township for a fee. Residents also have the option to pay-per-bag and take waste materials to the Dafter Landfill. Residents support the Chippewa County Recycling Center located in Sault Ste. Marie through a countywide millage. The millage supports recycling drop-off locations county-wide. The township's drop off location is the recycling trailer located at the Township Hall. Materials may also be dropped off at the Chippewa County Recycling Center.

Roads
Bruce Township works with the Chippewa County Road Commission and the State of Michigan by extension to maintain public roads. Snow removal services are provided by the Road Commission on both state and local roads with the exception of a limited number of seasonal county roads that do not receive winter maintenance. Most principal township roads are paved and the township is working cooperatively with the Road Commission on a program to improve those with gravel surfaces.

Police Services
The Chippewa County Sheriff's Department and the Michigan State Police are the primary first-responders who provide police services in the township. These police agencies are headquartered in Sault Ste. Marie. The Sault Tribe Police and Border Patrol are additional law enforcement working in the community and may provide backup response as needed.

Water-related emergency calls are handled by the Chippewa County Sheriff's Department and the U.S. Coast Guard. The Coast Guard responds to calls on open water including the St. Marys River. The Sheriff's Department will respond to calls on inland waters.

Ambulance Services
The township is served by the Northern EMS Authority (NEMSA), formerly the Kinross EMS. NEMSA is a new (2026), multi-municipality authority formed to provide emergency medical services (pre-hospital advanced life support, limited advanced life support and basic life support emergency medical services). According to the SooLeader.com, "NEMSA offers full time staffed EMS services to Kinross, Bruce, Rudyard, Pickford, Marquette, Raber, DeTour and Drummond Island [T]ownships as well as Neebish Island. Many of those townships previously relied on a response from volunteer EMS departments, but now they will receive quicker response times from NEMSA from highly trained first responders. NEMSA currently has 20 paramedics, eight advanced EMTs and 27 EMTs on staff."[1]

Water and Sewage
Bruce Township is not served by either a public water supply system or a public sanitary sewer system. Property owners rely on private wells for water supply and either standard septic systems or lagoon systems for sanitary waste. These systems are regulated by the Chippewa County Health Department, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), or EGLE depending on the type of facility the systems serve.

Much of the township is covered with clays and mucks with slow to very slow permeability rates. Water tables in many areas are also at or near the surface. These factors affect sewage disposal and place limitations on the type and scope of development that is practical in these areas.

Power Utilities
The township's electrical power is provided by Cloverland Electric Cooperative through transmission lines owned by American Transmission Company (ATC), the major regional utility. Natural gas service is provided by DTE Gas in limited areas. The Transportation and Municipal Assets Map identifies ATC transmission lines and the Great Lakes Gas Transmission natural gas pipelines. An ATC transmission line runs on the west side of the township.

[1] Lehocky, Jim. SooLeader.com. 9 January 2026. https://www.sooleader.com/then-and-now/kinross-ems-joins-area-townships-to-form-northern-ems-authority-11698799. 23 March 2026

Telecommunications
Landline telephone service is provided by AT&T and SBC in the central and northern portions of the township and by Century Tel in the south. Cellular phone service is provided by Verizon and AT&T. Cable television service is provided by Charter Communications and is only available in the northeast portion of the township.

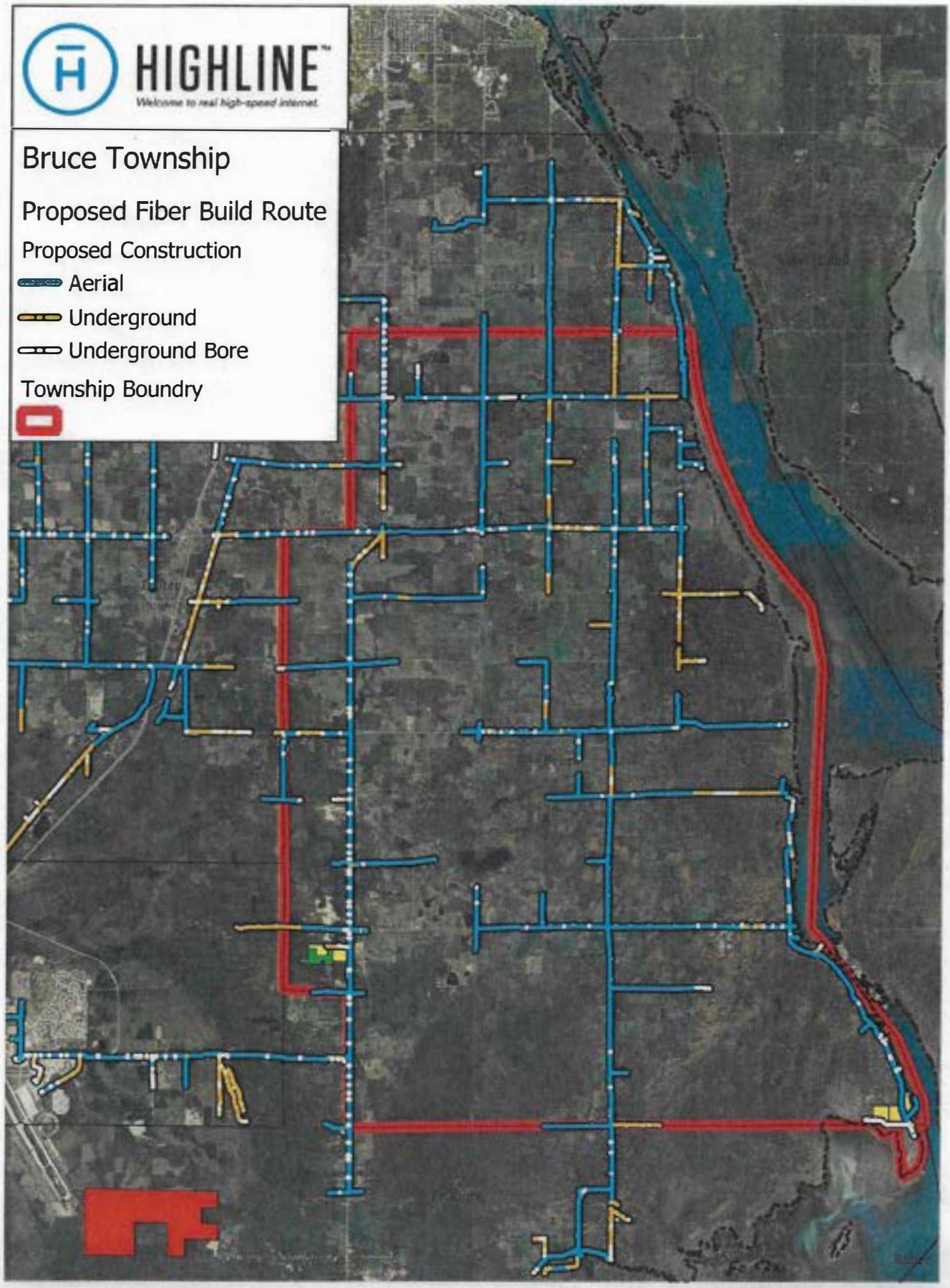
Prior to 2026, the Internet Service Provider (ISPs) was primarily Spectrum provided by Charter Communications. The EUPConnect Collaborative was formed to identify the scale of the broadband gap and plan for access expansion among other efforts. Broadband is a fixed Internet connection that provides a minimum of 25 Mbps download and 3 -Mbps upload. As of spring 2026, fiber-based broadband network build-outs are on-going and planned:

- Highline (ITC Broadband) was awarded BEAD funding to serve approximately 400 locations in Bruce Township. Their build-out is underway, beginning north of Pickford and extending into the southern portion of the Township.
- Spectrum was awarded funding for approximately 400 locations in Bruce Township through the ROBIN Grant program.
- Both Highline and Spectrum have indicated that their build-outs are expected to be completed by the end of summer 2026, and no later than the end of 2026

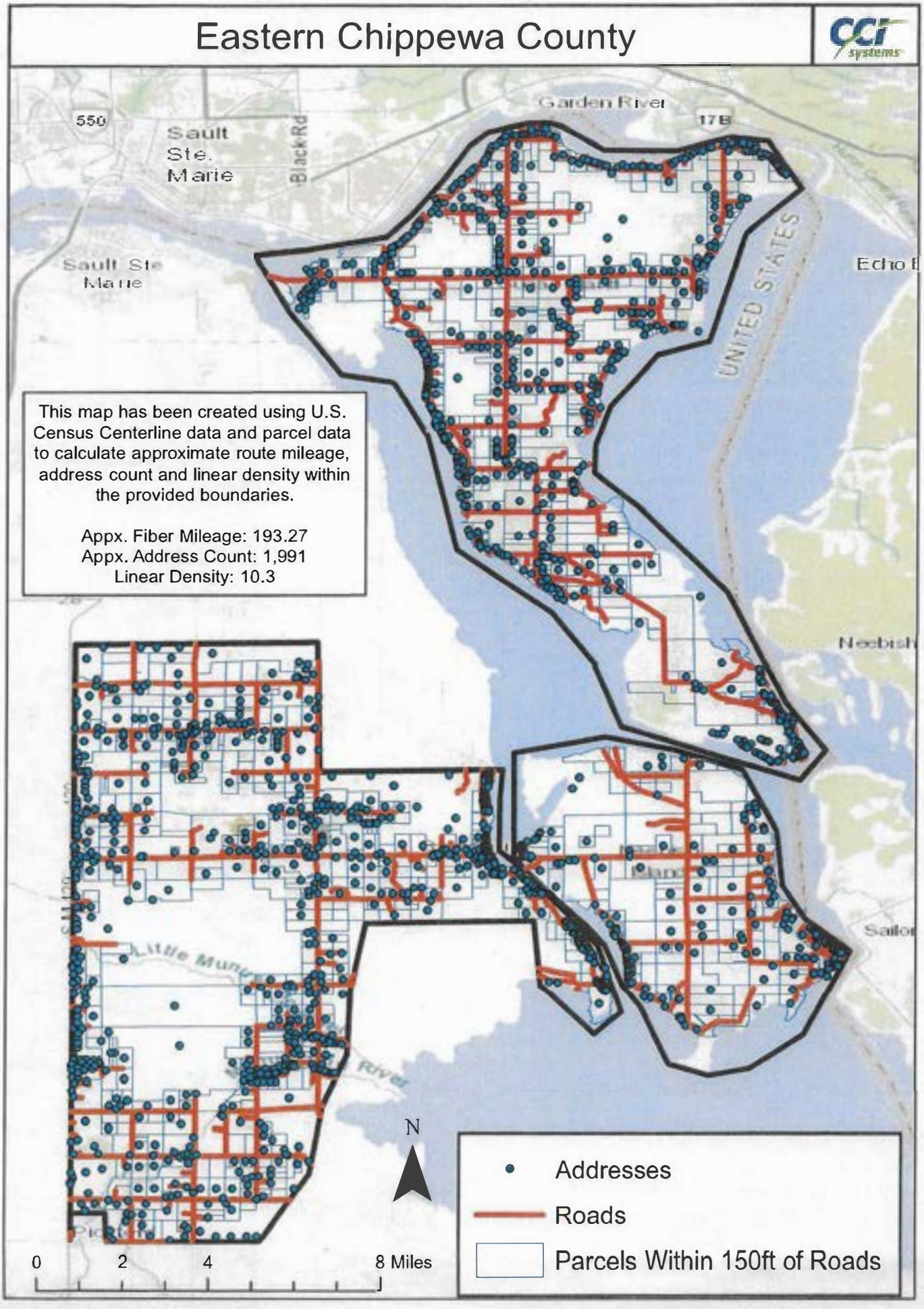
In addition, the Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians was awarded a ReConnect grant to construct a fiber route from Sault Ste. Marie to Rudyard, traversing the west side of Bruce Township along M-129. Cherry Capital Connections will be providing internet service over that fiber network.

As a result, all locations in Bruce Township will have access to at least one fiber provider, with some areas having two providers, as shown in the build out images below. Properties along M-129 may ultimately have access to as many as three fiber providers by the end of summer 2026.




HIGHLINE
Welcome to real high-speed internet
Bruce Township
Proposed Fiber Build Route
Proposed Construction
Aerial
Underground
Underground Bore
Township Boundry

Eastern Chippewa County



This map has been created using U.S. Census Centerline data and parcel data to calculate approximate route mileage, address count and linear density within the provided boundaries.

Appx. Fiber Mileage: 193.27
Appx. Address Count: 1,991
Linear Density: 10.3

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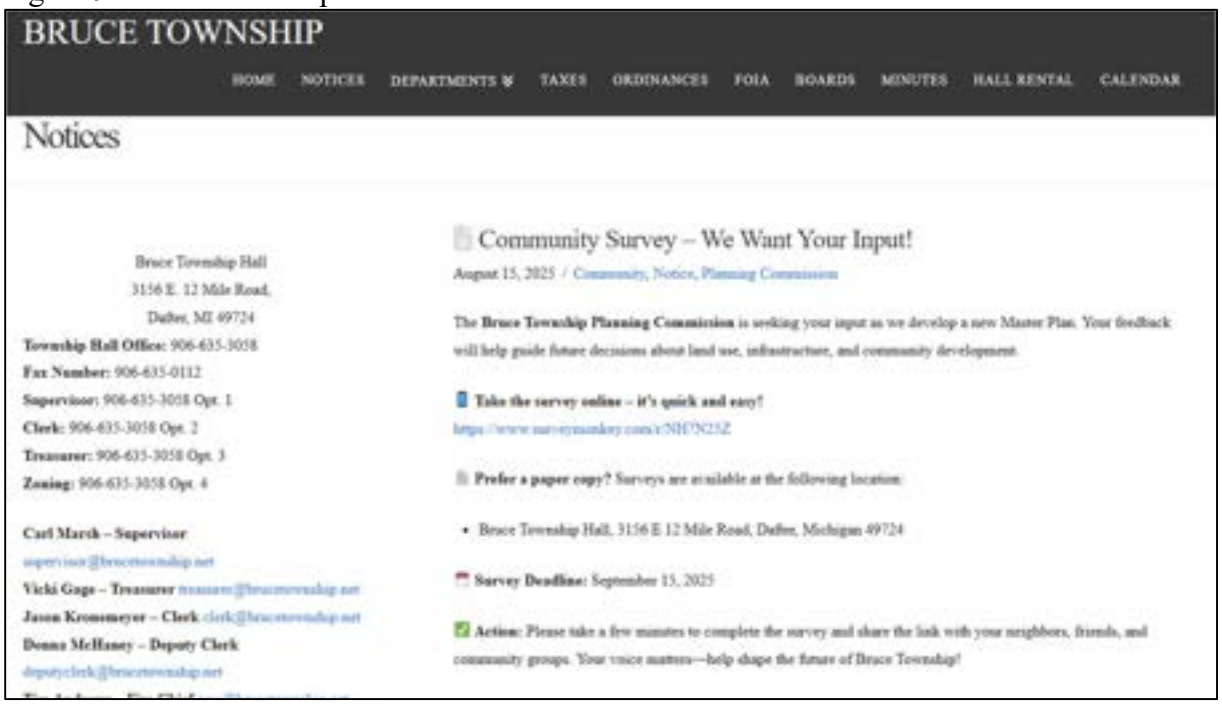
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United States Department of Agriculture. (2026, September 24). *Census of Agriculture.* Retrieved from 2022 State and County Profiles - Michigan: https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2022/Online_Resources/County_Profiles/Michigan/cp26033.pdf

Public Input

The update the of the Bruce Township Master Plan first began with the collection of feedback from the community with the distribution of the Community Survey. The survey was released to the public in October 2025 and closed in January 2026. The survey was posted online at the Township's website and the EUPRPDC's Facebook page, and it was available in paper copy that could be picked up at the Township Hall. The images below provide proof the survey was shared online. The survey received 39 responses on paper copies and 46 responses online. In total, there were 85 respondents to the survey, but not every question was answered each time. Compared to the township's total population, this is about a 5% response rate.

Figure 9: Bruce Township Website



Demographic questions asked in the survey provide insight into the community members who were providing input. The majority of survey-takers were members of two-person households and over the age of 45. The majority were also year-round residents and own the home where they reside. Other housing questions asked whether their current residence meets their needs (97%, yes) and whether participants might seek a home that better fits their needs in the future (87%, no).

The survey also asked about satisfaction with township services and community issues. Cell coverage and broadband access/availability were brought up as major issues. Overall, the several topics emerged as important considerations brought up in the Community Survey:

Protecting natural features especially water resources and open space.

Maintaining and improving township property including parks and recreation facilities. Youth social and recreational activities is an emerging need

Need for neighborhood commercial services and local health care options.

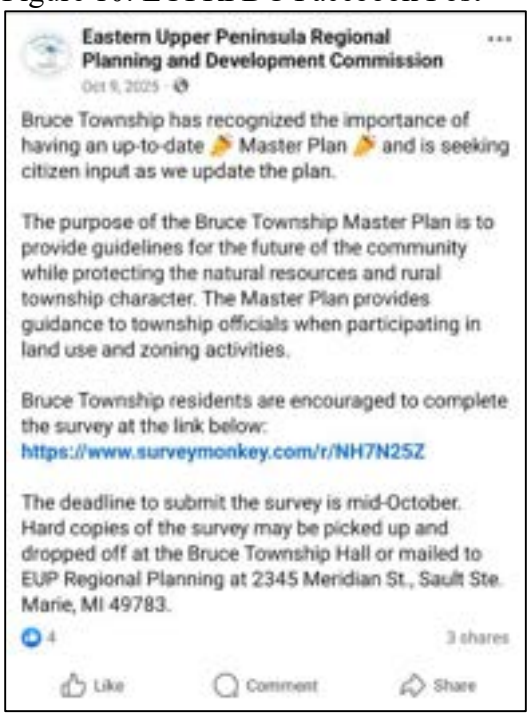
Question 21 of the survey asked participants to THINK BIG about what can make Bruce Township an even better place to live. The open-ended responses created this word cloud:



Source: M365 Copilot using responses to Question 21 of the Community Survey

The feedback gathered in the survey responses will help inform the discussion about things such as why residents live in the township, their level of satisfaction with services, and ideas for change to make Bruce Township an even better place to live. A complete record of the survey results are available by contacting the Township offices.

Figure 10: EUPRPDC Facebook Post



Goals and Objectives

Through discussions with community leaders, input received through the community survey, and the analysis of the socio-economic and land use profile, community needs begin to take shape and inform the discussion of goals for future growth and development in the township. Goals and objectives may reflect both ongoing challenges the community has experienced and emerging needs brought on by changes in the population, land uses, economy or other factors. A wide range of goals and objectives may bring about solutions that were unexpected or develop opportunities that were previously unattainable.

Goal 1
Guide growth that strengthens Bruce Township's rural character and local economy

Bruce Township will support growth that enhances its rural identity, protects agricultural lands, and expands opportunities for families and local businesses.

Objectives:

1.1 Preserve agricultural land through zoning protections and support for long-term farm viability.
1.2 Encourage home-based businesses and small enterprises by streamlining rural-appropriate permitting.
1.3 Encourage agritourism such as farm markets, U-pick operations, deer ranches, and seasonal events within guidelines that protect rural character.
1.4 Support diverse rural housing options that preserve open space and natural vegetation.
1.5 Allow neighborhood-scale commercial uses that serve residents while maintaining rural compatibility.
1.6 Identify and establish targeted zoning districts.
1.7 Continue to require industrial and high-impact uses to demonstrate clear community benefits and strong environmental protections.



Goal 2
Strengthen township facilities and services to meet community needs.

Bruce Township will invest in facilities, communication systems, and public services that support residents, visitors, and community organizations.

Objectives:

2.1 Increase social, recreational, and intergenerational programming through partnerships with local organizations.
2.2 Establish a consistent communication platform to keep residents informed and engaged.
2.3 Expand community use of the Township Hall by improving scheduling and promoting availability.
2.4 Pursue integration of the Bruce Township Historical Library with the Superior District Library.
2.5 Create a 5-Year Parks and Recreation Plan.
2.6 Develop a township-wide signage plan that establishes consistent design standards including colors, materials, fonts, and icons to reinforce rural character, improve wayfinding, and create a cohesive identity across parks, facilities, corridors, and historic sites.
2.7 Promote, strengthen, and support expansion/upgrades for the Bruce Township Fire Department.

Goal 3
Protect natural resources and the historic features for future generations.

Bruce Township will safeguard its waterways, forests, wildlife habitats, and historic sites to preserve the township's identity and environmental health.

Objectives:

3.1 Identify, document, and preserve historic sites through mapping, partnerships, and voluntary preservation programs.
3.2 Encourage expansion of ride-sharing parking and EUPTA access to Township.
3.3 Enhance and improve township property by adding more community recreation opportunities (e.g. hiking trails, disc golf, driving range, pickleball courts, outhouses, baby changing facilities, cross-country skiing, snowshoe trails.)
3.4 Explore and implement ways to expand/improve existing or new non-motorized trails (e.g. bicycle and hiking trails, improve signage, brush removal etc.)

Future Land Uses

The proposed future land use profile takes direction from the goals and objectives while acknowledging current land uses and the current Zoning Ordinance. It is important to recognize a variety of land uses and development types with distinct characteristics that are likely to expand and/or be proposed in Bruce Township in the near future. This narrative, the Future Land Use Map, and the Zoning Plan discussed below will drive decision-making for township elected and appointed officials.

Agriculture
Agriculture and open space are the backbone of the township's rural character. Conserving and protecting farm uses as well as farmland on large parcels is key to this goal. The township may enact several regulatory tools to maintain farm uses and reduce the development of farmland. More information about these programs and others can be found through the Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development[2]

- Exclusive agricultural zoning is a strict land use designation that designates an area only for agricultural purposes, with very limited or no allowance for non-farm uses.
- Purchase of Development Rights is a permanent restriction on the land between the unit of government and a landowner, voluntarily entered into by a landowner, preserving their land for agriculture in exchange for a cash payment for those rights. The State does currently offer funding for this program. The township or county may establish a Permanent Development Rights Program.
- Farmland Development Rights Agreements are a temporary restriction on the land between the State of Michigan and a landowner, voluntarily entered into by a landowner, preserving their land for agriculture in exchange for certain tax benefits and exemptions for various special assessments, commonly known as Preservation Act (PA) 116.
- Transfer of development rights is the sale of a parcel's development rights to the owner of another parcel, which allows more development on the second parcel while reducing or preventing development on the originating parcel.

Landowners may also seek to conserve land through a land trust. A land trust is a non-profit organization directly involved in the permanent protection of land and its resources for public benefit. A land trust is a private alternative to land preservation by public agencies or park districts. Land trusts accept properties, buy land, or help landowners establish legal restrictions that limit harmful use and development. Land trusts may own and manage properties, monitor the limits they have allowed set for landowners, and work in partnership with other agencies. Options for land protection include conservation easements, purchase of development rights, and donation of the land among others. The Little Traverse Conservancy is the Northern Michigan Land Trust operating in Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Chippewa, Emmet, and Mackinac Counties.

[2] Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development. MDARD - Farmland Preservation. May 19, 2026.

Residential

Planning for new residential development considers the community's population trends, the types of housing units currently available, and the types of land development desired in the community. Bruce Township has a strong foundation of single-family homes, the desired housing type, and will continue to permit and build these traditional structures. However, traditional single-family homes may not be the most desirable housing option for individual residents and families through various stages of adulthood. Young people and new families as well as empty-nesters and retired community members where less people are living in a household together and thus requiring less space may also benefit from housing options. Economically, young families typically do not have the capital to make a large down payment and families who have retired from the workforce are on a fixed income. Both population groups are ideally suited for one- and two-bedroom units at an affordable price point. Communities can support all residents through development of diverse housing types.

New housing types may be added to the fabric of the community without drastically changing the character by adding Missing Middle Housing, a term coined by Daniel Parolek of Opticos Design, Inc. Two-unit duplexes, three-unit triplexes, and four-unit quadplexes are Missing Middle Housing types that may be designed within the framework of a traditional single-family residence. Additionally, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), a unit accessory to a primary residential structure that may be attached (basement or garage unit) or detached (a separate stand-alone unit), allow current landowners to add living space for a relative or as rental income without buying an additional piece of property. Gentle density can be used to add new residential units using building types and design styles that are compatible with surrounding buildings.

In the bigger picture of residential land use, alternative development patterns can reduce land and construction costs which allow more affordable units to be built and can more efficiently use land which conserves open space. In terms of affordability, economies of scale apply to housing as with other goods that the per-unit cost of production goes down when multiple units are constructed. Housing types such as cabin or cottage courts, tiny home communities, and townhomes are single-family units with compact building footprints that can then be rented or sold at a cheaper price point than a single-family home on the same one acre or five acre parcel. In addition to new options for residential uses, changes to regulatory standards such as reduced minimum lot sizes and clustered housing options build more supply into the housing stock while conserving land.

Clustered development is the practice of clustering homes in a new housing development on smaller lots and the remaining unused land is dedicated through some form of conservation easement for open space in perpetuity.

It is important to note that residential uses are located throughout the township, and new development is likely to occur in this pattern but also in areas with new or expanded infrastructure. One such area is Ridge Rd. from 6 Mile to 9 Mile due to the planned paving of Ridge Rd. Conflicts between residential and non-residential uses have been minimal in the past. However, as discussed below more intense commercial and industrial development is planned for the M-129 corridor where there are existing single-family residential uses. More thoughtful approaches such as buffers between residential and non-residential uses and allowing more intense multi-unit housing types in this corridor might encourage a more harmonious mix of land uses.



Source: https://www.ajc.com/neighborhoods/dekalb/georgias-1st-tiny-home-community-wins-innovation-award/PE6FKIQXLBDTDL3OSD37QMQSEA/

Commercial
Generally, commercial uses are planned for the M-129 corridor and the developed areas on the eastern side of the township specifically at the intersection of 15 Mile Rd. and S. Scenic Dr. Both of these corridors are ideal locations for nodal development: a planning strategy that focuses high-density, mixed use growth into existing commercial, residential, and transit-oriented nodes. Future development may include new general commercial uses such as coffee shops, ice cream shops, food trucks, and some retail uses in a walkable environment with community gathering spaces. Initiating lighting, parking, and landscape screening development standards would help to maintain compatibility with surrounding residential uses.

Accessory commercial land uses to a predominant agricultural or residential use are becoming more prevalent throughout the interior of the township. These include small home-based businesses such as produce and bakery stands and pet grooming and boarding. Home-based businesses are encouraged especially services such as childcare centers and other small businesses that provide a valuable service to the community. Larger agritourism uses with appropriate limits are also encouraged. The terms agricultural tourism or agritourism are commonly used to describe any activity incidental to the operation of a farm that brings members of the public to the farm for educational, recreational, or retail purposes.[3] Agritourism supports agriculture economic development efforts by promoting the diversification of farm-related activities.

Industrial and Other High Impact Land Uses
While existing excavation and mining uses in the community are largely accepted and have not caused significant nuisances, industrial and high impact uses should be designed to mitigate nuisance impacts and to avoid adverse impacts on important areas such as farmland, sensitive land uses, or valuable natural resources. Industrial and other high impact land uses may require large amounts of vacant land and also large amounts of natural resources to operate including vacant, cleared land, energy, and fresh, clean water. By products of high impact uses are noise nuisance, impacts to water quality and energy usage, disruptions to the scenic landscape, and detractions from the rural nature of the township. Development standards may help protect against negative impacts on the community. Additionally, upon completion of the use the site shall be decommissioned and returned to its natural state.

Agricultural land and open space throughout the country is experiencing development pressure from other high impact land uses. Large-scale renewable energy projects for wind, solar, and battery energy storage systems (BESS) and large scale data centers (centers for networked computer servers, data storage systems, and networking gear) have a demonstrated public need, perhaps not in the immediate community like a factory or local business, but like a pipeline or transmission line for the surrounding community. These uses vary in scale, energy production or usage, and economic impact, but all occupy large pieces of land, and prefer to be located near the ATC transmission line. Data centers also need access to clean water and a fiber network. These uses are best suited for siting along the M-129 corridor and areas near the ATC transmission line.

[3] American Planning Association. https://www.planning.org/knowledgebase/agritourism/. June 10, 2026.

Zoning Plan

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Act 33 of 2008, as amended, requires a Master Plan that is prepared in conjunction with this act to be the foundation for the communities zoning plan. The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, PA 110 of 2006, as amended, requires a zoning plan to be created as the basis for the zoning ordinance. A zoning plan explains how the future land use categories in the Plan relate to the zoning districts incorporated in a community's Zoning Ordinance.

> *"For a local unit of government that has adopted a zoning ordinance, a zoning plan for various zoning districts controlling the height, area, bulk, location, and use of buildings and premises. The zoning plan must include an explanation of how the land use categories on the future land use map relate to the districts on the zoning map."*

Current Zoning District
The Bruce Township Zoning Ordinance has one established district for Bruce Township: AG/R Agricultural/Residential District. All of Bruce Township is designated as an Agricultural/Residential (AG/R) District.

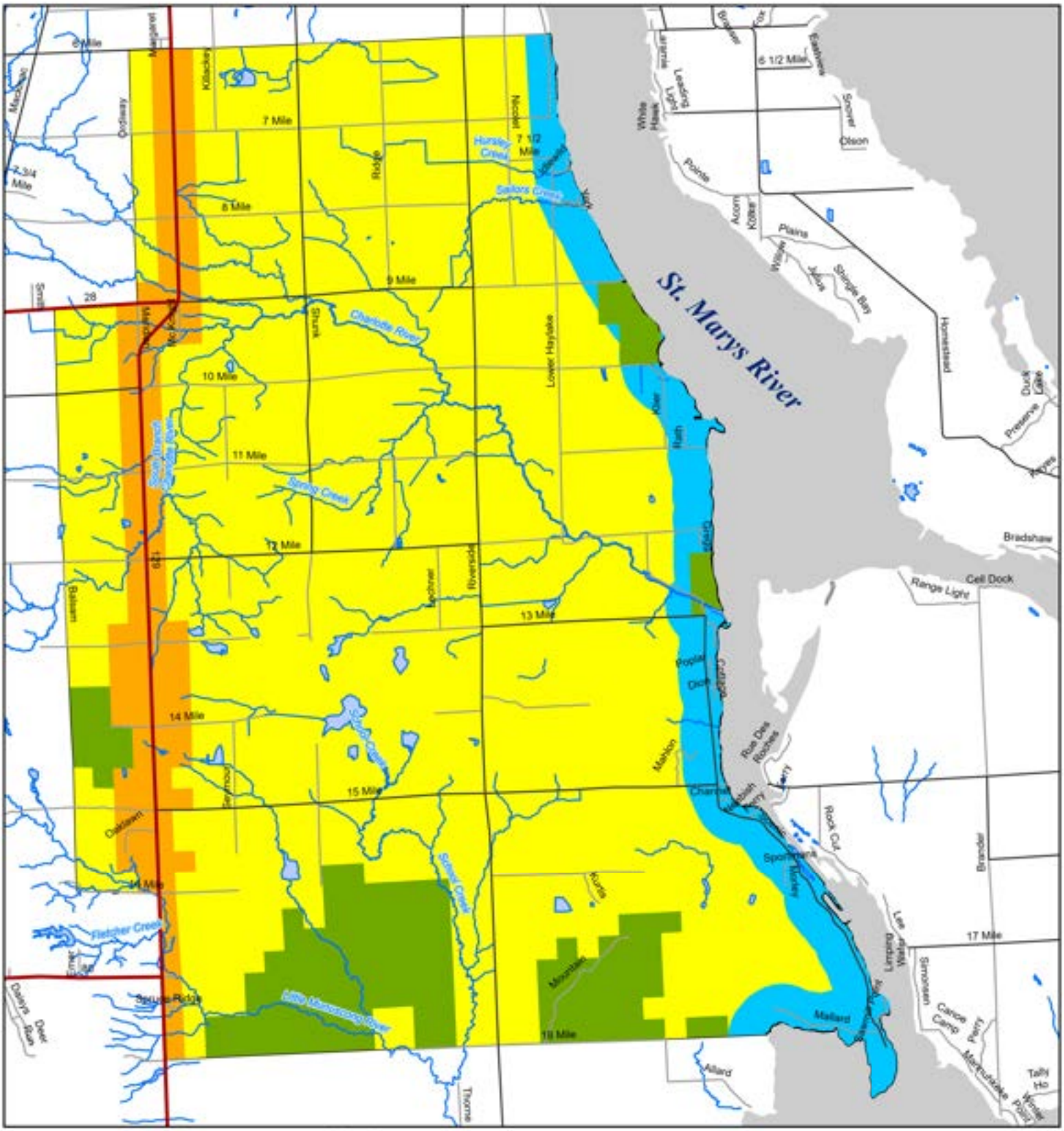
Future Land Use Map
The Future Land Uses discussed above are displayed on the Future Land Use Map. The Future Land Use Map proposes expanding the number of zoning districts in the township to four distinct districts:

- Agricultural/Residential
    - Suitable for agricultural uses, low density residential, accessory commercial uses, and public facilities.
    - Generally large lot sizes and low intensity

- Waterfront Residential
    - Suitable for medium density residential, accessory commercial, neighborhood commercial, some general commercial, and recreational uses.
    - Generally small lot sizes and low intensity

- Commercial Mixed Use
    - Suitable for medium density residential, public facilities, general commercial, industrial and high impact uses.
    - Generally, medium to large lot sizes and high intensity

- Recreation
    - Suitable for public and private recreation uses.
    - Generally, medium to large lot sizes and low intensity



Future Land Use Road Class

- Agriculture/Residential
- Commercial/Mixed Use
- Recreation
- Waterfront Residential
- COUNTY LOCAL
- COUNTY PRIMARY
- STATE HIGHWAY

N W E S

Bruce Township Future Land Use

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning & Development

The information and data provided herewith has been compiled from various sources, and is used by the EUPRPD Commission for its own general purposes. EUPRPDC does not warrant or guarantee that this information and data is accurate or current, nor does EUPRPDC warrant or guarantee that this information and data is fit for any particular use or purpose other than intended. More specifically, EUPRPDC warns that this information and data is not intended to be, and should not be, used to determine individual ownership, lot lines, or lines of occupation with respect to real estate. Any receipt of this information and data should independently verify its accuracy before relying on it for any purpose. EUPRPDC and its officers, agents, employees, boards, and commissions shall not be liable for any inaccuracy or omission in this information and data

Action Plan
Implementation of the Master Plan's goals and objections is described in the table below with the level of priority, intended timing of the activity, the responsible party, and potential funding methods.

The priority levels are marked 1-5.

- Level 1 priority is a high level of priority
- Level 2 is somewhat high priority
- Level 3 is neither high nor low priority
- Level 4 is somewhat low priority
- Level 5 is a low priority objective

The timeline given for each objective estimates how much time will be needed to accomplish the objective, or an objective may have continuous activity and therefore be listed as "ongoing." Objectives may include specific intended actions that may be completed at various stages and thus may require extended periods of time to complete.

The responsible party are those entities who have the ability to complete the task on their own or form partnerships with other groups to make progress on the objective.

Goal 1: Guide Growth That Strengthens Bruce Township's Rural Character and Local Economy

Table 14: Rural Character and Local Economy Objectives

Objectives	**Priority**	**Timeframe**	**Responsible Party**	**Funding**
1.1 Preserve agricultural land through zoning protections and support for long-term farm viability.	1	Ongoing, 1-20 years	Zoning Administration and Township Board	Not Applicable
1.2 Encourage home-based businesses and small enterprises by streamlining rural-appropriate permitting.	1	Ongoing, 1-20 years	Business Owner, Zoning Admin. and Planning Commission	Not Applicable
1.3 Encourage agritourism such as farm markets, U-pick operations, deer ranches, and seasonal events within guidelines that protect rural character.	1	1-20 years	Business owner, Township employees, Zoning Admin.	Not Applicable
1.4 Support diverse rural housing options that preserve open space and natural vegetation.	4	10-20 years	Planning Commission, Zoning Admin. & Township Board	seek state and regional partnerships
1.5 Allow neighborhood-scale commercial uses that serve residents while maintaining rural compatibility.	4	Ongoing, 1-20 years	Planning Commission, Zoning Admin. & Township Board	Not Applicable
1.6 Identify and establish targeted zoning districts.	2	1-2 years	Planning Commission and Township Board	Not Applicable
1.7 Continue to require industrial and high-impact uses to demonstrate clear community benefits and strong environmental protections.	3	Ongoing, 1-20 years	Defer to State and Federal agencies	Not Applicable

Goal 2: Strengthen Township Facilities and Services to Meet Community Needs

Table 15: Facilities and Services Objectives

Objectives	**Priority**	**Timeframe**	**Responsible Party**	**Funding**
2.1 Increase social, recreational, and intergenerational programming through partnerships with local organizations.	3	Ongoing, 1-20 years	Township Board	General Fund
2.2 Establish a consistent communication platform to keep residents informed and engaged.	1	Immediately-6 months	Township staff	General Fund
2.3 Expand community use of the Township Hall by improving scheduling and promoting availability.	1	Immediately-6 months	Township staff	Not Applicable
2.4 Pursue integration of the Bruce Township Historical Library with the Superior District Library.	2	Immediately-2 years	Township Board and Library staff	Not Applicable
2.5 Create a 5-Year Parks and Recreation Plan.	1	Immediately-2 Years	Planning Commission	General Fund
2.6 Develop a township-wide signage plan that establishes consistent design standards including colors, materials, fonts, and icons to reinforce rural character, improve wayfinding, and create a cohesive identity across parks, facilities, corridors, and historic sites.	3	Immediately-4 years	Planning Commission and Township Board	General Fund and/or comm. sponsors
2.7 Promote, strengthen, and support expansion/upgrades for the Bruce Township Fire Department	1	Ongoing, 1-20 years	Planning Commission and Township Board	Fire Department Fund/Grants

Goal 3: Protect Natural Resources and Historic Features for Future Generations

Table 16: Natural Resources and Historic Features Objectives

Objectives	**Priority**	**Timeframe**	**Responsible Party**	**Funding**
3.1 Identify, document, and preserve historic sites through mapping, partnerships, and voluntary preservation programs.	4	Ongoing, 1-20 years	Planning Commission and Township Board	General Fund, fund-raising
3.2 Encourage expansion of ride-share parking and EUPTA access to township.	2	Ongoing, 1-5 years	Planning Commission and Township Board	not applicable
3.3 Enhance and improve township property by adding more community recreation opportunities (e.g. hiking trails, disc golf, driving range, pickleball courts, outhouses, baby changing facilities, cross-country skiing, snowshoe trails.)	2	Ongoing, 1-20 years	Planning Commission and Township Board	General Fund/fund-raising
3.4 Explore and implement ways to expand/improve existing or new non-motorized trails (e.g. bicycle and hiking trails, improve signage, brush removal etc.).	2	Ongoing, 1-20 years	Planning Commission and Township Board	General Fund/fund-raising

NUMBER OF REGISTERED VOTERS BY GENDER-AGE

	All	Precent	18-21	Percent	22-30	Percent	31-40	Percent	41-50	Percent	51-59	Percent	60+	Percent
VILLAGE														
Male:	974	52.96%	57	5.85%	101	10.37%	162	16.63%	122	12.53%	156	16.02%	376	38.60%
Female:	864	46.98%	40	4.63%	97	11.23%	128	14.81%	126	14.58%	129	14.93%	344	39.81%
No Gender:	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
All	1,839		97	5.27%	198	10.77%	291	15.82%	248	13.49%	285	15.50%	720	39.15%
GRAND TOTAL:														
Male:	974	52.96%	57	5.85%	101	10.37%	162	16.63%	122	12.53%	156	16.02%	376	38.60%
Female:	864	46.98%	40	4.63%	97	11.23%	128	14.81%	126	14.58%	129	14.93%	344	39.81%
No Gender:	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
All	1,839		97	5.27%	198	10.77%	291	15.82%	248	13.49%	285	15.50%	720	39.15%