

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

Chippewa, Luce, and Mackinac Counties



2025 - 2029

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What is contained within is the Eastern Upper Peninsula's 2025-2029 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, which was made possible by funding from the Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA).

The content was prepared by the Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning & Development Commission.

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Acknowledgements

Many organizations and individuals contributed to the development of the CEDS. With heartfelt thanks, EUPRPDC would like to acknowledge the members of the REDAC, the many community groups which gave us time at their meetings, and the survey respondents. The Regional Economic Development Advisory Collaborative (REDAC) is comprised of a collection of experts from throughout the region whose combined knowledge and experience will be used to address and identify viable solutions for various community and economic issues facing the Eastern Upper Peninsula—and the counties and municipalities within.

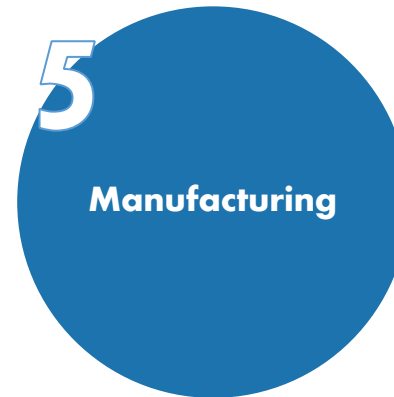
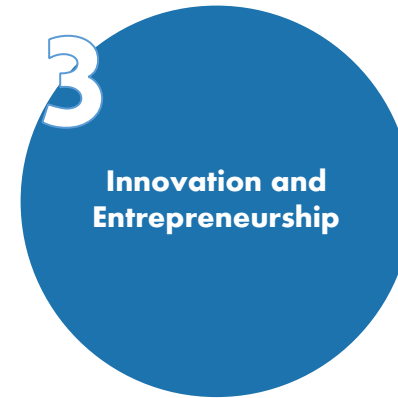
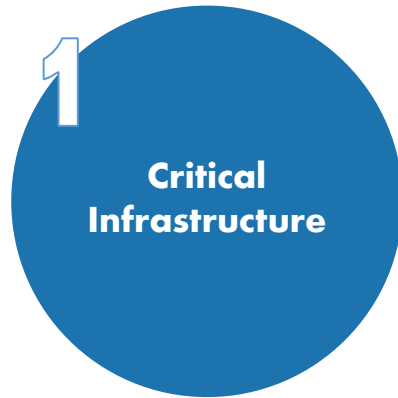
In addition to the REDAC's guidance of the CEDS, the following organizations gave EUPRPDC the opportunity to conduct SOAR analyses and have conversations about the future of the region:

- Bay Mills Community College
- Chippewa County Economic Development Corporation
- Communities That Care- Chippewa, Mackinac and Luce Counties
- DeTour Economic Development Corporation
- Drummond Island Tourism Association
- Eastern Upper Peninsula Intermediate School District
- Great Lakes Boat Building School
- Helen Newberry Joy Hospital
- Kiwanis Club of Saint Ignace
- Lake Superior State University
- Les Cheneaux Culinary School
- Mackinac Economic Alliance
- MDNR EUP Citizens' Advisory Council
- Michigan Townships Association- Chippewa County
- UP Michigan Works!
- Newberry Area Chamber of Commerce
- Rotary Club of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan
- St. Ignace Chamber of Commerce
- St. Ignace Visitors Bureau
- Sault Ste. Marie Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Taste the Local Difference
- Top of the Lakes Communities Association
- War Memorial Hospital (MyMichigan)

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EDA Investment Priorities



Vision Statement: Michigan's Eastern Upper Peninsula (EUP) will be attractive to residents, business, tourists, and students alike. Here, people enjoy a natural setting, have a high quality of life, and can grow in their careers and businesses. Regional leaders will create opportunity through collaboration, proactive policy making, and implementation of best practices for economic prosperity and community development.

Executive Summary: The EUP's 2025 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) includes the results of past surveys of the state of the regional economy, workforce, social fabric, governance, and infrastructure and provides a blueprint for constructing a resilient and sustainable future.

The Strategy begins with Education & Training, presenting a broad view of the workforce and available opportunities for the region's residents. A breakdown of existing sectors and assets are outlined in Business Development. These two chapters capture a broad view of the region's economy and potential growth areas.

Because economic growth depends on and feeds into community, social, and physical health, we must examine what factors beyond investment, workforce, and opportunity contribute to development. The Vibrant Communities and Policy & Planning chapters present the region as a whole and offer recommendations and resources for municipalities and community members.

The Integrated Asset Management chapter presents current efforts underway to inventory, maintain, and expand critical infrastructure across the region and presents best practices aligned with State initiatives.

Dozens of community groups, hundreds of survey respondents, and the Regional Economic Development Advisory Collaborative (REDAC) provided background information, contributed to the analysis of the region, and helped to develop goals, strategies, and actions items. This information has been carried over from a previous edition and applied to our current CEDs.

Education & Training: Build on the strong network of relationships between educational institutions to expand and promote learning opportunities in the region. Attraction of new talent and families will strengthen our workforce and schools.

- Regional partners will develop plans and policies to attract and retain talent and families.

Business Development: The region will foster entrepreneurship, support existing businesses, attract new investments, and provide tailored and adaptable resources businesses need at every stage.

- Leverage our proximity to the Soo Locks, St. Marys River, Great Lakes, international border, and natural and recreation resources to support creative business ventures and build a Blue Economy.

Vibrant Communities: Vibrant downtowns and village centers will thrive throughout the region with a variety of safe and attainable housing options for students, seasonal and transient workers, and residents. A healthy populace will have access to healthcare, arts and culture, and local food and communities will support local farms.

- Create, and facilitate the creation of housing to accommodate students, seasonal and transient workers, and residents through the a strong housing ecosystem.

Policy & Planning: Local governments and government agencies will support long- and short-term strategic planning to facilitate investment, ensure fiscal responsibility and stewardship, and increase community prosperity and resiliency.

- Promote environmental, financial, and community health through forward-thinking services, policies, and planning.

Integrated Asset Management: Through inventories, fiscal and maintenance planning, and need-identification, the region will support existing and expand upon robust road, utility, broadband, and service infrastructure.

- Implement and advocate for Integrated Asset Management best practices across the Region.

Introduction

The Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning & Development Commission (EUP) has led the development of the regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for half a century. This strategy provides a blueprint for economic and community growth. Across the region, dozens of individuals and organizations collaborated to inventory assets and strengths, document needs and risks, and develop a plan that will improve the lives of the citizens of the Eastern UP through specific actions and measurable goals.

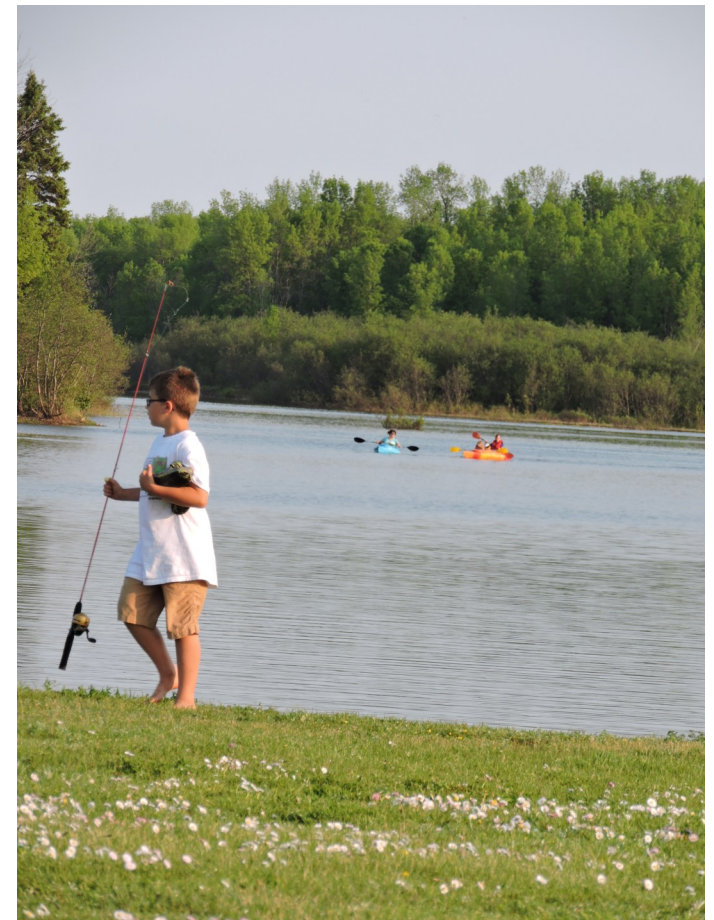
EUP was founded in 1968 under the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965, certified as one of fourteen Economic Development Administration (EDA) Economic Development Districts (EDD) in the State of Michigan in 1970 and formally recognized through the State of Michigan Public Act 281 of 1945 in 1972. EUP is a non-profit government agency and is primarily funded by the United States Department of Commerce's EDA through Title IV of the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965, as amended, and the EDA Reform Act of 1998, and serves communities through Chippewa, Luce, and Mackinac Counties. Directed by a board comprised of public and private sector representatives from each county, EUP assists communities with land use planning, zoning, economic and community development, hazard mitigation planning, recreation planning, transportation, housing, small business development, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping and databases.

Plan Overview

The Regional Economic Development Advisory Collaborative (REDAC) meets to learn and discuss economic development in the region. This group oversees the development of this plan and reviews the annual CEDS updates. Their input has been invaluable to this process. To provide additional insight into the new CEDS, EUP staff referred to previous meetings with community groups and organizations and previously circulated surveys—Economic and Workforce Development, Education, and Tourism. The results of the surveys, conversations, and the insight of the REDAC is incorporated into each chapter of this plan. For complete results from the SOAR analysis, a list of REDAC members, and data sources, please refer to the Appendices. Below, we examine the workforce, business landscape, quality of life, governance, and infrastructure of the region. Each chapter (Education & Training, Business Development, Vibrant Communities, Policy & Planning, and Integrated Asset Management) focuses on a particular aspect of our region. Every chapter has four sections:

- Background
- Public Input/Key Findings
- Action Plan & Evaluation
- Metrics & Impact

Local projects are highlighted in the final chapter. Supporting documentation of public input, contributing organizations, links to webpages, and other documents can be found in the Appendices. This organization allows for easy reference and clear connections between stakeholder efforts.



A Waterfront Park in the EUP

The Eastern Upper Peninsula



Regional Information

Chippewa, Luce, and Mackinac Counties form Michigan’s Eastern Upper Peninsula (EUP). This freshwater-based region is surrounded on three sides by Lakes Superior, Huron, and Michigan with the St. Marys River, home to the Soo Locks, connecting Lakes Superior and Huron. The EUP is connected to MI’s Lower Peninsula by the Mackinac Bridge and to Ontario, Canada, by the Sault International Bridge at the northern end of I-75. The main roads connecting the EUP to westward counties and states are M-28 and US-2. Multiple highways, railways, and airports connect the EUP to the rest of the state and country.

52,955 people call the region home, a 7.2% reduction since 2010, and thousands more have second homes or vacation in the EUP throughout the year. The three counties combined cover 3,479 square miles of land. Population density is 15.2 people per square mile, which is considerably lower than the national population density of 93.8 people per square mile and Michigan’s population density of 178.0 people per square mile according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

17.4% of the population is under 18 and 21.6% is over 65. The 65 and over age group has increased by 2,470 since 2010 while there has been a reduction of 1,817 from the under 18 group over the same period. Since 2010, the population of the region has declined by about 7.2%. Luce County has experienced much of this decline, but due to complications with counting those in group quarters, this decline may be exacerbated.

The region is mostly white, with a significant Native American population of 12.3% compared to less than 1% of the total MI population. This demographic is also an economic driver in the region. Tribal enterprises and governments are major employers that make significant investments in the region and partner on major economic endeavors.

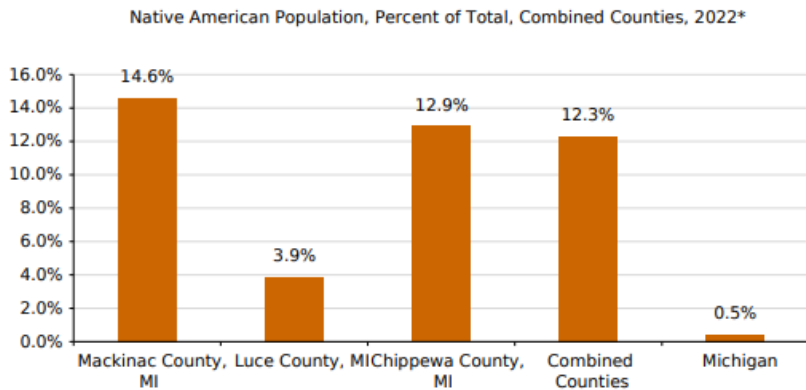


Figure 2 Source: US Census/ACS, Headwaters Economics Report

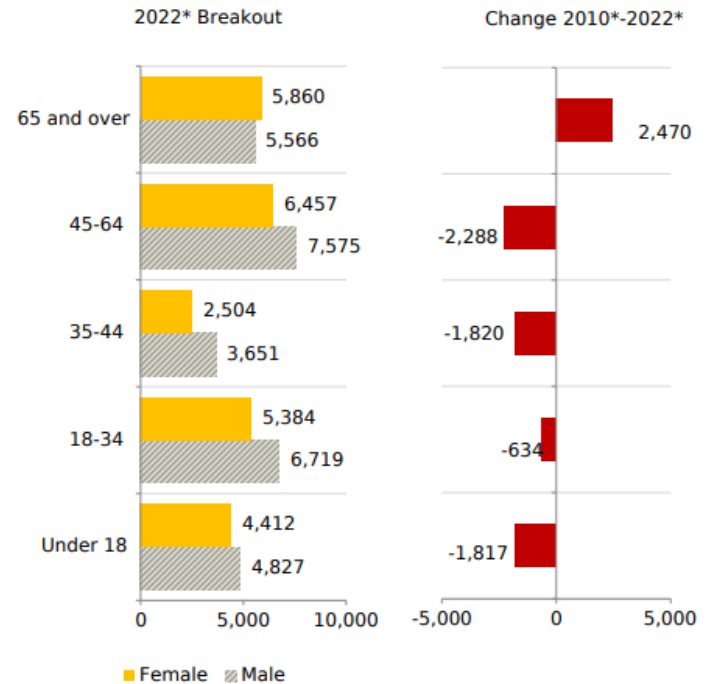


Figure 1 Source: US Census/ACS, Headwaters Economics Report

Average Annual Components of Population Change, Combined Counties, 2010-2023

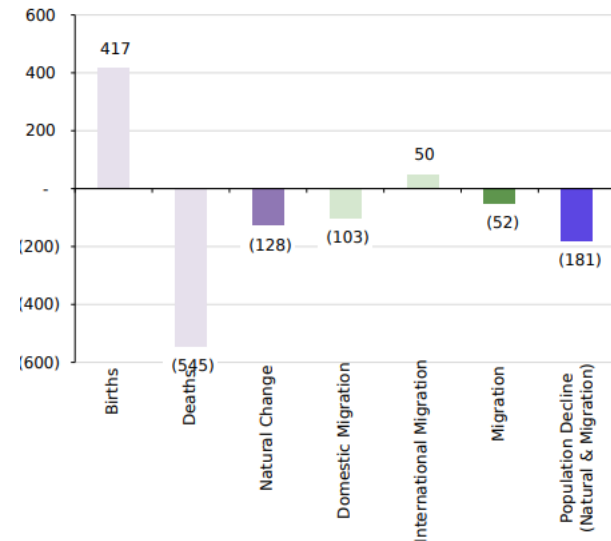


Figure 3 Source: US Census/ACS, Headwaters Economics Report

Group quarters data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau through the 2020 Decennial Census shows 4,915 individuals in group quarters in Chippewa County, with 4,141 determined to be institutionalized and 774 deemed noninstitutionalized. The total population in group quarters makes up 7.5% of Chippewa County, 1.4% of Luce County, and 1.1% of Mackinac County.

Group quarters population is defined as persons living or staying in a group living arrangement that is owned or managed by an entity or organization providing housing and/or services for the residents. Examples in the EUP would include correctional facilities, nursing homes, assisted living centers, rehabilitation centers, and a university-type setting. The implications for the region are significant for several reasons:

- Chippewa and Luce counties have institutional correctional facilities
- Chippewa County is home to Lake Superior State University, a four-year college where students have the option to reside on campus
- Several assisted living and nursing home facilities are located throughout the EUP

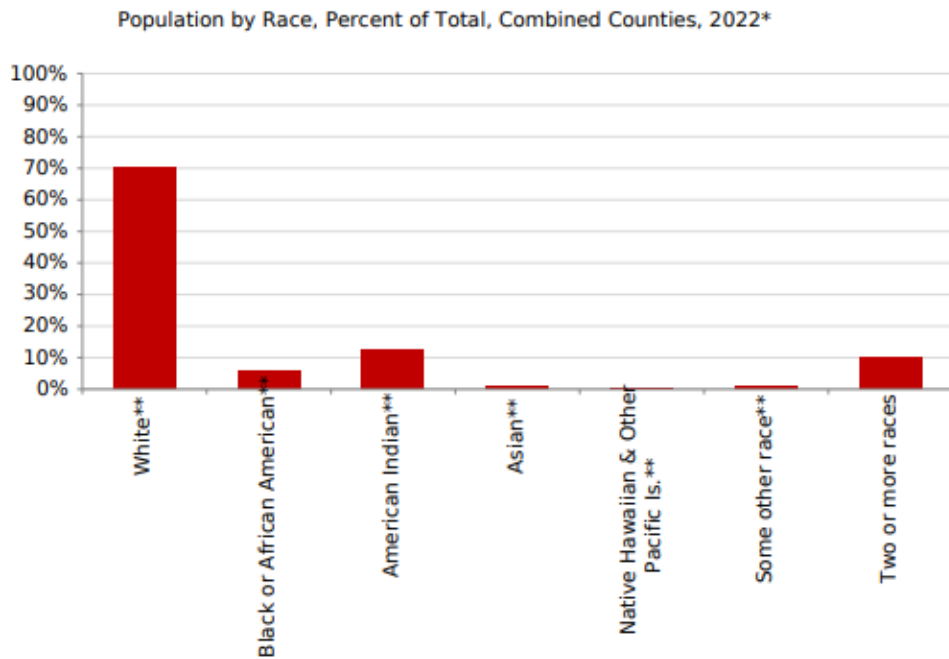
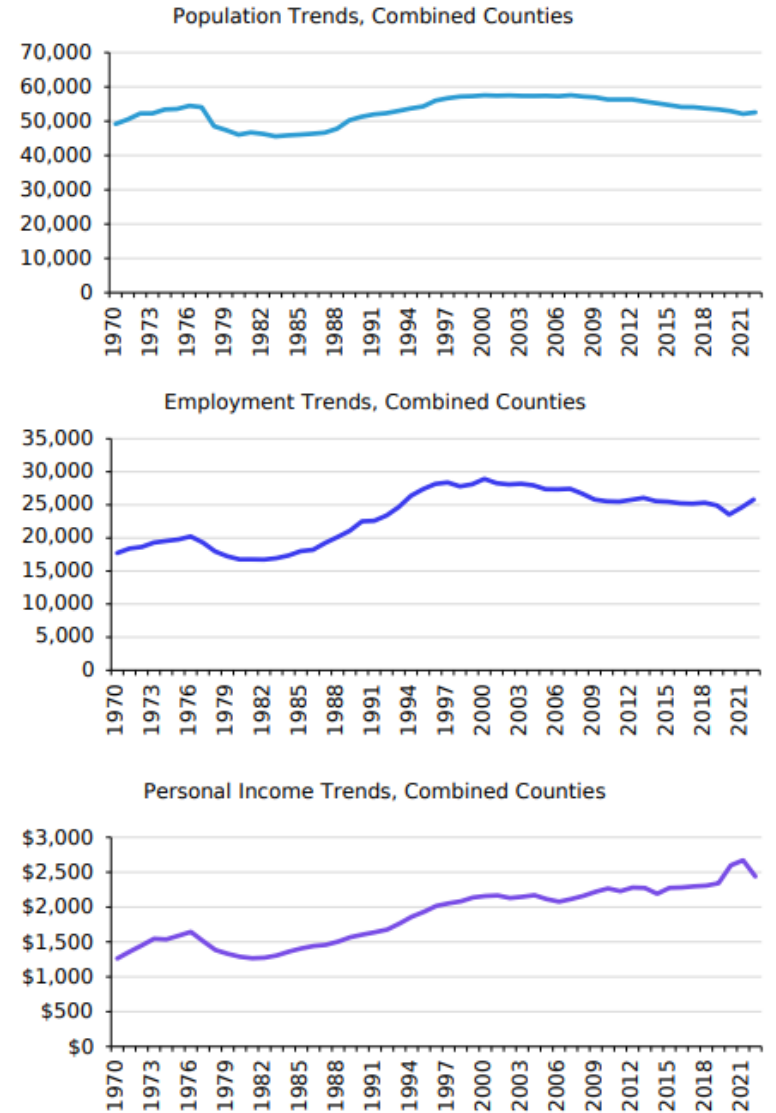


Figure 4 Source: US Census/American Community Survey, Headwaters Economics Report



Figures 5, 6, 7

Source: US Census/American Community Survey, Headwaters Economics Report

Public Input/Key Findings

The dozens of communities in our rural region enjoy established reputations as beautiful and relaxing destinations for visitors and each has its own unique sense of place which is treasured by the residents. The natural setting and multitude of year-round recreational opportunities support a high quality of life. Our abundant natural resources support businesses from logging, manufacturing, shipping, and mining to campgrounds, hotels, retail, and outdoor adventure tours.

These existing strengths will be built upon in coming years, helping to grow and diversify our region in a sustainable way which benefits all residents. Our spirit of collaboration and mutual support, so evident in Education & Training, also extends to our relationships with Ontario. The region has experienced developments to support international business, including the establishment of a Foreign Trade Zone in Chippewa County.

Deliberate action and focused leadership can guide the region to a more diversified economy with stable, middle-class jobs where entrepreneurs and businesses thrive. The following chapters have specific goals, strategies, action items, and data which will be updated regularly to gauge our progress as a region.

Each chapter in this report includes past public feedback - with new findings - and a discussion of what strengths can be leveraged to create jobs, wealth, and stability throughout the region. Broadly, updated interpretations of the results of our past community conversations are presented on page 12.



A Freighter Sailing the Great Lakes

SOAR Analysis

“Strong Desire to Improve Communities-Passion and Energy”

STRENGTHS

- Opportunities for Outdoor Recreation
- International Border
- Natural Resources as Economic Drivers (Timber, Water, Minerals, Weather)
- High Quality of Life for Those Seeking a Slower Pace
- Nature, Waterfront Communities, Moderate Weather, and Low Cost of Living
- LSSU, CFRE, BMCC, K-12 Ed., CTE, GLBBS, Les Cheneaux Culinary School
- Tribal Partners
- Local Character and Strong Historical Significance
- CTE Programs and a Higher Education System; LSSU MBA Program
- Established Events and Attractions
- Low Crime Rate

RISKS

- Inadequate Housing
- Declining, Aging Population
- A Breakdown in Collaboration
- Needing Outside Investment to Support Development
- Extreme Winter Weather Events or Environmental Disasters
- Needing More Mental Health and General Healthcare Services
- The Threat of MyMichigan, LSSU, or a Prison Closing, or a Backslide in Tourism
- Reactionary Government Policies
- An Unmotivated, Untrained Workforce
- Inadequate Broadband Coverage and Cellular Reception
- Low-Wage Positions that Don't Attract Talent

“People are Busy in Their Day-to-Day Business; They Need to Intentionally Try to Connect, Learn, and Grow”

“Only Limited by Our Imagination-How Do We Share What We Have Here?”

OPPORTUNITIES

- Economic and Community Development through the Blue Economy
- Leveraging the Outdoors, Remote Work, Natural Resources, and Weather
- Federal and State Infrastructure and Economic Investments
- Collaboration with International Partners in Sault, ON
- Investments in Recreation Infrastructure and Support Businesses
- Development of Underused or Obsolete Properties
- Adult Learning, Training, and Continuous Education
- Programming to Attract and Retain Youth and Young Professionals
- Leveraging State and Federal Agencies Located in the EUP
- Education and Healthcare Entities Generating Community Development
- Partnerships with Tribal Nations

ASPIRATIONS

- A Skilled Labor Force Equals the Demand
- Leveraging Our Natural Resources to Produce Growth and Jobs
- Well-Coordinated Marketing Efforts for Tourism and Economic Development
- Vibrant Downtowns with an Attractive Uniqueness
- High-Quality and Plentiful Housing with Multiple Typologies
- Waterfront Development and a Hub for the Blue Economy in the Midwest
- Universal Access to Internet and Technology
- Attract More Residents, Tourists, and Investors
- Cultural Centers and Community Gathering Places
- Higher-Paying, Fulfilling Jobs
- Fully-Leveraged, Four-Season Recreational Assets

“Infrastructure Spending Must Be Invested In a Way That Will Support Future Growth and Further Investment”

Education & Training Background

Before we dive into education and training, we will address where the need for talent is the greatest. Retail trade and accommodations and food service hold the largest share of private-sector jobs. This number fluctuates throughout the year given the seasonality of tourism-based businesses such as hotels, restaurants, and gift shops. These jobs pale in comparison to government positions, which, in 2022, made up 31.3% of the total employment in the region.

According to the State of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula Career Outlook Through 2030, the highest expected demand will be for fast food workers, waitstaff, salespeople, office staff, and order fillers. In the same report, it is of note that heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers, registered nurses, and general managers will have the highest demand while also offering higher wages. Opportunities for nurse practitioners will see the largest growth at 43.8%, or 15 annual openings.

The Eastern Upper Peninsula is home to 9,239 school-age children and 12,103 residents between 18 and 34 years of age who are potentially training for employment or already actively in the workforce. Educational and employment organizations have worked together on a number of initiatives over the past several years developing expanded opportunities for learners across the region. These educational organizations, along with economic development organizations and UP Michigan Works!, operate together to meet local workforce demands, especially during times of economic fluctuations.

The region has a higher high school graduation rate than the national average; however, it lags behind in Bachelor’s degree holders. Employers have indicated that it is harder to fill high-paying, high-skilled jobs. There are also wide-spread concerns that jobs in skilled labor positions—such as carpenters, plumbers, and welders—will remain unfilled as demand for talent rises due to new federal investments and the sparse presence of trade unions in the Eastern Upper Peninsula.

Employment by Industry (since 2000)

	2001	2010	2022	Change 2010-2022
Total Employment (number of jobs)	28,279	25,544	25,801	257
Non-services related	3,938	2,809	3,111	302
Farm	547	549	518	-31
Forestry, fishing, & ag. services	204	227	213	-14
Mining (including fossil fuels)	111	158	124	-34
Construction	1,607	1,132	1,352	220
Manufacturing	1,469	743	904	161
Services related	14,076	13,553	14,161	608
Utilities	119	110	111	1
Wholesale trade	195	266	271	5
Retail trade	3,440	3,074	2,866	-208
Transportation and warehousing	793	527	865	338
Information	341	249	184	-65
Finance and insurance	643	704	808	104
Real estate and rental and leasing	586	683	896	213
Professional and technical services	555	621	806	185
Management of companies	16	0	56	56
Administrative and waste services	469	615	490	-125
Educational services	177	275	177	-98
Health care and social assistance	1,243	1,611	1,515	-96
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	443	450	400	-50
Accommodation and food services	3,671	2,943	3,208	265
Other services, except public admin.	1,385	1,425	1,508	83
Government	10,126	8,905	8,080	-825

All employment data are reported by place of work. Estimates for data that were not disclosed are indicated with tildes (~).

Figure 8

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Headwaters Economics Report

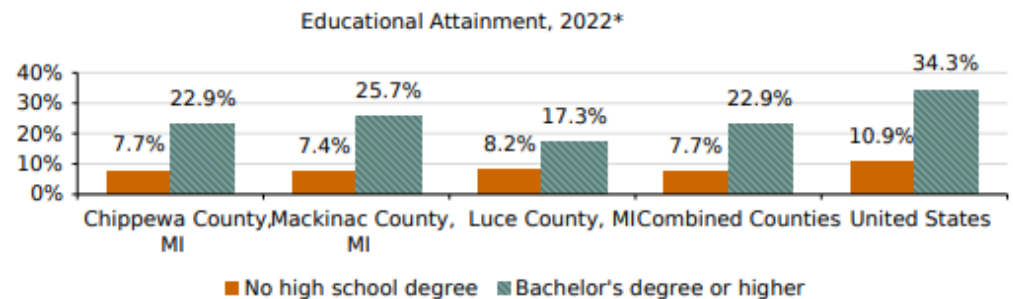


Figure 9

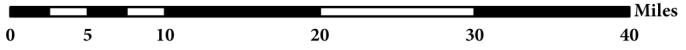
Source: US Census/American Community Survey, Headwaters Economics Report



EASTERN U.P. EDUCATION ASSET MAP



- School Locations
- Municipality Boundaries
- County Lines
- Great Lakes
- Ontario
- Michigan



The 13 school districts in the Eastern Upper Peninsula Intermediate School District (EUPISD) have made significant strides in recent years. Since 2013, the percentage of high school graduates from the region who require remedial classes in college has been steadily declining.

As of March 2024, 8 schools offer a combined 23 CTE programs for students. The Sault Area Career Center provides an Early Middle College track for students to pursue college credits in public safety and protection services.

Figure 11 shows that, since 2013-2014, the amount of students enrolled into college within 6 months of graduation has been declining. Over the course of 10 years, there has been a 6.6% reduction in college enrollments.

From the class of 2022-2023, 16.5% of high school graduates who chose to go to college stayed in the EUP and about 11.7% attend our regional institutions, like Lake Superior State University (LSSU). The remaining 5% chose to attend Bay Mills Community College (BMCC).

LSSU is one of Michigan’s most affordable public universities through a single World Rate Cost. It also has around 1,700 undergraduates, making it Michigan’s smallest public university. This allows for a 16:1 student-to-faculty ratio and leads to programs designed and taught directly by professors that will prepare students to meet tomorrow’s challenges.

Available EUP CTE Programs

Airframe Technology	Health Sciences (2 Schools)
Automobile Technician	Machinist
Business Administration	Mechatronics
Computer Security	Natural Resources
Construction (3 Schools)	Public Safety
Digital/Multimedia	Public Safety (Early College)
Drafting and Design	Small Engine Repair
Education (2 Schools)	Welding
Finance	Woodworking (2 Schools)

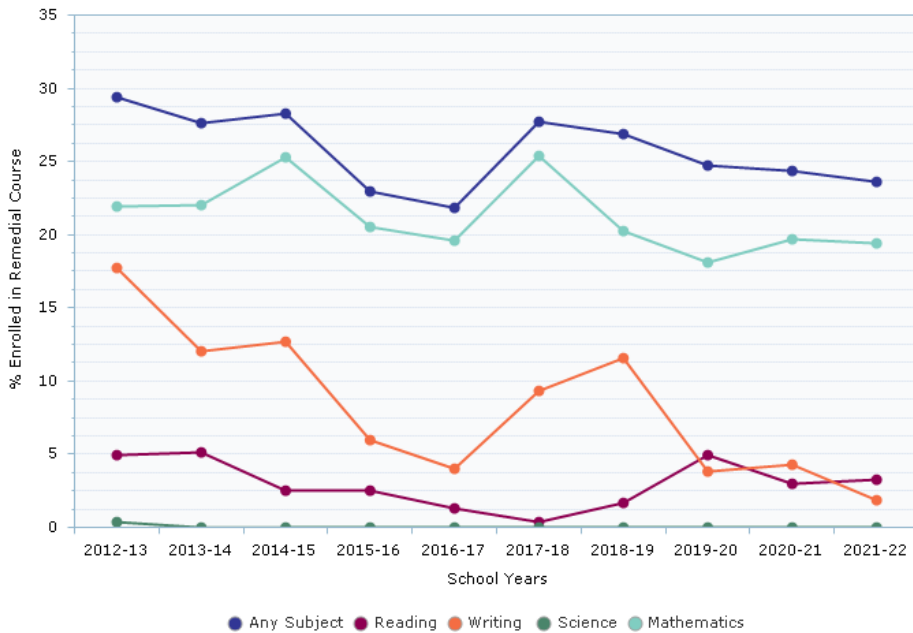


Figure 10

Source: MISchoolsData.org

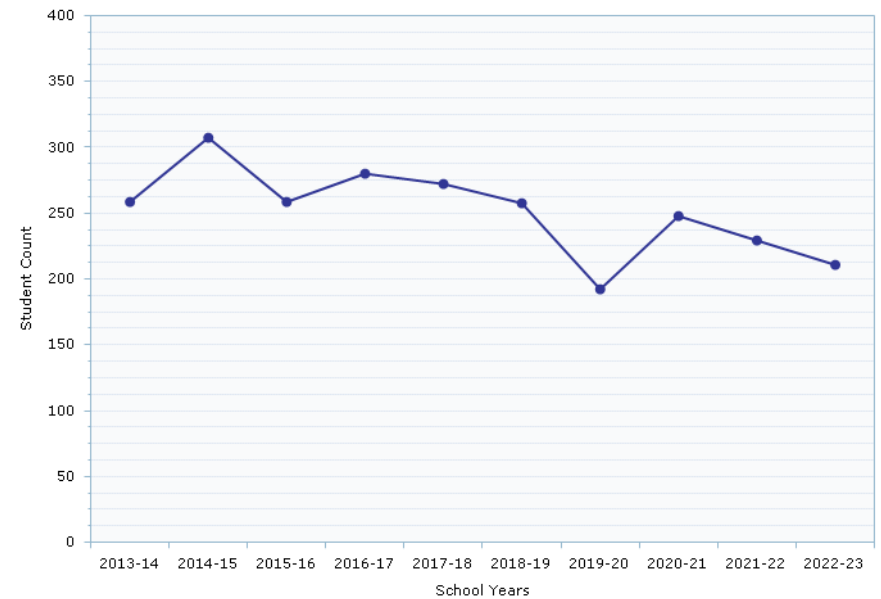


Figure 11

Source: MISchoolsData.org

In the fall of 2019, the LSSU Center for Freshwater Research and Education, at this time located on campus, launched the Natural Resources CTE program in collaboration with Brimley High School. The Natural Resources CTE program prepares local high school students for a career in natural resources by providing unique, hands-on learning opportunities at university sites and in the field.

In 2020, LSSU received a designation as a First-Gen Forward institution that recognizes institutions of higher education who have demonstrated a commitment to improving experiences and advancing outcomes of first-generation college students. The University continuously strives to create student-learning opportunities, promote uniqueness and sustainability, and build upon community collaborations with local schools and businesses.

In 2021, the Richard and Theresa Barch Center for Freshwater Research and Education (CFRE) officially opened its doors. This marked the beginning of CFRE’s existence off campus. This new site is now home to the Great Lakes Discovery Center, classrooms and labs, meeting space, and coworking space for partners like MI Sea Grant, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Coast Guard’s Great Lakes Oil Spill Center of Expertise (GLCOE). The Barch Center has made hands-on learning, Great Lakes scientific interpretation, and networking accessible for LSSU students. This project was made possible through EDA EAA funding which provided money for furnishings and equipment in the building. This grant was awarded in early 2021 under the CARES Act.

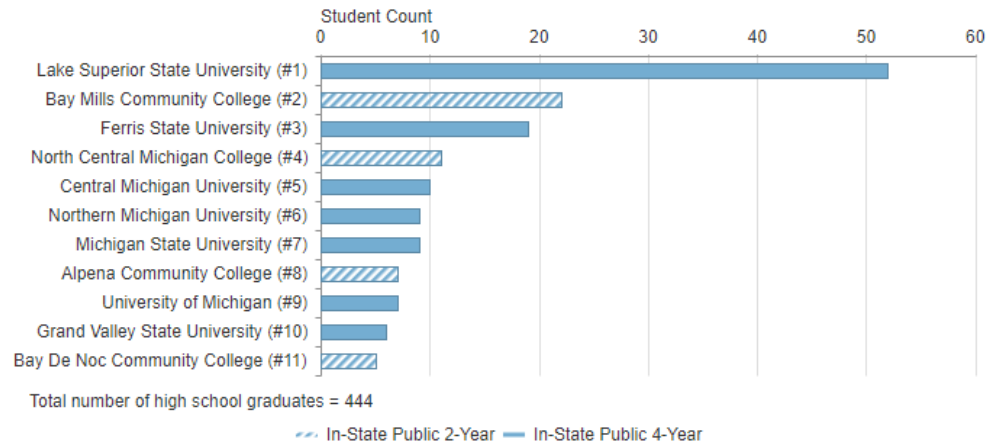


Figure 12 Source: MISchoolsData.org

Economic Impact Per LSSU Student

2013: \$45,230.00

2024: \$61,220.74 (adjusted for inflation)

Data derived from May 2013 study authored by LSSU Faculty and Student

In 2023, LSSU created a certificate program in Space Missions and Operations. This program was much needed and was in response to the establishment of CHAMP, a space command and control center located in Kincheloe, Michigan. The partnership between LSSU and CHAMP will increase regional staffing capacity as CHAMP continues to grow and secure more contracts.

The Great Lakes Boat Building School (GLBBS) was established in Cedarville over 15 years ago and is, to this day, a highly-touted and accredited marine industry-specialized school. GLBBS offers two 12-month programs (Comprehensive Career Boat Building and Marine Service Technology). According to GLBBS’s 2024 reporting, there is 100% placement in the Comprehensive program and 90% placement in Marine Services. They are also working with the Les Cheneaux Community Schools to offer a small engine repair CTE course to high school students throughout the EUPISD.

As Michigan’s first fully-accredited, tribally-controlled college, Bay Mills Community College meets the educational needs of a wide variety of students with its remote, rural Main Campus and off-campus sites, including the Waishkey Bay Farm. Online courses are also available. BMCC partners with LSSU on agricultural programs and offers free public meeting space which is used frequently by local, regional, state, and federal partners.

The regional workforce is supported by UP Michigan Works! They work to ensure there is a vibrant pool of skilled workers which enables business and industry to thrive year-round. In turn, this business vitality creates the potential for higher paying jobs, thus improving the overall regional economy. Their services for businesses include a business services outreach team, recruitment assistance, training funds, layoff and separation support, and veteran services referrals. Michigan Works! provides job seeker support, as well, including resume building, interview preparation, education and training funding, career guidance, on-the-job training, occupational skill training, leadership development, supportive services, adult mentoring, and job coaching.

Public Input/Key Findings

Past general survey results shed some light on education and the workforce in Chippewa, Luce, and Mackinac counties. When asked to select regional assets, only 11% of respondents identified the workforce and talent as an asset and only 3 respondents (2.56%) identified career and job opportunities. However, 30% identified PreK-12 schools and nearly 43% selected colleges and universities as assets. When asked to identify factors limiting growth, 71% (84) said career and job opportunities and 53% identified workforce and talent. Thirty percent (30%) identified PreK-12 schools and only 15% selected colleges and universities. This indicates that while natural resources, recreational opportunities, and cost of living were top assets, feelings toward educational opportunities were largely positive; but the lack of career and work opportunities potentially drive home-grown talent away and make attraction to the region difficult. To date, population loss and students leaving the area exceed the number of individuals moving into the region.

A survey specific to education was also circulated over several months. Nearly 78% of the respondents to the Education survey felt that there were gaps in educational resources. The gaps they identified were largely centered on funding, either at the State level or teacher pay. Respondents also noted that increased support for the arts, languages, and the trades was necessary to bridge educational shortcomings in the region. The rural districts also incur greater transportation costs, which may be mitigated by developing more distance and on-line learning programs.

Survey respondents identified the following as the top three strengths of education in the region:

- Local K-12 Schools (61.04%)
- Growing CTE Opportunities (41.56%)
- Variety of Opportunities (41.56%)

Survey respondents cited concerns about economic instability and the impact it has on students as well as the need for more funding to retain teachers and develop programming when asked about barriers. The top three barriers to educational attainment in the region are:

- Keeping Families in the Region (72%)
- Teacher and Staff Retention (72%)
- Low Enrollment (48%)

When asked to identify strategies and actions that would be most effective to support educational attainment, respondents echoed their earlier responses and wrote in teacher staff pay and retention and the need of social support (social workers, after school programs, etc.). The top three choices were:

- Recruiting CTE Teachers (54.55%)
- Increasing Tutoring for K-12 (50.65%)
- Increased Internet Access at Home (45.45%)

The community meetings also often included discussion of workforce challenges and opportunities. The top discussion points are as follows:

- The MDNR Citizens Advisory Collaborative discussed opportunities for careers in forestry, from harvesting and transportation to processing lumber.
- Meetings with the healthcare sector underlined the strong relationship which the local hospitals have developed with the school systems (the hospitals partner with K-12 educators for CTE courses) and with LSSU (internships and job-site learning).
- Private business owners discussed how they will fund training for employees who are using both online and in-person courses.
- Meetings also covered regional population loss and the need to train and attract workers.

Education Strengths

Local K-12 Schools
Growing CTE Opportunities
Variety of Opportunities

Action Plan & Evaluation

Focus Area: Education & Training

The Goal: Build on the strong network of relationships between educational institutions to expand and promote the many learning opportunities available in the region. Attraction of new talent and families will strengthen our workforce and schools.

Initiative	Description	Recent Updates
Regional partners will develop plans and policies to attract and retain talent and families.		
Develop a Talent Recruitment Marketing Strategy	Place-based marketing that shows our communities are attractive places to relocate. Strategies to encourage higher pay and attractive benefit packages. Establish an ambassador program for new families, which would provide information on local amenities and resources, and a traveling-spouse program. Provide quality housing options and cultural opportunities in our communities.	Luce County EDC utilized an EDA Planning Grant to develop a strategic plan. Soo EDC leveraged local funding to develop a city-wide Strategic Plan. Soo EDC worked with the Soo CVB to develop a community welcome packet.
Develop and Retain Education Professionals	The region will attract and retain high-quality teachers through the promotion of available positions, competitive pay and benefits, and impactful training and resources.	Ongoing.
Provide the best education in the region to students and show an increase in the number of graduates in post-secondary and CTE programs by ensuring every student has knowledge of and access to every program available in our region.		
Support the Early College Program	Increase program participation and expand early college program courses for high school students in the EUPISD.	Expanded distance learning technology and opportunities.
Support Dual and Concurrent Enrollment	Offer and expand dual and concurrent enrollment opportunities for high school students in the EUPISD.	Ongoing.
Strengthen CTE Programs	Continue to advocate for the expansion of CTE programs and support existing programs.	Ongoing.
Enhance Region-wide Broadband Accessibility and Availability to Facilitate Remote and Distance Learning	The COVID-19 pandemic placed an extreme amount of pressure on the inadequate broadband infrastructure and created additional learning challenges. Short-term fixes have been applied to maximize remote learning opportunities, where possible. Long term solutions through RDOF, Merit, BEAD, and other project opportunities should be supported and pursued, where applicable.	RDOF funds awarded to providers with a timeline for implementation in 2025. Starlink Technologies is becoming more prevalent in remote areas. The EUPConnect Collaborative formed in mid-2021 to create a 21st century broadband infrastructure program throughout the EUP. The Collaborative is transitioning to a digital literacy focus to help members of the public utilize new connectivity.

Initiative	Description	Recent Updates
Support the Les Cheneaux Culinary School Efforts to Increase Enrollment	Support those efforts around increasing enrollment at the Culinary school to a sustainable class size. Promote internships with regional restaurants.	In 2024, LCCS taught 9 aspiring chefs, and another 8 in 2023.
Expand Great Lakes Boat Building School Facilities	GLBBS seeks to increase their facility footprint to allow for expanded enrollment and offerings. GLBBS is also looking to increase housing options for potential enrollment expansion.	EDA Public Works Grant awarded in March 2022. Construction is slated for 2024/2025.
Revitalize and Supplement LSSU's Academic Offerings That Respond to Student Needs and Promote Transformational Growth in Classroom Education	Adding new academic programs and delivery methods for certificates, associates, and baccalaureate degrees that meet student and market needs for traditional and nontraditional students in the LSSU broader service region.	Enrollment goals continue to lag behind targets, but a new president was hired in 2024. New programs in Cannabis Chemistry and Cannabis Business are attracting new students to the university. A new MBA program launched in January 2024, targeting working individuals with a flexible, virtual curriculum. The Space Mission and Operations Certificate launched in 2023. LSSU introduced the STEP UP prison education program in 2024.
Leverage post-secondary educational institutions to drive community and economic development.		
Support CFRE, Post-Secondary Research and Development, and the Blue Economy	Leverage the research, professionals, expertise, students, and facilities at CFRE to produce new products, services, and technologies related to the blue economy, which highlights and leverages our position on the St. Marys and in the Great Lakes. These advancements will drive progress in the regional economy, enhancing community development and adding a tool in our efforts to recruit and retain professionals and students.	The construction of CFRE's "Boat Shop" which is used for storage and research tools is ongoing and close to completion. GLCOE, USFWS, and MI Sea Grant are now co-located in CFRE. Headwaters North, the nonprofit managing Sault Ste. Marie's Smartzone, aims to grow the blue economy in our region with the groundwork that has been laid by CFRE. There are opportunities for students and graduates in the blue economy.
Support BMCC as a Workforce Development Partner and Educator of our Native American Communities	Support the continuation and improvement of coursework and hands-on education provided at Bay Mills Community College to upskill our region and raise up our Native American partners and communities.	Ongoing.

Metrics & Impacts

The past few years have seen phenomenal growth in learning opportunities, and the relationships between our educational and training institutions have never been stronger. By keeping these programs and partnerships strong and effectively promoting them, the region will be more attractive to families, businesses, and talent. Attracting families and individuals to the area is the only option for increasing enrollment, keeping schools open, and making communities vibrant. Retaining home-grown and new-to-the-area talent is also necessary. Teacher attraction, especially CTE teachers and professors, will depend on competitive pay.

Approximately 57.63% of past general survey respondents identified an overreliance on one industry or employer as a threat, and a large majority (87.29%) indicated that the inability to attract and retain population was the biggest threat. With the demand for employees appearing to be most needed for fast food workers, waitstaff, salespeople, office staff, order fillers, heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers, registered nurses, general managers, and nurse practitioners, the region must focus on producing and attracting a variety of talent with differing skillsets. Successful attraction and retention will ameliorate our schools funding situation and help our communities achieve the vibrant, economically stable status they aspire to obtain. Our strong relationships, low cost of living, and quality of life provide a firm foundation for expanding our population and talent pool.

The actions outlined prior will be updated and adjusted to reflect partner activities and programs. These adjustments will make the plan more representative of current efforts. To ensure continuity between years, we will also track:

- New Education and Training Institutions, Programs, and Opportunities
- Number of Students in the EUPISD School Districts
- Percent of Students Needing Remedial Courses in Higher Education
- Percent of Population with a High School Degree



The Great Lakes Boat Building School in Cedarville, MI

Business Development Background

Our region, regardless of population shifts and trends in education, will see a need for increased private and public sector employees in the coming years. Projections from the State of MI indicate that positions as fast food workers, waitstaff, salespeople, office staff, order fillers, heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers, registered nurses, and general managers will have the highest amount of annual openings in the Upper Peninsula until 2030. Opportunities for job creation and sustainable economic growth exist for entrepreneurs, existing local businesses, and potential outside investors.

Nevertheless, the region remains heavily dependent on the public sector for employment. Government jobs represent a large portion of employment in the region. These public-sector jobs are reasonably well-paying and infuse both wages and services into our communities. Data reflects that there are over 8,000 jobs in Government in the EUP, with the next closest, Accommodation and Food Service, nearing 3,000 jobs, and the third closest, Retail Trade, with a little over 2,000 jobs. Positions with our two Native American tribes, LSSU, Homeland Security, US Corps of Engineers, state and local law enforcement agencies, and correctional institutions in Chippewa and Luce Counties account for the high number of Government jobs.

The Eastern Upper Peninsula economy is also known for being reliant and built upon tourism. Accommodation and Food Services and Retail Trade, as mentioned above, produce nearly 5,000 jobs. Both industries also outpace the national average in terms of jobs created for the area. Although these two industries and the tourism industry as a whole help to support our region, they do not rank highly in a recent list of top industry earnings. Retail Trade and Accommodation and Food Services rank 17th and 19th, respectively, in a list of the top earnings per worker in the EUP. Both industries average less than \$40,000 per worker in earnings.

These statistics show that there is a need for more varied and well-paying private sector opportunities to create resilience in our regional economy. With access to the St. Marys River and the Great Lakes, multi-modal transportation, an international border, a 4-year university, and affordable employees and land, the EUP is ripe for private investment.

Largest Industries

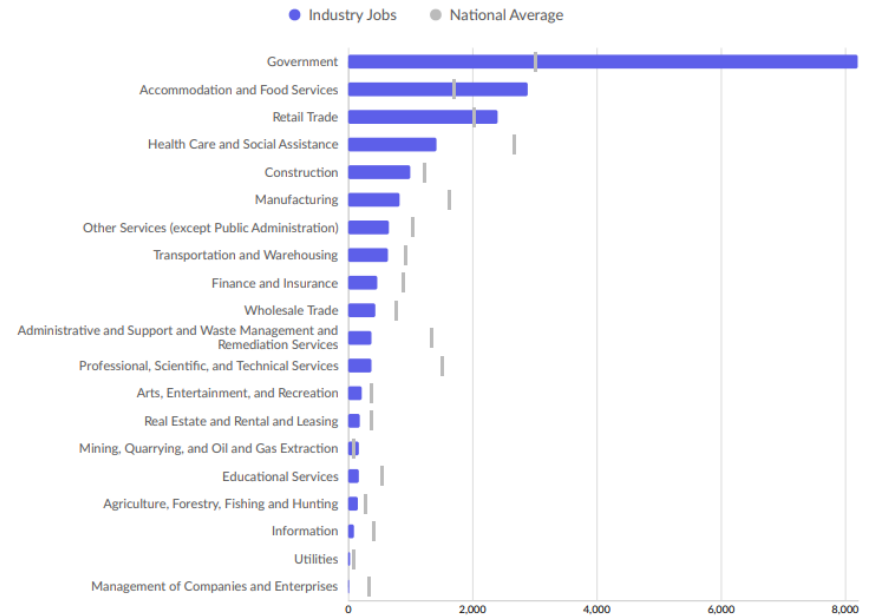


Figure 13 Source: : Lightcast Q3 2023 Data Set

Top Industry Earnings

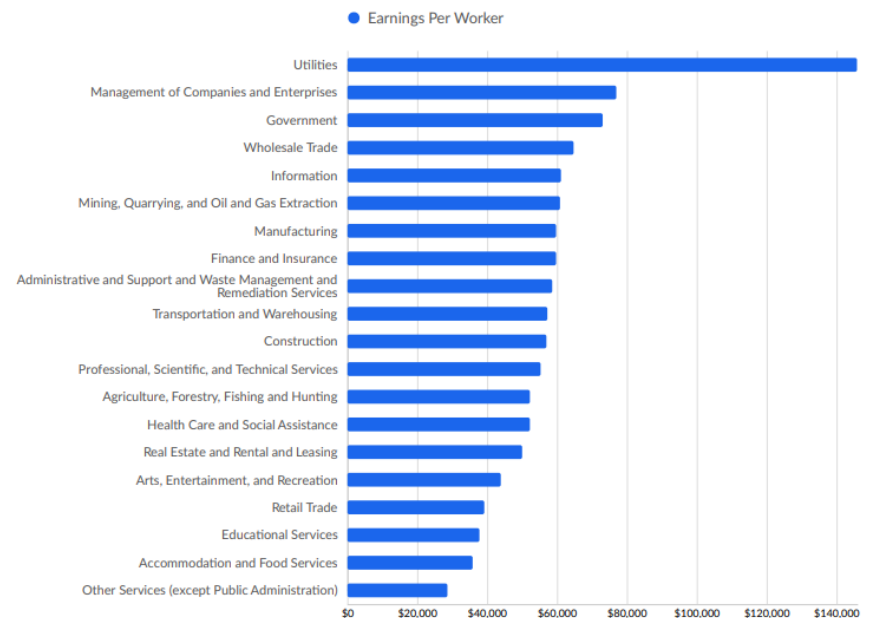


Figure 14 Source: Lightcast Q3 2023 Data Set

Business Size

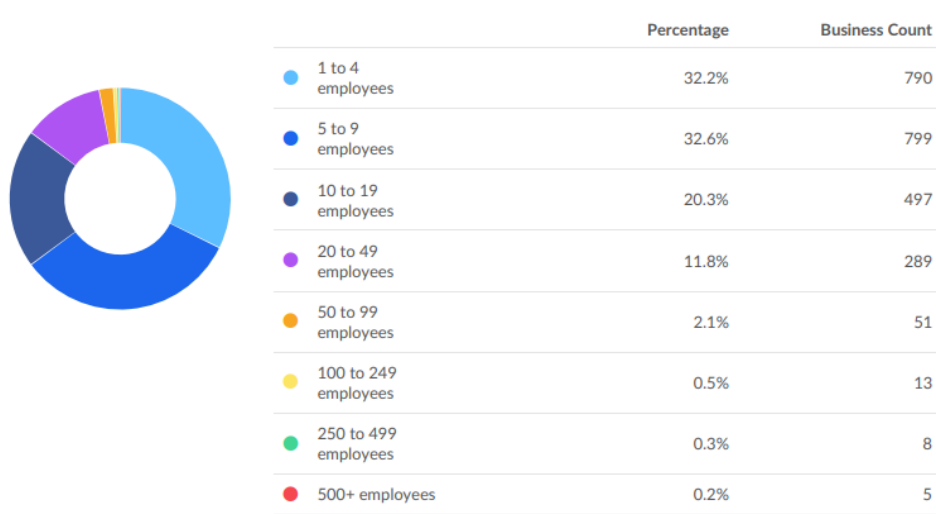


Figure 15 Source: : Lightcast Q3 2023 Data Set

Top Industry GRP

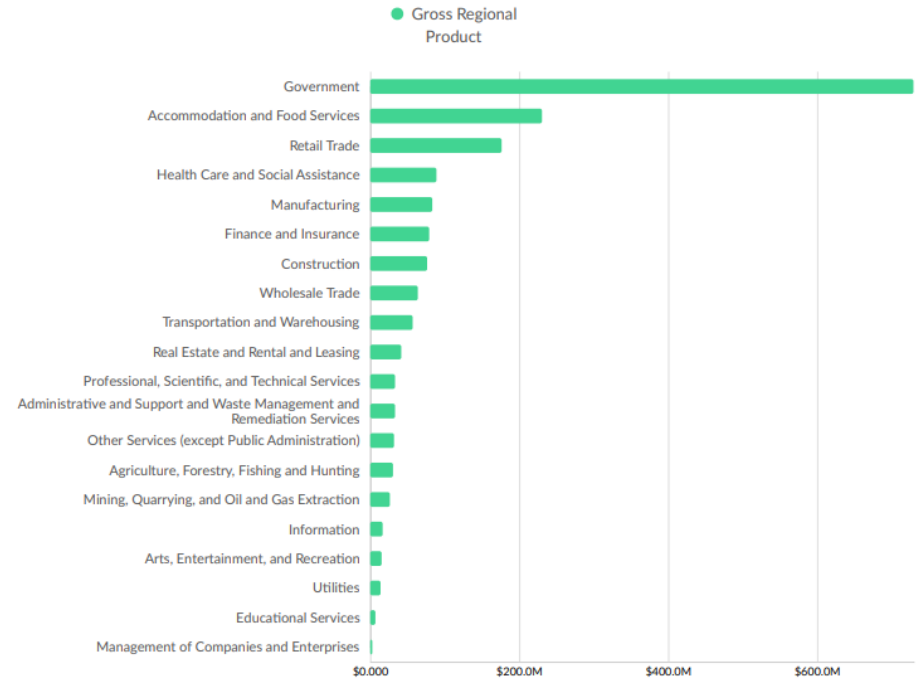


Figure 16 Source: : Lightcast Q3 2023 Data Set

Top Growing Industries

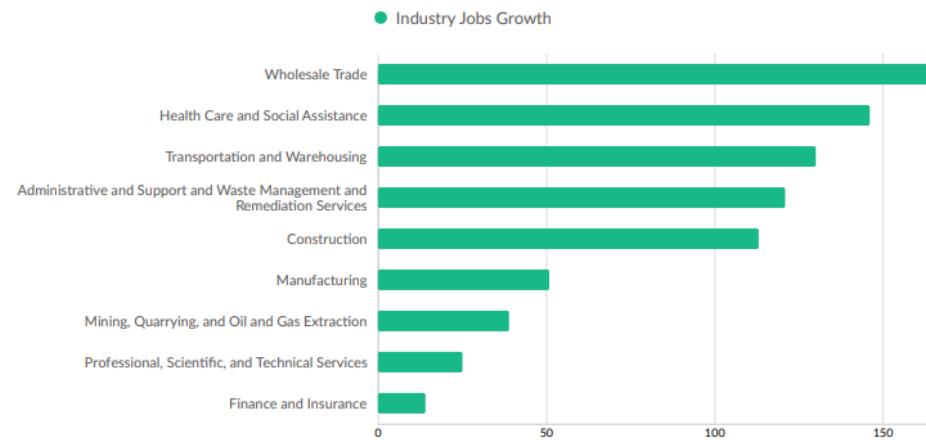


Figure 17 Source: : Lightcast Q3 2023 Data Set

May 2023 Labor Force Breakdown



Figure 18 Source: : Lightcast Q3 2023 Data Set

According to a 2023 Lightcast report surveying the three EUP counties, the vast majority of businesses have between 1 and 9 employees, with businesses numbering 1 to 4 employees comprising 32.2% of the total, and businesses numbering 5 to 9 employees comprising 32.6% of the total. On the other end of the spectrum, businesses comprised of 250 or more employees made up only 0.5% of the businesses in our region. This data shows that micro businesses dominate the private sector landscape in terms of quantity in Michigan’s Eastern Upper Peninsula.

Many of these small businesses are open seasonally. The impact of this reality is clearly seen in Mackinac County, home to Mackinac Island and the Grand Hotel. Mackinac County, in particular, oscillates between peak unemployment in February (21.4%) to 3.1% in August and September, which is below the State’s September unemployment rate of 3.8%.

Region	Area	Year	Period	Adjustment	Preliminary	Employed	Labor Force	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
MI	Chippewa County, MI	2023	Annual	Not Adj	No	15,393	16,360	967	5.9%
MI	Luce County, MI	2023	Annual	Not Adj	No	2,123	2,256	133	5.9%
MI	Mackinac County, MI	2023	Annual	Not Adj	No	4,910	5,392	482	8.9%



Region	Area	Year	Period	Adjustment	Preliminary	Employed	Labor Force	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
MI	Mackinac County, MI	2023	January	Not Adj	No	3,678	4,594	916	19.9%
MI	Mackinac County, MI	2023	February	Not Adj	No	3,690	4,693	1,003	21.4%
MI	Mackinac County, MI	2023	March	Not Adj	No	3,738	4,659	921	19.8%
MI	Mackinac County, MI	2023	April	Not Adj	No	4,116	4,729	613	13.0%
MI	Mackinac County, MI	2023	May	Not Adj	No	5,386	5,660	274	4.8%
MI	Mackinac County, MI	2023	June	Not Adj	No	6,008	6,214	206	3.3%
MI	Mackinac County, MI	2023	July	Not Adj	No	6,278	6,495	217	3.3%
MI	Mackinac County, MI	2023	August	Not Adj	No	6,247	6,447	200	3.1%
MI	Mackinac County, MI	2023	September	Not Adj	No	5,817	6,002	185	3.1%
MI	Mackinac County, MI	2023	October	Not Adj	No	5,547	5,730	183	3.2%
MI	Mackinac County, MI	2023	November	Not Adj	No	4,452	4,833	381	7.9%
MI	Mackinac County, MI	2023	December	Not Adj	No	3,963	4,650	687	14.8%



Figure 19 Source: MI DTMB, Unemployment Rates by County

As one would expect following the review of the entries on Page 21 of this report, the three largest producers of Gross Regional Product (GRP) are:

- Government,
- Accommodation and Food Service, and
- Retail Trade.

Figure 17 does show that Wholesale Trade, Health Care and Social Assistance, and Transportation and Warehousing are all growing industries in terms of job growth. All three industries lend themselves well to the region given our demographics and close proximity to an international border and multiple modes of transportation including air, rail, international and state roadways, and access to the Great Lakes and St. Marys River.

Business Applications by County (2023)

Chippewa: 260 (+16.1%)

Luce: 63 (+70.3%)

Mackinac: 104 (+4.0%)

Innovation Intelligence Index (2023)

Chippewa: 98.5

Luce: 97.0

Mackinac: 100.7

The Eastern Upper Peninsula boasts numerous advantages for business recruitment and sustainability, including low risk and moderately high resilience. According to the National Economic Resilience Data Explorer (NERDE), Chippewa, Luce, and Mackinac Counties all score “Very Low” on the National Risk Index. Additionally, they score at 69.24, 62.88, and 84.08, respectively, on the Community Resilience Challenges Index. The value is a ranking from 1 (least resilient), to 100 (most resilient) according to multiple indicators.



There are a variety of investment tools available to encourage and facilitate internal and external investment. The tools can be found listed below:

- Every county—as well as the DeTour area, the City of Sault Ste. Marie, the Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians, and the Bay Mills Indian Community—is served by an economic development organization (EDO).
- Mackinac County, Chippewa County, and Sault Ste. Marie have active Brownfield Redevelopment Authorities that utilize tax capture plans to restore and redevelop contaminated land and obsolete structures.
- Chippewa County is designated as a Foreign Trade Zone, which is, “a designated location in the United States where companies can use special customs procedures that help encourage U.S. activity and value added – in competition with foreign alternatives – by allowing delayed or reduced duty payments on foreign merchandise, as well as other savings.” (Dept. of Commerce, ITA)
- Luce County has established an asset inventory to prepare for the activation of their Brownfield Redevelopment Authority, and their EDO has a robust Revolving Loan Fund (RLF), which supports new and existing business ventures.
- Four designated Opportunity Zones are located in the region and can be found on the map in Figure 21. According to MSHDA, Opportunity Zones, “incentivize patient capital investments in low-income communities nationwide that have been cut off from capital and experienced a lack of business growth.”

Hazard	Annual Loss (Est.)	Rating
Chippewa County (MI) , Luce County (MI) , Mackinac County (MI)		
Total Hazards	\$ 1.49M	Very Low
Avalanche	-	
Drought	\$ 42.54	Very Low
Tornado	\$ 74.71K	Very Low
Riverine Flooding	\$ 63.51K	Very Low
Hurricane	\$ 20.57K	Very Low
Lightning	\$ 171.73K	Very Low / Relatively Low
Strong Wind	\$ 28.11K	Very Low
Heat Wave	-	
Landslide	\$ 65.70K	Relatively Low
Hail	\$ 245.76K	Very Low / Relatively Low
Winter Weather	\$ 149.01K	Relatively Low / Relatively Moderate
Earthquake	\$ 7.75K	Very Low
Ice Storm	\$ 8.16K	Very Low
Wildfire	\$ 295.77K	Very Low / Relatively Low
Cold Wave	\$ 222.24K	Relatively Low / Relatively Moderate
Coastal Flooding	\$ 135.90K	Relatively Low
Tsunami	-	
Volcanic Activity	-	

Figure 20

Source: NERDE, National Risk Index

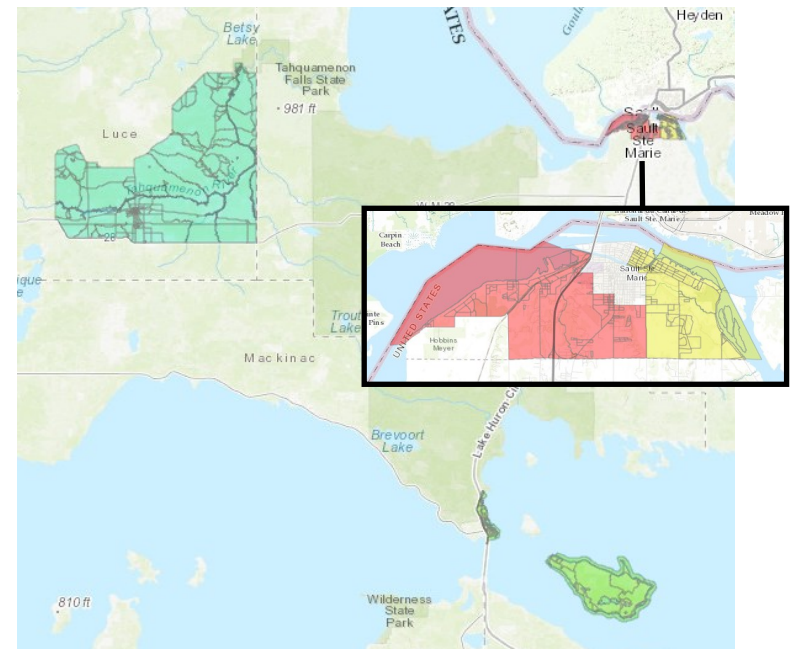


Figure 21

Source: EUPRPDC, Opportunity Zones Map

Public Input/Key Findings

Dozens of residents, business owners, and economic development professionals discussed the economic status of the region and what steps can be taken to strengthen and diversify the economy in a sustainable manner. Beyond identifying our assets, like the nearby international border, natural resources, and existing unique businesses, they discussed what sectors were already strong in the area, particularly forest products and niche markets that support local businesses. Many of these strengths could be leveraged further still, supporting more local businesses. The participants wanted to see vibrant downtowns, better-paying and year-round jobs, and more investment from local and outside sources. They also spoke about how informed planning and forward-thinking, professional leadership would be key to achieve that vision.

Additionally, 117 people responded to the online survey. The top three assets identified were Opportunities for Outdoor Recreation (85.47%), Natural Environment (84.62%), and Access to Natural Resources (79.49%). Over 60% of respondents also selected Cost of Living, which can be an important factor to consider for business owners and entrepreneurs looking to invest.

At the same time, fewer than 5% said that the Business Status, Career/Job Opportunities (2.56%), and the Availability of Good-Paying Jobs (1.71%) were assets. Only seven of 119 survey respondents felt that the region's assets were marketed "very well" to effectively attract private investment, while 26.27% said assets were not marketed at all.

When asked, "What attributes may limit growth in the Eastern U.P.?", over half of respondents selected Availability of Good-Paying Jobs (83.9%), Career/Job Opportunities (71.19%), Geographic Location (59.32%), High-Speed Internet (59.32%), Workforce/Talent (53.39%), and Business Status (51.69%). It is noteworthy to mention that internet service providers have begun working in the EUP to provide not served or underserved locations with high-speed internet. In the coming years, many locations that were previously disconnected will receive service.

Over half of the survey respondents indicated that over-reliance on one industry or employer was one of the biggest threats to resiliency in the region. Identifying sectors for growth and recruiting new businesses and investments will allow the region to become more resilient to unpredicted changes.

When asked to check up to five specific things that leaders can do to make the region a better place for businesses, more than 50% selected:

- Increase access to broadband internet—58.97%
- Fund/develop more workforce training opportunities—51.28%
- Create more high-paying job opportunities—45.3%

The Tourism Survey highlighted small business needs. Fifty-nine respondents answered a variety of questions and identified Attractions, Variety of Activities, and Waterfront Communities and Downtowns as the top three strengths of tourism in the Eastern U.P. Over half of respondents selected Potential (Capital or Other Resources) for Business Growth or Attraction (67.24%), Low Wages and/or Lack of Benefits for Employees (63.79%), and Lack of Available Employees (56.90%) as the top three barriers to expanding tourism. Several respondents also mentioned housing and lodging options as a barrier.

Business development support was selected most frequently as an action that would be most effective to support thriving tourism and over a third of the respondents also selected greater collaboration within the region and promoting lesser-known activities and attractions.

Natural Strengths

International Border
Natural Resources
Unique Businesses
Low Cost of Living
Proximity to Great Lakes

Action Plan & Evaluation

Focus Area: Business Development

The Goal: The region will foster entrepreneurship, support existing endeavors, and attract established, prosperity-building businesses by providing tailored and adaptable resources that they need at every stage in their life cycle.

Initiative	Description	Recent Updates
Leverage our international border, natural resources, low cost of living, and recreational opportunities to support and attract creative business ventures.		
<p>Focus Attraction Efforts on Industries Which Have a Competitive Advantage In Our Region</p>	<p>Natural resources, manufacturing from recycled products, marine repair and manufacturing, outdoor recreation, international trade, Great Lakes and freshwater science and technology, entertainment and tourism, and other sectors have either a supply or market advantage in our region.</p> <p>Economic development leaders will focus attraction resources and efforts on those, and yet-to-be-identified, industries.</p>	<p>GLBBS partnered with Mercury Marine to advance marine repair education in the region. They are also in the process of expanding their teaching and training facilities.</p> <p>CCEDC is utilizing an EDA construction grant to build additional commercial space in Kinross, Michigan. It will be suitable for up to 3 tenants, including Maple Transport, Inc., which has committed to creating 10 new jobs in addition to 5 retained jobs for its expanding operations.</p> <p>Headwaters North has been created and established as the new entity managing the City of Sault Ste. Marie’s SmartZone program.</p> <p>MEDC Small Business Support Hub (HUBS) grant awarded to CCEDC in late 2023, and the first round of direct grant funds were awarded to 42 EUP businesses.</p>
<p>Gather and Disseminate Data and Market Studies on Potential Growth Areas</p>	<p>Studies and data reports on potential growth sectors should be cultivated and leveraged to guide local businesses and attract outside investment. These efforts should also help find value-added opportunities and logistics solutions.</p>	<p>The Sault Ste. Marie EDC completed and published their Strategic Plan in 2024, outlining goals and strategies to meet objectives identified by a consultant and based on public input and research.</p>
<p>Support Marketing Efforts Around the Sault Ste. Marie Foreign Trade Zone and Increase the Number of Businesses Benefitting From the Designation</p>	<p>Create marketing materials for the Foreign Trade Zone and pair them with suitable priority properties. Identify local and outside companies that would benefit from doing business in an FTZ. Contact companies and furnish with marketing materials.</p>	<p>The Sault EDC conducted informational sessions on the Foreign Trade Zone with the help of a FTZ lawyer in 2024. There are several interested businesses.</p>
<p>The Twin Sault’s Will Pursue the Creation of a Federally Recognized Bi-National Investment Zone That Extends Into Both Canada and the U.S.</p>	<p>Create a board or governing structure. Plan and undertake incentive development. Create marketing materials and a list of businesses and industries to target.</p>	<p>During late 2023, we re-initiated meetings with our Canadian economic development counterparts on the Bi-National Economic District concept. Meetings also took place in 2024, and funding methods to complete the work were discussed.</p>

Initiative	Description	Recent Updates
Create a Regional Prospectus to Highlight our Opportunity Zones (OZ)	The Prospectus will: Introduce Opportunity Zones, provide a data-driven description of the region and individual community profiles, identify key partners, establish roles and responsibilities; identify market strengths, establish an online and marketing presence for OZs in our region, outline institutional capacity with measurements and expected outcomes, and detail other incentives available in each OZ.	MEA marketing and attraction strategy completed in late 2021. EUP Opportunity Zones map completed in 2021. Other activities ongoing.
Through private-public partnerships, ensure that businesses' workforce needs are met.		
Focus Attraction Efforts on Companies That Already Have Training Programs in Place	Attraction efforts should be further refined by research into what training and development programs potential companies have in place.	There is ongoing collaboration between the EDO's, UP Michigan Works!, and Regional Planning.
Offer Local, Specialized Training Based on Employer Needs	Local organizations will hold programming aimed at providing skill-development opportunities. They may be one session or several courses over a period of time.	UP Michigan Works! Incumbent Worker Training Program continues and has capacity to take on additional applicants. On-the-Job Training through UP MI Works!, and the State Apprenticeship Expansion Program continue to add value.
Support UP Michigan Works! in the Establishment and Implementation of Business Support Programs.	Provide support and assistance to UP Michigan Works! that would assist companies in creating training programs to attract and retain employees. Coordinate the collaboration with employers and schools to meet training needs.	Five companies in the EUP were awarded Going PRO funding in FY 2024. Awards totaled \$357,304.02.
Attract Businesses With Established Training Programs	Attract businesses to the region that are willing to collaborate with local institutions to train employees rather than require skills upon hiring.	There are ongoing efforts through UP MI Works!, local CTE programs, adult education providers, and undergraduate institutions.
Regional Manufacturing Alliance	The Manufacturers Alliance, comprised of local manufacturing entities, partners with local universities and community colleges for joint training opportunities, leadership training, networking, and the sharing of resources.	No progress to report.
Assist businesses in determining their needs and then help them fill those needs.		
Help EDO's, Chambers of Commerce, and Michigan Works! Identify and Fill Businesses' Needs	Provide insight, data, and analysis regarding funding, strategy, supply chain logistics, workforce, and markets.	The MEDC Small Business HUBS grant was awarded to CCEDC in late 2023. The \$1.4 million grant will be used to identify and assist small business needs across the region. The 1st round of direct grants to businesses was completed in 2024 and about 40 small, local businesses received funding to upgrade operations.

Initiative	Description	Recent Updates
Help Local Businesses Find Value-Added Ways to Grow	Existing businesses, particularly farms and land-based producers, may often find revenue streams or cost savings in endeavors that are closely related to their current operations.	Taste the Local Difference completed work with EUP under a contract on the EDA CARES Act grant to address this goal.
Connect Locally Grown or Made Products With Markets	<p>Connect entrepreneurs to services, resources, and external business listings that connect products and services to consumers and large-scale buyers.</p> <p><i>Example:</i> Taste the Local Difference’s Local Food Guide. Regional Planning and partners will connect new and existing local food manufacturers to this marketing database.</p>	Progress is ongoing.
Highlight Business Successes	Celebrating local successes as they occur will encourage the broader community, create support for local investment, and inspire outside investment	<p>The Sault EDC celebrated the purchase and future redevelopment of the Zim’s Building, formerly the Del Mar, in Sault Ste. Marie’s historic downtown. This mixed-use building will house a restaurant/lounge and housing units once it is completed.</p> <p>A Culver’s franchise is opening on the I-75 Business Spur in Sault Ste. Marie in 2025.</p> <p>Construction on the Mac Building in downtown Sault Ste. Marie was completed in 2024, and nearly all of the luxury apartments have been rented.</p> <p>The Annex Building in downtown Sault Ste. Marie was completed and apartments have begun to be rented in late 2024.</p> <p>Progress is ongoing.</p>

Metrics & Impacts

The actions outlined above will be updated and adjusted to reflect partner activities and programs. These adjustments will make the plan more representative of year-to-year realities, while measurements independent of individual actions will demonstrate the continuity of the impact of our efforts.

Generally, the majority of our workforce is employed in low-skill, low-wage positions that make it difficult support a family with the rising costs of living. Reliance on relatively few major employers makes the region vulnerable to large impacts from a single closure or significant State or Federal funding cuts. Reliance on tourism also makes us vulnerable to broader economic changes outside of the region, whether that be increased competition for visitors or an economic downturn that leads to lower travel spending per family.

Our unique assets offer many opportunities to diversify and strengthen the regional economy, and our low cost of living benefits current residents as well as businesses and investors. By leveraging and marketing these assets and opportunities, the region will grow its economy and create a high quality of life.

Regional leaders must fully leverage existing incentives and benefits, including Opportunity Zones, Brownfield Redevelopment, and other state and federal funding programs. Utilizing these tools will increase downtown vibrancy and ensure that our region is competitive in terms of business and talent recruitment and retention. Currently, EDOs throughout the EUP are connecting and collaborating through the HUBs grant to provide services and funding to local businesses. These actions will support entrepreneurs and increase retention.

Awareness of economic risks and sustainable growth will create a more resilient regional economy. By focusing economic development on growing businesses which diversify our economy, create good-paying jobs, and leverage our unique assets, we will increase the region's ability to withstand outside economic shocks. Economic development leaders who plan for the future and market our assets widely and strategically will create a more prosperous economic landscape.

To track the success of our efforts, the annual CEDS updates will also track these general data points as indicators of increased economic vitality and resiliency:

- Area Median Income
- Annual Unemployment Rate
- Business Formation Statistics
- Top Growing Industries



Vibrant Communities Background

The communities of the Eastern Upper Peninsula have unique qualities that give them a distinctive sense of place. They also share many qualities, such as a rural setting, seasonal population variations, and access to outdoor recreation. Growth will look different in each community, but they will all draw from shared principals and employ similar strategies. Household income, population health, local food, culture, and housing contribute to the prosperity and resiliency of the region.

Several data sources provide insight into to the economic well-being of the families and households in the region. One such metric is household income. 20.1% of households in the EUP have a household income between \$50,000 and \$74,999, with the next highest concentration being between \$75,000 and \$99,999.

According to Argonne National Laboratory’s Economic Development Capacity Index (EDCI) Report Generator, Chippewa County has moderate capacity in human capital, financial, infrastructure, and institutions & partnerships. It has elevated capacity in industry. Likewise, Luce County’s capacity is limited in human capital and financial, moderate in industry, low in infrastructure, and elevated in institutions & partnerships. Lastly, Mackinac County’s capacity is elevated in human capital and financial, moderate in industry and institutions & partnerships, and limited in infrastructure.

The American Communities Project uses relevant data and reports to gauge the cultural, socioeconomic, and political aspects of counties around the country. According to their findings, Chippewa, Luce, and Mackinac Counties are, “Graying America,” which is comprised of a large senior population. The constituents are also primarily middle-income and are less varied than metropolitan areas while having an average educational background.

To better understand the economic status of families in Michigan, the United Way of Michigan began the ALICE project. This project focuses on Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) households which earn more than the Federal Poverty Level but less than the basic cost of living for the county. Combined, the number of ALICE and poverty-level households equals the total population struggling to afford basic needs. A breakdown of households by ALICE threshold and the federal poverty rate is found in Figures 23, 24, and 25.

The region’s household incomes by county indicate that our population is at a significantly increased risk of experiencing a wide range of negative health indicators from a decrease in general health status to higher rates of diagnosis for depression, anxiety, and disabilities.

Household Income Distribution, Combined Counties, 2022*

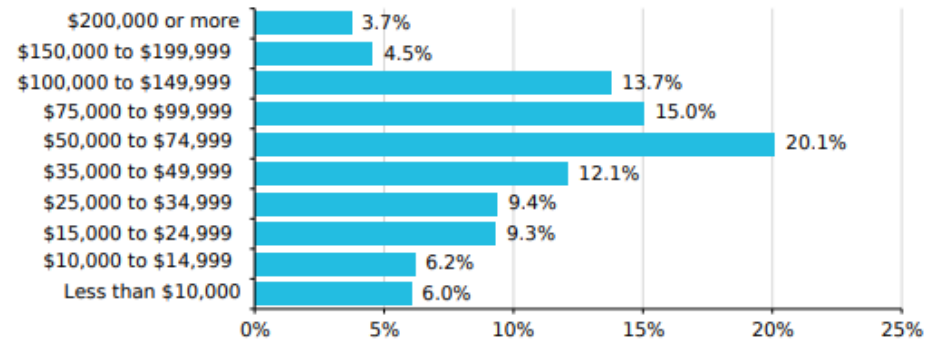


Figure 22

Source: US Census/ACS, Headwaters Economics Report

2022 Point-in-Time-Data **Chippewa**

Population: 36,670 Number of Households: 13,747

Median Household Income: \$58,408 (state average: \$66,986)

Labor Force Participation Rate: 56% (state average: 62%)

ALICE Households: 31% (state average 28%) Households in Poverty: 16% (state average 13%)

2022 Point-in-Time-Data **Luce**

Population: 5,442 Number of Households: 2,065

Median Household Income: \$51,015 (state average: \$66,986)

Labor Force Participation Rate: 35% (state average: 62%)

ALICE Households: 32% (state average 28%) Households in Poverty: 19% (state average 13%)

2022 Point-in-Time-Data **Mackinac**

Population: 10,843 Number of Households: 5,226

Median Household Income: \$60,620 (state average: \$66,986)

Labor Force Participation Rate: 52% (state average: 62%)

ALICE Households: 25% (state average 28%) Households in Poverty: 16% (state average 13%)

Figures 23, 24, 25

Source: UnitedforALICE.org

Table 1 shows the three counties compared to the State on several important health indicators.

The health indicators listed, if left untreated or unaccounted for, can lead to downturns in mental health which can be exasperated by a lack of mental health providers in the region. According to County Health Rankings & Roadmaps (2021), adults in Chippewa County reported that their mental health was not good on 5.7 of the previous 30 days. Adults in Luce County reported that theirs was not good on 5.4 days, and adults in Mackinac County reported that theirs was not good on 5.6 days.

Following the UP Community Health Needs Assessment, each Health Department developed a Community Health Improvement Plan. Plans were developed with input from partners from across all healthcare sectors and rely on clear metrics and reporting. Every county also has a Communities That Care (CTC) coalition which uses evidence-based methods to help lower rates of problem youth behaviors with the aim of breaking, “the multi-generation cycles of depression, substance use, and other issues that keep our young people from flourishing.” These coalitions include health professionals, law enforcement, educators, tribes, faith-based organizations, local officials, social services agencies, families, and schools and they develop local strategies and programs to address their unique needs.

Factors contribute to health outcomes, such as the ability to pay for necessities and the quality and affordability of housing. Chippewa and Luce counties both have a higher percentage of households receiving food stamps/SNAP than Michigan or the United States at 13.6% and 16.7%, respectively. Mackinac County, in terms of SSI, cash assistance, and SNAP, has the lowest percentage of households reliant on public assistance in the region. It is noteworthy that their percentages are also lower than Michigan and the United States.

Attainable housing can also place an impediment on mental and physical health. In Luce County, 53% of households (HH) spend over 30% of their HH income on rent. In Chippewa County, 42.7% of HH spend the same. Mackinac County is once again an outlier with 26.3% spending 30% or more of HH income on rent.

Health Indicator	Chippewa	Luce	Mackinac	State
General Health Status Only Fair or Poor	15.6%	17.1%	17.6%	15.5%
Unable to Access Healthcare Due to Cost	10.9%	8.8%	9.7%	7.9%
No Dental Care in Past 12 Months	35.1%	30.1%	42.9%	28.2%
Obese (BMI 30.0 or Greater)	27.0%	49.1%	36.2%	35.2%
5+ Daily Servings of Fruits and Vegetables	5.0%	8.8%	6.9%	N/A
Ever Diagnosed with Diabetes	10.2%	15.0%	12.6%	12.3%
Ever Diagnosed with Heart Disease	11.2%	12.6%	12.2%	5.0%
Ever Diagnosed with Depressive Disorder	30.7%	29.9%	21.0%	19.5%
Heavy Alcohol Drinker	21.3%	12.8%	16.7%	6.8%

Table 1

Source : UP Community Health Needs Assessment, 2021

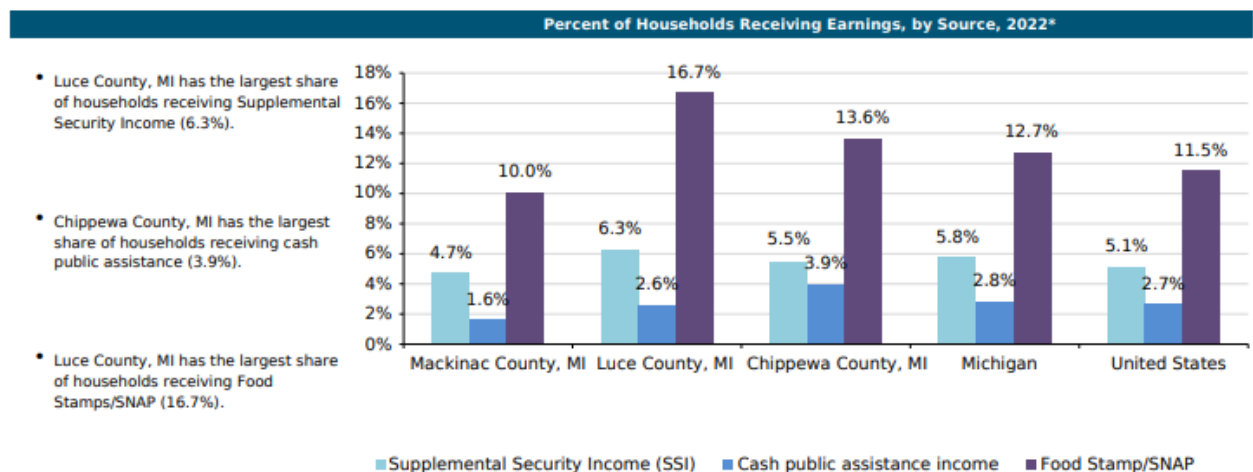


Figure 26

Source: US Census/ACS, Headwaters Economics Report

All three counties have a hospital, and various communities within the counties maintain their own emergency services. Some communities provide volunteer fire services and others provide paid EMS services. The region is served by the Chippewa County Health Department and LMAS District Health Department. The health departments complete restaurant food inspections, manage the WIC program, provide immunizations, conduct testing and screening, provide home health services, and provide a variety of other services to communities throughout the region. The region's health is also managed by the Bay Mills Health Center and the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe Health Center through the Bay Mills Indian Community and the Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians.

Access to healthy food contributes to public health. Consuming five or more servings of fruits and vegetables can reduce a variety of health risk factors. Unfortunately, residents of the United States struggle to adhere to this guidance as low-income and minority populations face barriers to a healthy diet. In the Eastern UP, 5% of Chippewa County residents, 8.8% of Luce County residents, and 6.9% of Mackinac County residents consume five or more daily servings of fruits and vegetables. The low percentage of adults consuming adequate, healthy food can lead to poorer health outcomes in the region.

These local consumption rates may improve as farmers' markets gain in popularity and education around nutrition increases. However, due to a short growing season and other factors including economic and workforce downturns, local farms cannot meet the local need. Incubator kitchens may help to incentivize more healthy eating habits while creating jobs and bringing money into the regional economy; but, to date, the EUP does not have an incubator kitchen.

While agriculture makes up a small percentage of the region's employment, it has a large impact on quality of life and community identity. Many communities were founded as fishing villages and trading posts. Maple syrup production is a point of pride throughout the region, and iconic community symbols such as Pickford hay and the horses of Mackinac Island have national reputations.

Michigan State University Extension, the U.P. Food Exchange, and Taste the Local Difference have all created resources and educational opportunities for farmers and local food systems. For example, they have produced policies and funding resource guides for community outreach. This outreach touches on the economic impact of farming and importance of food security. These organizations lead developments in communities across the region while also serving as a bridge to State and Federal resources.

Regulating short-term rentals, supplying seasonal workforce and student housing, and ensuring a supply of safe, attainable, and quality housing for residents are all challenges faced by our communities.

According to Census data, 32.1% of homes in the EUP are seasonal, recreational, or occasional households which greatly reduces the amount of housing for year-round residents. This tug-of-war between seasonal supply and demand, coupled with the influx of workers completing the Soo Locks Project, have created higher costs for housing.

Item	Chippewa	Luce	Mackinac
Farms number	335	47	88
Land in farms acres	84,200	8,037	19,050
Average size of farm acres	251	171	216
Median size of farm acres	110	55	89
Estimated market value of land and buildings:			
Average per farm dollars	713,880	531,707	688,693
Average per acre dollars	2,840	3,109	3,181
Estimated market value of all machinery and equipment:			
..... \$1,000	38,133	9,624	7,815
Average per farm dollars	113,831	204,766	88,808
Farms by size:			
1 to 9 acres	3	7	4
10 to 49 acres	91	12	34
50 to 179 acres	117	19	30
180 to 499 acres	79	4	12
500 to 999 acres	25	3	3
1,000 acres or more	20	2	5
Total cropland farms			
..... acres	288	31	72
Harvested cropland farms	51,959	4,219	7,881
..... acres	246	24	72
..... acres	37,113	3,595	7,184
Irrigated land farms			
..... acres	9	10	7
..... acres	107	(D)	19
Market value of agricultural products sold \$1,000			
Average per farm dollars	15,646	(D)	5,873
..... dollars	46,705	(D)	66,738
Crops, including nursery and greenhouse crops \$1,000			
Livestock, poultry, and their products \$1,000	7,700	(D)	1,423
..... \$1,000	7,946	(D)	4,450
Farms by value of sales:			
Less than \$2,500	91	13	44
\$2,500 to \$4,999	51	2	7
\$5,000 to \$9,999	31	9	8
\$10,000 to \$24,999	63	13	13
\$25,000 to \$49,999	29	4	9
\$50,000 to \$99,999	31	1	3
\$100,000 or more	39	5	4
Government payments farms			
..... \$1,000	85	2	7
..... \$1,000	851	(D)	40

Figure 27

Source: USDA Census of Agriculture, 2022

Cost-burdened households pay more than 30% of their income in housing costs. According to the 2022 American Community Survey, 42.7% of renters in Chippewa County are cost burdened. In Luce and Mackinac Counties, this number varies. It is substantially lower in Mackinac at 26.3% and substantially higher in Luce County at 53.0%. In Michigan, it is 45.3%.

In 2022, Chippewa County led the region in the percentage of total households occupied by renters at 26.4%. Luce and Mackinac Counties followed at 17.6% and 24%. Chippewa and Luce Counties were similar to the State at 27.5% of total households.

Home values in the region have risen over the last seven years according to the Zillow Home Value Index. The values dipped slightly in late 2023 then rose in early 2024. If the current trend continues, we anticipate continued, steady growth over the next year. The increasing home values have risen overall, but they remain significantly lower than the Michigan average of \$245,716.00.

This may make entry into the Eastern UP housing market easier compared to the rest of the state and can potentially contribute to a high ownership rate. Limited job opportunities to incentivize migration and a colder-than-normal area, combined with aging and low-quality housing stock, may partially explain the low housing values.

The U.S banned the manufacture of lead-based house paint in 1978 due to health concerns. Homes built before this date are at risk of containing lead-based paint which can lead to health issues. As 40.5% of the homes in the EUP were built between 1940 and 1979, they are likely to contain lead-based paint unless remediation has taken place. Only 3.9% of the homes in the EUP were built in 2010 or later compared to Michigan's 8.8%. Through MI Lead Safe, Michigan provides lead inspection and abatement services. Utilizing these services in the EUP will ensure that our current and future residents stay safe and health in their homes.

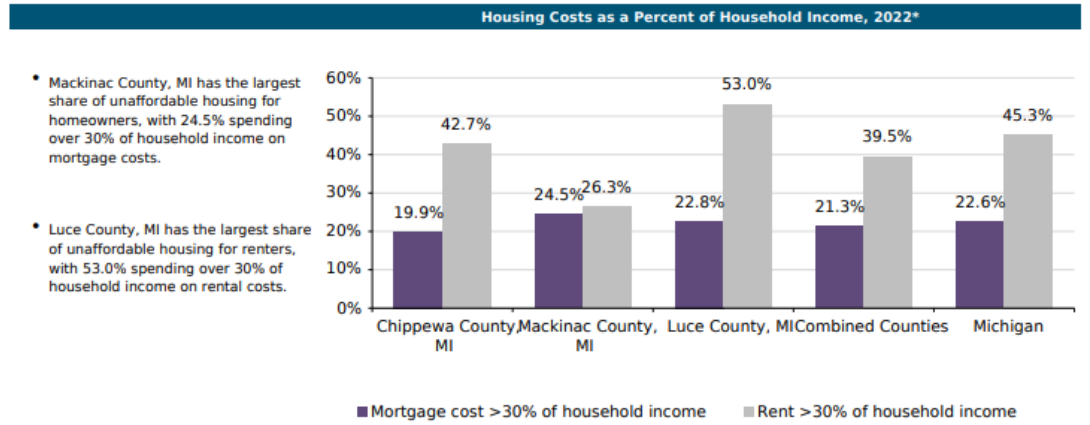


Figure 28 Source: US Census/ACS, Headwaters Economics Report

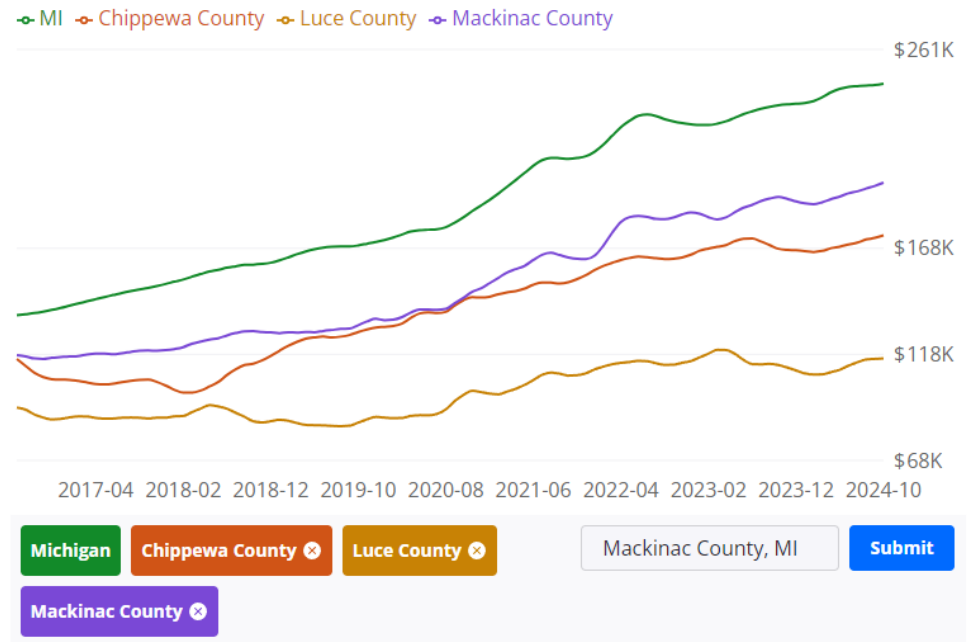


Figure 29 Source: Zillow Home Value Index

Housing Redevelopment Tools in 2024

- Brownfield Redevelopment - MEDC
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) - MSHDA
- Housing Tax Increment Financing (TIF) - MSHDA
- MI Community Revitalization Program (MCRP) - MEDC
- MI Neighborhood - MSHDA
- Obsolete Properties Rehabilitation Exemption (OPRA) - MEDC

When an individual or family is looking at housing costs, they also need to look at transportation costs to get the most accurate picture of how much this home will cost them. People are unlikely to live in a bubble; and they have to travel away from their homes for work, shopping, entertainment, education, and more. A way to measure the cost of housing plus transportation is the H+T Index.

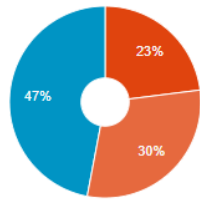
According to the H+T Index, “Traditional measures of housing affordability ignore transportation costs. Typically, a household’s second-largest expenditure is transportation costs which are largely a function of the characteristics of the neighborhood in which a household chooses to live. Location Matters. Compact and dynamic neighborhoods with walkable streets and high access to jobs, transit, and a wide variety of businesses are more efficient, affordable, and sustainable.”

Figure 30 (Chippewa), Source: H+T

Average Housing + Transportation Costs % Income

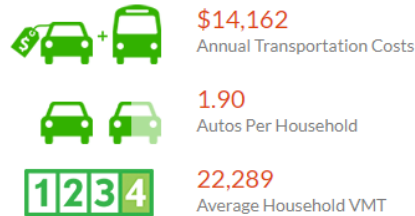
Factoring in both housing *and* transportation costs provides a more comprehensive way of thinking about the cost of housing and true affordability.

- Housing
- Transportation
- Remaining Income



Transportation Costs

In dispersed areas, people need to own more vehicles and rely upon driving them farther distances which also drives up the cost of living.



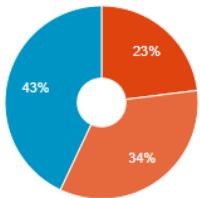
Figures 30 (Chippewa County), 31 (Luce County), and 32 (Mackinac County) show the percent of household income that is spent on both housing and transportation, revealing that more than half of the income earned in households in the EUP goes toward those two items alone.

Figure 31 (Luce), Source: H+T

Average Housing + Transportation Costs % Income

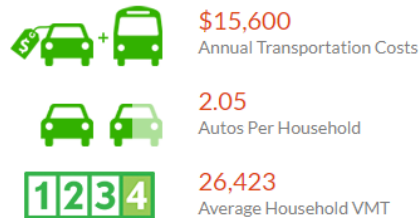
Factoring in both housing *and* transportation costs provides a more comprehensive way of thinking about the cost of housing and true affordability.

- Housing
- Transportation
- Remaining Income



Transportation Costs

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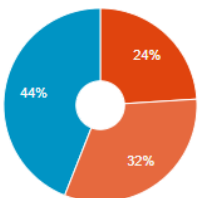
It is said that the health of a downtown can indicate the health of a town overall. The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) spends millions of dollars per year making Michigan downtowns vibrant. In fiscal year 2024, the MEDC undertook eight projects in the eastern UP: seven in Chippewa County and one in Mackinac.

Figure 32 (Mackinac), Source: H+T

Average Housing + Transportation Costs % Income

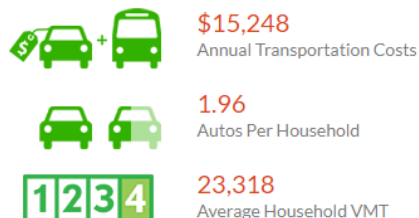
Factoring in both housing *and* transportation costs provides a more comprehensive way of thinking about the cost of housing and true affordability.

- Housing
- Transportation
- Remaining Income



Transportation Costs

In dispersed areas, people need to own more vehicles and rely upon driving them farther distances which also drives up the cost of living.



Four of the projects in Chippewa took place in Sault Ste. Marie and totaled \$149,000 of public investment and leveraged \$204,527 in private investments. Two more projects in Chippewa took place in Rudyard and garnered \$1,607 in public money. The seventh project in Chippewa took place in Pickford and utilized \$226,000 in public funds and \$226,030 in private funds to create 15 jobs.

The lone MEDC project in Mackinac County was located on historic Mackinac Island and received \$76,751 in State funding.

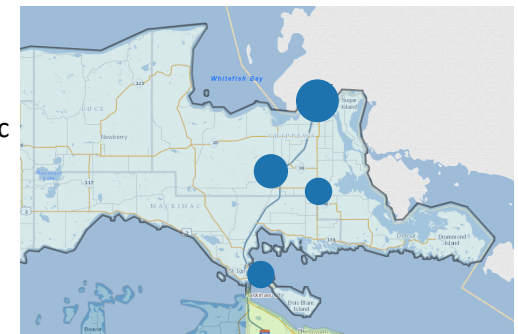


Figure 33

Source: MEDC

Public Input/Key Findings

Housing came up in a variety of ways during the past public meetings, as both the lack of options being a risk and as an investment opportunity. Participants said they enjoy a high-quality of life, largely thanks to the natural resources and recreational opportunities that are so abundant in the region. They envisioned communities that draw on these strengths to attract investment and jobs and build vibrant downtowns.

Responses to the online survey again emphasized the benefits of the region's natural resources environment, cost of living, location, and lifestyle. Lack of economic opportunity and business landscape were identified as limitations and were discussed in the previous chapter. Nearly 60% of respondents also identified the lack of high-speed internet as an issue which impacts all areas of life. Over half of respondents also pointed to the inadequate housing supply as one of the greatest threats to regional resiliency.

The top responses to, "Q8: Check up to five specific things that leaders can do to make the region a better place for residents" were:

- Create more high-paying job opportunities (62.71%)
- Increase access to broadband (58.47%)
- Downtown revitalization (53.39%)
- Develop more quality of life amenities (50%)
- Fund/develop more workforce training opportunities (42.37%)

The Eastern U.P. Food Summit survey results underline local food and agricultural business passion to provide their communities with locally produced, healthy, and fresh food options. Education remained a top priority particularly an increased understanding of the positive impact local food production can have including increased physical health and a diversified and broadened regional economy.

Some of this education could take place at Farmers Markets. These markets have become a center of activity and socialization for many communities in the region and provide opportunities for further growth. Opportunities identified included funding for marketing to increase attendance and sales, creating infrastructure for drop-off and pick-up areas for sellers and buyers (or food aggregation sites), and help with market set up and tear down. Participants also raised concerns over the economic sustainability of farming, market size, food cost and availability to consumers.



Portage Avenue in Sault Ste. Marie, MI

Action Plan & Evaluation

Focus Area: Vibrant Communities

The Goal: Vibrant downtowns and village centers will thrive throughout the Region, with a variety of safe housing options for guests, seasonal workers, and residents. A healthy populace will have access to healthcare, cultural assets, and local food, and communities will support local farms.

Initiative	Description	Recent Updates
Events, internal and external investments, building development, and placemaking efforts increase downtown activity and prosperity.		
Use strategic placemaking in a manner that is unique, exciting, sustainable, and conducive to commercial activity.	Collective effort to energize public spaces leads to a stronger connection between residents and their communities. Using design and justness principles, placemaking in turn enhances community identity.	<p>Soo Theatre renovation efforts are ongoing.</p> <p>The Annex Building in downtown Sault Ste. Marie is now taking applications for residents, as is the Mac Building across from the Soo Locks.</p> <p>The Zim's Building is being redeveloped into housing, a restaurant, and lounge in Sault Ste. Marie.</p>
Encourage volunteerism and organizational openness to connect individuals to their communities.	Civic groups, DDAs and Chambers organize events and beautification efforts. DDAs, Chambers, and EDOs highlight volunteer activities; recognize those groups.	Recognition efforts are ongoing across the region.
Create a variety of safe housing options to accommodate guests, seasonal workers and residents.		
Employ Land Bank, Brownfield, and other TIF and tax credit programs to show outside investors that you are development friendly, and to assist local developers grow their capacity.	Support local units of government in their pursuit of funding programs and other incentives to promote the development of missing middle housing options in the Region.	<p>Through a MI Office of Rural Prosperity grant, EUP is looking to expanding Chippewa County's Brownfield Authority and create either a county- or region-wide Land Bank.</p> <p>Through an RHP Action Grant, EUP is looking to pay for the tuition of emerging developers to attend a Development Bootcamp hosted by CEDAM.</p>
Ensure clear communication and processes with developers.	Through implementation of Best Practices in the Redevelopment Ready Communities 2.0 Program, communities can provide clear processes, and more simple permitting makes a community more development-friendly while increasing transparency with the public.	<p>EUP Regional Planning & Development Commission has created the Housing Readiness Checklist for communities.</p> <p>Multiple communities are engaged with MEDC through the RRC program.</p>
Review zoning ordinances to allow for more density, innovative forms, and lower parking minimums where appropriate.	Greater density reduces building costs, environmental impact, and the cost of infrastructure build-out.	The City of Sault Ste. Marie is updating their zoning using the Housing Readiness Grant Incentive program through MSHDA.

Initiative	Description	Recent Updates
Ensure that a healthy populace will have access to local food, and that communities will support local farms.		
Support farmer education and support local food production, warehousing, distribution, and sales	<p>MSUE hosts beginning farmer webinars.</p> <p>BMCC offers agriculture educational opportunities through Waishkey Bay Farms.</p> <p>Les Cheneaux Culinary School trains chefs and exposes the community to farm-to-table dining.</p> <p>Taste the Local Difference matches producers with markets and hosts annual local food summits.</p> <p>Educate schools about the 10 Cents A Meal Program, which provides schools with \$0.10 for every meal when the meals are prepared with local ingredients.</p>	<p>The 2022 Local Food Guide featured EUP markets, farms, and restaurants to promote local farming.</p> <p>New digital marketing is ongoing.</p> <p>EUP staff have engaged with staff from Grow Benzie to learn about the process of creating an incubator kitchen.</p>
Support local food education efforts	<p>Several local schools have gardens and other agricultural curricula, and local libraries support Cookbook Clubs and seed exchanges.</p> <p>There are opportunities for partnership with community organizations regarding composting and organic gardening.</p>	Ongoing
Support for Farmers Markets in the region	<p>Connect all of the farmers market managers to the Michigan Farmers Market Association.</p> <p>Provide support and technical assistance to EUP farmers markets in order to help them afford marketing and operations costs.</p> <p>Support the infrastructure for food education at markets.</p>	Ongoing
Identify and implement strategies from the Region C Housing Partnership's Action Plan.		
Implement goals and strategies from Region C's Housing Action Plan	<p>Increase the availability and quality of housing stock throughout the Eastern Upper Peninsula through the development of the housing ecosystem, preparing communities for development, educating the public about funding sources, identifying areas for development, conducting studies and surveys, and convening and connecting stakeholders with outside investors and capacity -builders.</p>	<p>Completion of EUP's One-Stop housing resource webpage.</p> <p>Completion of housing needs assessments and surveys for every county in the region.</p> <p>Convening of stakeholders during the Emerging Developers Roadshow.</p> <p>Ongoing meetings to educate and motivate stakeholders.</p>

Metrics & Impacts

Families form the basis of communities. Their housing, wellness, and income all impact the overall prosperity of the community around them. Increasing and improving housing stock will benefit current residents and attract new families to the region. Additionally, vibrant downtowns strengthen our communities economically and socially. Support for farmers and local food systems will strengthen local food supply chains, which will be better able to withstand disruptions. All of these elements combine to create vibrant places to live and work.

The need for broadband and high-speed internet impacts education systems, businesses, communities, and government service delivery. A plan for comprehensive broadband infrastructure buildout is currently being implemented by the EUPConnect Collaborative. Updates to the CEDS will include highlights from their efforts.

Healthcare deserts, as identified by Data USA and County Health Rankings & Roadmaps data, will be identified to help draw attention to and garner support for the healthcare system as a whole in the EUP. Fixing the problem begins with facing it.

Resources and examples listed in this chapter will be updated annually; and to track the impact of related developments, the annual reports will also include:

- Updated ALICE Data
- Changes in Household Income Distribution
- Changes in Housing Costs as a Percent of Household Income
- Updated USDA Agriculture Data



Snowy Roof

Policy & Planning Background

The schools, businesses, and communities of the Eastern Upper Peninsula give the region its character. The local units of government and policy makers help preserve that character while facilitating growth and ensuring openness. Forward-thinking planning and proactive policy development draw on tools and best practices which are outlined below. While governments formally take the lead in developing policy, residents help shape its creation and implementation. Many of the actions and tools discussed in this chapter require governmental or organizational action; however, it will begin with and be executed by individual involvement.

There are three cities within the region (Sault Ste. Marie, St. Ignace and Mackinac Island), two villages (Newberry and DeTour) and many small and unincorporated communities (Bay Mills, Brimley, Kincheloe, Pickford, Paradise, Rudyard, Curtis, Engadine, Naubinway, Hessel, and Cedarville, to name a few). Consequently, townships play a large role in economic and community development efforts throughout the region. Chippewa County has sixteen Townships, Luce County has four, and Mackinac County has eleven. Tables displaying municipalities in each county can be found on Tables 2, 3, and 4.

Within the region, there are island communities which include Bois Blanc, Drummond, Les Cheneaux, Mackinac, Neebish, and Sugar Island. The unique lifestyle of the island communities present distinct challenges. These communities have banded together with other Great Lakes islands under the Great Lakes Islands Alliance to share information and leverage resources to benefit island communities.

Additionally, two federally-recognized tribal communities are located in the EUP. The Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians has over 44,000 members worldwide and offers cultural, environmental, housing, healthcare, elder, educational, and recreational services to its members and the broader community. The Sault Tribe has tribally-owned enterprises throughout the seven easternmost counties of the Upper Peninsula. The Bay Mills Indian Community (BMIC) is primarily located in and around Bay Mills and Superior Townships along Lake Superior, with some reservation land on Sugar Island. They also provide healthcare, housing, environmental, and other services. BMIC supports Bay Mills Community College and a robust Boys and Girls Club. Both tribes are sovereign governments, and they participate in a separate CEDS process through the Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan.

Through planning, zoning, and enforcement, local governments can guide investment in a manner that preserves the community's character and the health and safety of its residents. Many, but not all, of the counties and local units of government in the region have their own master plans and zoning ordinances. These plans capture the community's reality for the year in which it was written, and present a shared vision of the years to come. All zoning in Michigan must be based on a plan. Ideally, land use regulations, such as zoning, promote public health and safety, preserve and enhance building values, and encourage appropriate land uses.



City of Sault Ste. Marie City Hall

Land Use Plan Assessment

Chippewa County

Municipality	Plan Type and Adoption Year
Bay Mills Twp	Master Plan, 2011
Bruce Twp	Master Plan, 2012
Chippewa Twp	Land Use Plan, 1977
Dafter Twp	Master Plan, 2010
City of Sault Ste. Marie	Master Plan, 2018
Detour Twp	N/A
DeTour Village	Master Plan, 2022
Drummond Island Twp	N/A
Hulbert Twp	Land Use Plan, 1976
Kinross Charter Twp	Master Plan, 2009
Pickford Twp	Master Plan, 2011 Amendment
Raber Twp	Land Use Map, 1977
Rudyard Twp	Master Plan 1999
Soo Twp	Master Plan, 2024
Sugar Island Twp	Master Plan, 2018
Superior Twp	Master Plan, 2012
Trout Lake Twp	Land Use Plan, 1977
Whitefish Twp	Master Plan, 2006

Tables 2, 3, and 4 Source: EUPRPDC

Luce County

Municipality	Plan Type and Adoption Year
Columbus Twp	N/A
Lakefield Twp	N/A
McMillian Twp	N/A
Village of Newberry	Master Plan, 2018
Pentland Twp	N/A

Mackinac County

Municipality	Plan Type and Adoption Year
Bois Blanc Twp	Master Plan, 2023
Brevort Twp	Master Plan, 2008
City of St. Ignace	Master Plan, 2019
Clark Twp	Master Plan, 2015
Garfield Twp	Master Plan, 2007
Hendricks Twp	N/A
Hudson Twp	N/A
City of Mackinac Island	Master Plan, 2018*
Marquette Twp	Master Plan, 2011
Moran Twp	Master Land Use Plan, 2003
Newton Twp	N/A
Portage Twp	Master Plan, 2019 Amendment
St. Ignace Twp	Land Use Plan, 1996

*Mackinac Island is in the process of updating their plan as of 12/11/2024.

Each county has a different status concerning planning and zoning. Luce County has a Master Plan and zoning which serves every local unit of government with the exception of the Village of Newberry. Mackinac County has a Master Plan, but leaves zoning to individual municipalities. Chippewa County does not have a master plan, which leaves the local units of government to develop their own plans and zoning ordinances. Several Master Plans have been updated in recent years, while others are out-of-date. Many of the Master Plans reference a desire to build service capacity through cooperation and resource sharing and to preserve the rural lifestyle and protect the natural environment and features.

The rural character of the region is reinforced by extensive public land ownership. The East Unit of the Hiawatha National Forest—a federal entity—stretches over tens of thousands of acres, from Lake Superior to Lakes Michigan and Huron. Federal forest management enables conservation, recreation, and commercial uses. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR)—a state entity—holds extensive lands throughout the region, as well. Nearly every municipality has land in it which is owned by the DNR. Similar to the Hiawatha National Forest, these lands provide conservation, recreation, and economic opportunities to the region.

The Eastern Upper Peninsula Citizens Advisory Council provides local input on regional programs and policies. Meetings feature regular updates from DNR division staff, and in-house discussions of local issues such as trail developments, Chronic Wasting Disease in deer, and Oak Wilt. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), such as the Little Traverse Conservancy, the Michigan Nature Association, the University of Michigan, Intervarsity Ministries, the Michigan Audubon Society, and the Fiborn Kart Conservancy, also own and manage lands for conservation and recreational use. Local volunteers for conservancies help maintain trail systems, participate in wildlife counts, and promote health and education activities.

Many local municipalities manage public space for recreation; generally, these are parks, campgrounds, and boat launches. These properties are in addition to the privately-owned campgrounds and golf courses that can be found in the region. The wide variety of recreational opportunities, public land, and seasonal experiences found in the region are the bedrock of the quality of life and a pillar of the economy. Every level of public leadership can play a role in maintaining that balance through planning and policy.

Taxable Value by County

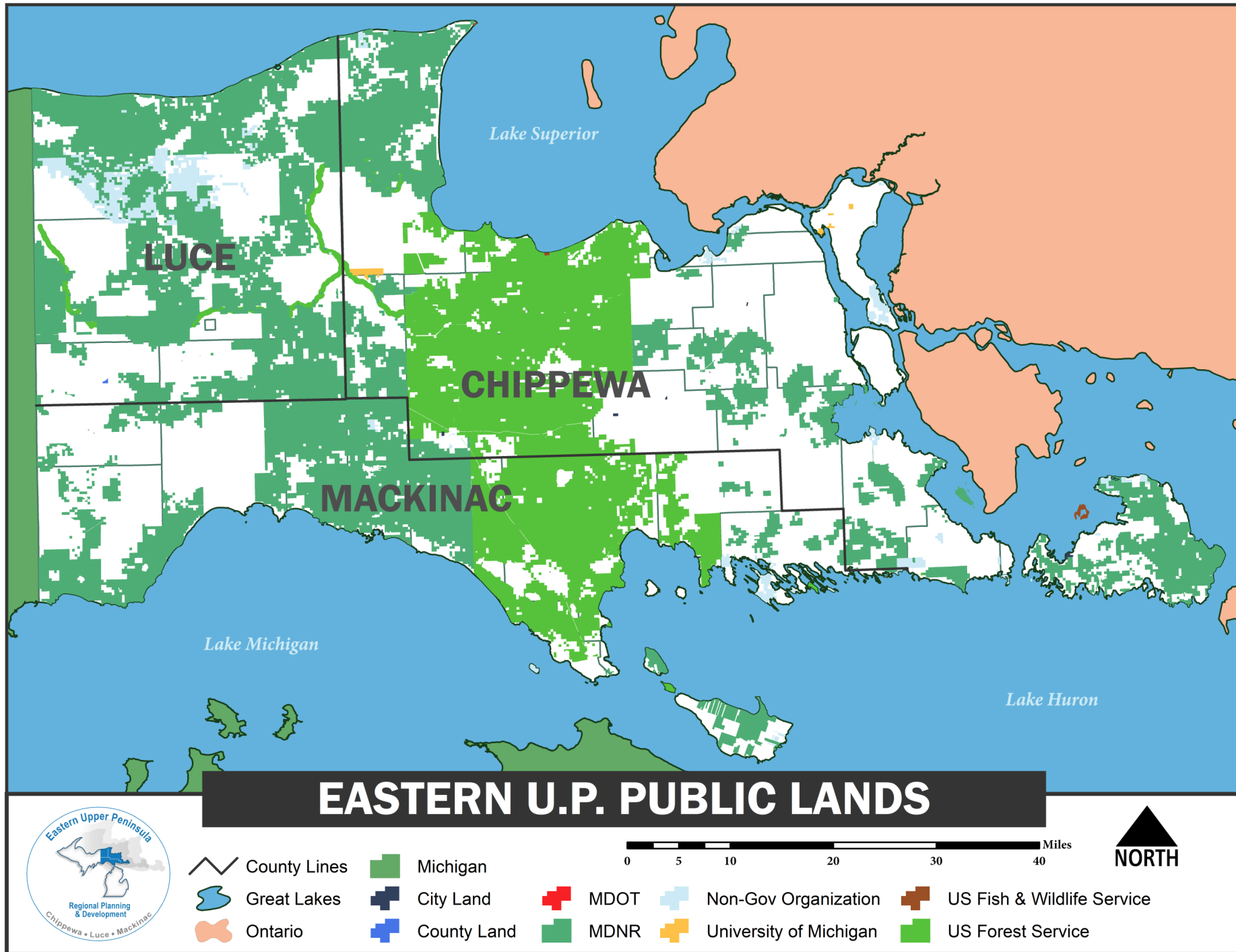
County	Taxable Value ('23)	Taxable Value/ Capita ('23)	Taxable Value ('18)	Taxable Value/ Capita ('18)	Taxable Value ('13)	Taxable Value/ Capita ('13)
Chippewa	\$1,326,557,410	\$36,581	\$1,140,660,977	\$30,404	\$1,090,343,956	\$27,941
Luce	\$214,415,772	\$33,320	\$188,450,026	\$29,994	\$185,821,380	\$28,478
Mackinac	\$1,253,814,069	\$115,548	\$1,021,569,010	\$94,704	\$935,182,941	\$84,548

Table 5 Source: Open Data Network

Impacts on property values have a direct impact on the services that municipal governments are able to provide. Public funds that can be used for special projects or departmental operations, such as a library or animal shelter, are derived from millages, which are assessed based on a property's taxable value.

Proposal A of 1994 in Michigan states that unless the property comes under new ownership, changes in taxable value exceeding 5%, or the rate of inflation, are prohibited. If there is a large increase in taxable value in a county, one might infer that there were many property sales or an increase in property development over the time period being reviewed.

It is worth noting that Mackinac County, with a population of 10,851, has nearly the same overall taxable value as Chippewa County, with its population of 36,264, due to its elevated taxable value per capital of \$115,548.



Public Input/Key Findings



From past online survey results, only 8.55% of respondents identified Government/Political Leadership as an asset, 33.05% identified it as an attribute which may limit growth, and 35.59% also identified lack of civic engagement as a threat to the region's resiliency. Others wrote in related concerns such as sprawl, income disparity, and changes in weather patterns. A tourism survey also identified greater local investment in recreational opportunities as desirable.

Past meetings with community groups identified strengths related to public life, such as the power of volunteers and collaboration. Opportunities to utilize Brownfield funding to redevelop property were also seen as strengths related to policy and planning. They saw opportunity to be had in housing, mental health services, trail development, zoning and ordinance policies, and future business-friendly policies and personnel. When discussing their aspirations for the future, participants described a variety of new housing, vibrant downtowns, reliable internet, and robust and well-maintained trails and sidewalk systems. Risks identified by the group include a lack of planning, a lack of professional leadership, resistance to change, old school mentalities, good old boys/no change mentality, man-made environmental disasters, a need for grant writers and lobbyists, and formal public support for economic development.

REDAC discussions about local policies specifically focused on permitting on State and Federal land, and local zoning and tax rates restricting agricultural uses of property such as maple syrup harvesting and hoop houses. The collaborative also discussed the need for clear communication among businesses, governments, and the public.

Recommendations & Resources

Focus Area: Policy and Planning

The Goal: Local governments and government agencies will support long- and short-term planning to facilitate investments, ensure fiscal responsibility and stewardship, and increase community prosperity.

Initiative	Description	Recent Updates
Increase educational opportunities on relevant topics to residents including land use, zoning, building codes, and other topics as they arise.		
Local and regional governments will establish clear channels of communication to residents, local organizations, and businesses—and to one another—to foster collaboration and share ideas across the region.	<p>Deepen planning understanding within the region through charrettes and in-person public engagement.</p> <p>Assist communities to better understanding virtual community engagement opportunities.</p>	<p>The Michigan Association of Planning and others provide annual training modules that are promoted across the region.</p> <p>A Citizen Planner in-person training series took place in spring of 2024 in Sault Ste. Marie.</p> <p>EUP is utilizing funds to get training in charrette development.</p>
Reduce and prevent blight.		
Rural and urban blight contribute to lower property values, environmental contamination, and loss of revenue to a community due to it becoming unattractive to visitors and new residents. Many programs and policies assist blight reduction.	<p>Revise and develop blight ordinances.</p> <p>Dedicate resources so that policies may be enforced; develop a strategy for cost-sharing of enforcement staff.</p> <p>Support the development of a county-wide land bank for the management of acquired and tax-reverted properties.</p> <p>Develop and support façade grant programs.</p> <p>Support expanded Brownfield Redevelopment Authorities.</p> <p>Initiate placemaking, support streetscape enhancement, and create special overlay district standards in downtown areas.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p> <p>Sault DDA completed a façade improvement program in 2021.</p> <p>MAC building improvements and brownfield remediation was completed in early 2024.</p> <p>EUP continues to provide assistance to local units of government who are interested in pursuing funding to address blight through the State Land Bank for the Blight Elimination program.</p>
Local processes will ensure clear communication with business and support investment into communities.		
Ensure local growers, manufacturers, and service providers can produce and supply their products and services locally and regionally through common language regulations and land use policies.	<p>Promote blue economy endeavors, maple syrup, and other agricultural product production, warehousing, manufacturing, and distribution.</p> <p>Work with large public land owners to increase our citizens' understanding of permitting on their land.</p> <p>Develop guides in common language to help various types of entrepreneurs understand the impacts of their investments.</p>	<p>No progress or update on policy language.</p>

Initiative	Description	Recent Updates
Promote environmental and community health through forward-thinking services, policies, and planning.		
Develop recycling services and improve materials management services overall	EUPRPDC is working on Materials Management Planning after updates to Part 115.	<p>Reina Recycling now accepts E-Waste recyclable materials.</p> <p>The waste-to-energy anaerobic digester in Kincheloe has been shut down temporarily.</p> <p>After forming a Materials Management Committee, EUP will work with stakeholders and representatives from around the region to attempt to meet the State’s goals for materials management, specifically looking at changes to diverting food waste, recycling, hauling, processing, and more.</p>
Development Partnership with NextCycle Michigan	<p>Create partnerships promoting recycling services and the impacts on the community.</p> <p>Educate about the State of MI’s recycling goals within our communities.</p>	Ongoing.

Metrics & Impacts

The strategies and actions outlined in previous chapters will be most effective when implementation is guided by proactive plans and policies. Progress will be safeguarded by thoughtful leadership that seeks to plan for both best- and worst-case scenarios. Achievements in this section will be measured by reviewing plan and policy updates, the number of public engagement sessions offered in the region, the total taxable value and taxable value per capita, and survey results.

Integrated Asset Management Background

A strength of the EUP is the variety of infrastructure assets within the region. The Mackinac Bridge, the International Bridge, and the Soo Locks are attractions in and of themselves, while also serving an essential logistical purpose. These critical land and marine connections are vital to domestic and international trade for the region and the country.

The Eastern Upper Peninsula Transportation Authority (EUPTA) operates local public transit. With ferry services to the three largest islands in the region (Sugar, Neebish, and Drummond), residents have a unique option to make their homes off of the mainland. EUPTA also operates bussing services between Sault Ste. Marie and DeTour; Sault Ste. Marie, Rudyard and Trout Lake; and Sault Ste. Marie and Kincheloe. In the Newberry and Curtis area, those needing public transportation can use EUPTA's Dial-a-Ride system.

The Chippewa County International Airport (CIU) provides daily flights on a commercial airline to Detroit and Minneapolis, through which one can travel to any destination of their choosing. CIU has recently constructed a new terminal, new hangars and repaved the main runway. The municipal airports located in each county allow for air travel and transportation. It is important to note that the airports located on Mackinac Island and Bois Blanc Island play a critical role in transportation to these isolated areas, particularly during the winter months. The region's four commercial harbors provide the region with access to the Great Lakes for transporting products made in the region.

Broadband

Another critical piece of infrastructure in the EUP is broadband. Since 2010, the Commission has been involved in a myriad of broadband efforts, from County Technology Action Plans developed through the Connect Michigan program, to a vertical asset inventory, and an extensive region-wide survey funded through the Michigan Regional Prosperity Initiative.

Recently, the Commission has become a contributor to the EUPConnect Collaborative, a member-driven group whose purpose is to, "facilitate the creation of a twenty-first century broadband infrastructure throughout the EUP." EUPConnect is leading the initiative to bring internet connectivity to every 911 address in the region through advocacy and education, and is also addressing digital literacy by funding MSU Extension outreach efforts.

Due to the region's low population density, the availability and accessibility of adequate broadband is a decades-old challenge, proving difficult to overcome due to the cost of construction. All of these efforts to overcome the connectivity barrier have put the region on the cusp of bridging the digital divide that has negatively affected students, and also professionals who would potentially move to the area and work remotely had their been internet availability throughout the region.



Soo Locks and Observation Deck

Transportation Asset Management (TAMC)

The Michigan Transportation Asset Management Council (TAMC) was formed under Public Act 499 of 2020 (amended by PA 338 of 2006, PA 199 of 2007, PA 257 of 2010, PA 298 of 2012, PA 506 of 2012, and PA 323, 324, 325 of 2018). TAMC continues to promote the principles of asset management statewide to enhance the productivity of investing in Michigan's roads and bridges through coordination and collaboration among state and local transportation agencies. TAMC is comprised of professionals from county road commissions, cities, county commissions, townships, regional and metropolitan planning organizations, and state transportation departments. The Council reports directly to the State Transportation Commission.

TAMC's activities include:

- Surveying and reporting the condition of roads and bridges by functional classification categories.
- Analyzing completed and planned investments in roads and bridges.
- Supporting the development of appropriate asset management methodologies.
- Providing education and training on the benefits of asset management principles and procedures.

For over a decade, the EUP Regional Planning & Development Commission has been engaged in a strategic partnership with TAMC to assist in the evaluation and collection of road data in the EUP. Through an annual work plan, the organization has leveraged state funding to implement asset management best practices in coordination with the transportation agencies across the region. As the asset management program for roads has evolved through the years, TAMC and EUP strive to provide data that can be easily accessed and tell a story.

These outlets for information include:

- Interactive maps of road and bridge conditions.
- Dashboards that identify annual metrics from finance, and road, bridge, traffic, and safety data.
- An investment reporting tool – detailed information on road and bridge projects.

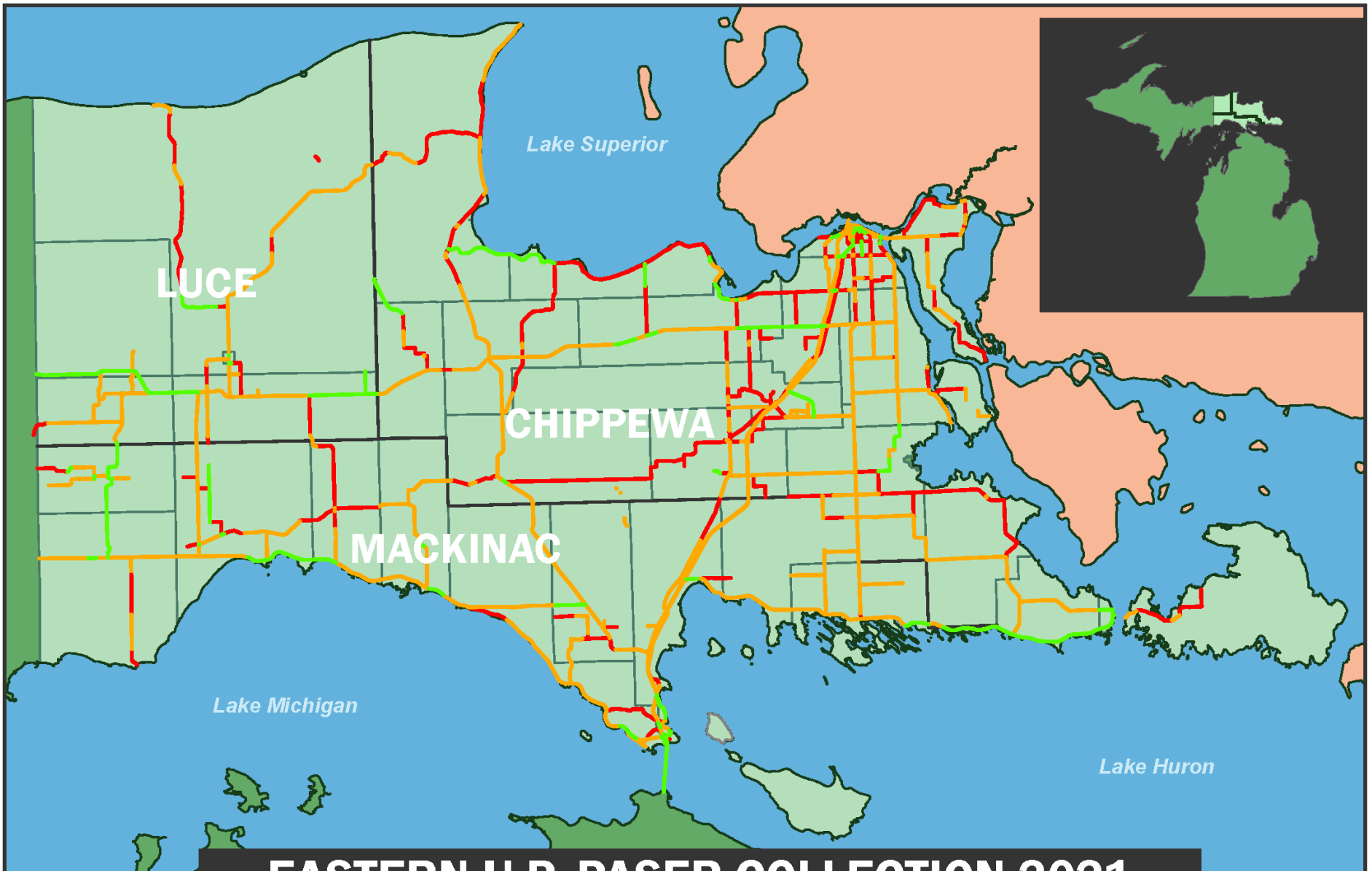
Displayed on the following pages are PASER ratings for the years 2015-2016 and 2018-19. The evaluation index is broken down into these categories that make it clear for the reader what type of maintenance is needed:

- Structural Improvements (1-4)
- Capital Preventative Maintenance (5-7)
- Routine Maintenance (8-10)
- Gravel Roads

When using these categories, 1 denotes a failing road and 10 denotes a newly-paved road.

From 2015 to 2019, the percentage of roads requiring structural improvements increased from 32% to 48%, those needing capital preventative maintenance decreased from 53% to 39%, and roads needing routine maintenance decreased from 13% to 12.5%. This clearly indicates that roads in the region are getting worse, not better, as the highest rating category (Routine Maintenance) decreased by a mere 0.5%, while the poorest category increased by 16%.

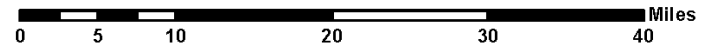
Asset management is founded on a, "mix of fixes," meaning road agencies are encouraged to evaluate their entire system and develop a matrix of solutions based on funding levels. It is fair to assume we will not see a massive overhaul of many lane miles of roads in any one year; however, it is concerning that assets in the capital preventative maintenance category are quickly deteriorating into the structural improvements category. This is no doubt exacerbated by our harsh winter weather and its significant freeze/thaw cycles, which are known to damage roads.



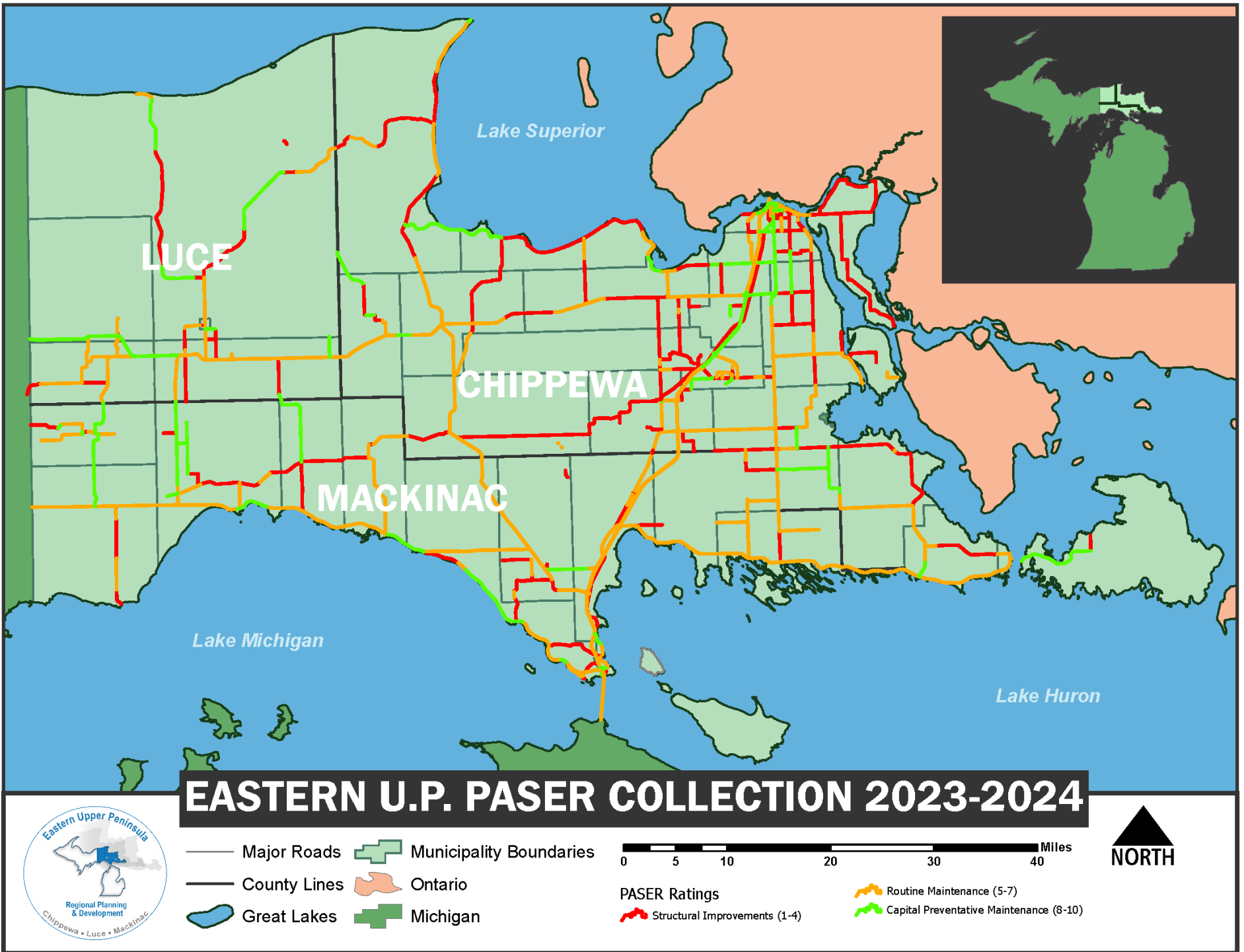
EASTERN U.P. PASER COLLECTION 2021



- Major Roads
- County Lines
- Municipality Boundaries
- Ontario
- Michigan



- PASER Ratings**
- Routine Maintenance (5-7)
 - Structural Improvements (1-4)
 - Capital Preventative Maintenance (8-10)



Michigan Infrastructure Council (MIC)

The Michigan Infrastructure Council (MIC) was created through Public Act 323 of 2018 and is charged with bringing together public and private infrastructure owners, regional representatives, finance and policy experts, and state departments to coordinate and measure infrastructure goals, safeguard investments and develop an efficient, strategic and statewide framework for integrated asset management. The mission of the MIC is to define a vision for Michigan's infrastructure that provides the foundation for public and environmental health, economic prosperity, and quality of life. To accomplish this mission, the MIC has identified several strategic priorities: Collaborate, Coordinate, Educate, Invest, and Prioritize.

Michigan Infrastructure Office's (MIO) Technical Assistance Center (TAC)

According to the Michigan Infrastructure webpage, the MIO Technical Assistance Center, "provides a suite of resources to support Michigan communities in applying for federal grant funding," in addition to providing, "technical assistance, planning, and matching grants to local units of government, planning organizations, and federally recognized Tribal nations to help draw federal infrastructure money to Michigan's communities."

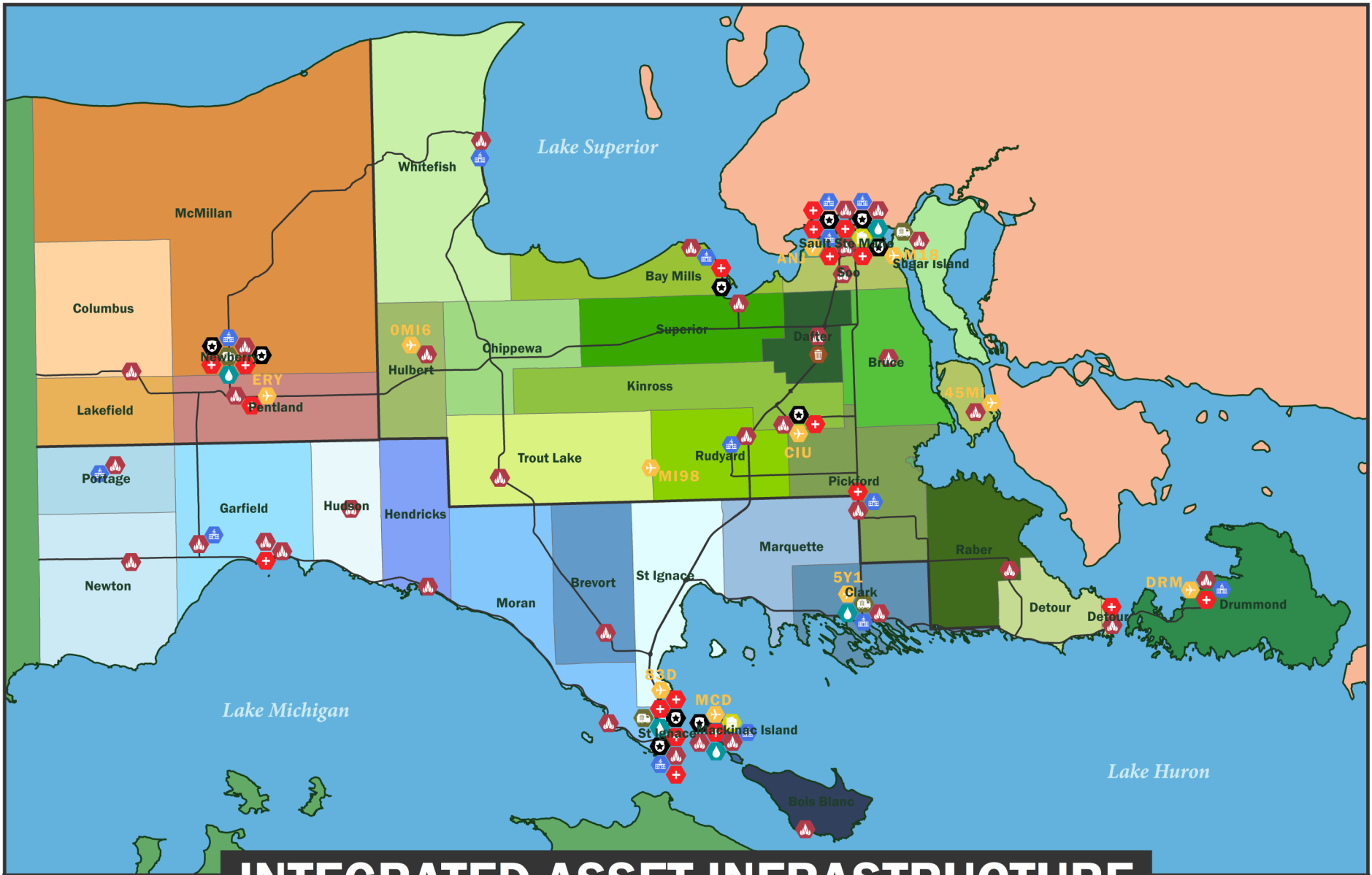
In our endeavor to improve, expand, and update our aging infrastructure, EUP and communities in our region can leverage MIO TAC to bring much-needed resources to the Eastern Upper Peninsula.

Public Input/Key Findings

The region hosts a significant number of infrastructure assets including roads, bridges, rail, marine ports, and airports. Aging staff and retirements are creating an environment with a lack of institutional knowledge of the infrastructure systems, which in many cases are old and in need of regularly scheduled maintenance, repair, and upgrades. Funding for these upgrades and infrastructure expansion is scarce; however, some progress has been made recently, particularly at the Chippewa County international Airport. Additionally, Federal, State and private investments have begun and will have enormous economic and social impact over the next several years.














The REDAC often discussed these investments, particularly the Soo Lock upgrades, and the impact it may have on housing. Discussions with community groups featured many infrastructure assets as strengths, including I-75, Mackinac Trail, 6 Mile, local Class H roads, Chippewa County international Airport, increased broadband, and general infrastructure improvements. Improving internet access was one of the most frequently discussed opportunities, and leveraging outside infrastructure investments for local gain was also mentioned by several groups. Nearly all participants aspired to widespread, reliable, and accessible internet access. The risk of not expanding internet access and of governments failing to plan well were also discussed.

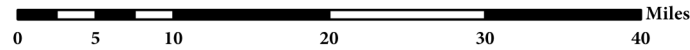
Online survey respondents generally felt that water and sewer, road/highway systems, and the railroad were advantages, while broadband, housing, and public transportation were disadvantages. Nearly 70% of respondents selected aging infrastructure as one of the biggest threats to resiliency. When asked to identify the top five things local leaders could do to improve the region for residents and business, nearly 60% selected increase access to broadband internet. Despite a majority feeling public transit, or lack thereof, is a disadvantage to the region, a third selected it as a way to improve lives of residents. Few respondents had strong feelings about the changes in infrastructure over the past three years. Nearly 60% acknowledged some improvement in internet and around 30% felt the road/highway system and pedestrian/bicycle routes had improved. More respondents felt public transportation had declined than felt it had improved.



INTEGRATED ASSET INFRASTRUCTURE



-  County Lines
-  Michigan Boundary
-  Great Lakes
-  Airports
-  Ontario
-  Composting Facilities
-  Firestations
-  Landfills
-  Libraries
-  Medical
-  Police Stations
-  Transfer Stations
-  Water/Sewer



Action Plan & Evaluation

Focus Area: Integrated Asset Management

The Goal: Through inventories, fiscal and maintenance planning, and need-identification, the region will support existing and expand road, utility, broadband, and service infrastructure.

Initiative	Description	Recent Updates
The Region will continue to maximize the resources available to maintain and enhance roads, utilizing asset management best practices.		
Local Road Agencies Will Continue to Participate in the PASER Rating and Evaluation Process Annually.	EUP annually conducts the Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating Program on paved roads, with Act 51 Road Agencies in the region.	Ongoing.
Completion of Asset Management Plans	Required local transportation agencies will develop and submit to the TAMC an Asset Management Plan.	Ongoing.
Completion of Local Road Asset Inventory	PASER data collection for all roads that do not fall within the Fed -aid guidelines of TAMC.	Ongoing
Implement New Tools to Improve Asset Inventorying	Adoption of a schedule requiring update or replacement of Field Collection equipment every two years.	New field rugged tablet for upcoming asset inventory.
Collection of All Types of Assets (Signs, Roads, Culverts, etc.)	Implementation of an internship program with the County Road Commissions to collect and inventory other asset data.	Ongoing.
Implement and advocate for Integrated Asset Management Best Practices across the Region.		
Completion of Asset Management Readiness Scale	Asset owners of road, water, sewer, fiber, electric, and natural gas infrastructure will have conducted and submitted an asset management readiness report to the MIC.	Ongoing.
Communities Will Adopt a Holistic Approach to Asset Management	Local Units of Government (LUG) and asset owners will strive to create Asset Management Policies that guide future investments and maintenance.	Ongoing.
Implement Capital Improvement Planning for Core communities	Enhanced educational offerings so elected officials and citizens can better understand the challenges today and in the future.	Ongoing.
Invest in public transit services to ensure mobility and accessibility and to stimulate economic growth, productivity, and competitiveness in the EUP.		
Improve Public Transit Offerings Across the Region.	Improved public transportation services through better mapped routes.	Ongoing.
Identification of the Need for Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT)	Development of a strategy that identifies the areas of greatest need across the Region for NEMT and specific actions to address this need.	NEMT plan completed, Jan 2022.

Metrics & Impacts

Critical infrastructure supports businesses of all sizes and is essential to meeting the needs of communities. Well-maintained roads and responsibly managed local infrastructure contribute to a higher quality of life for residents. This foundational infrastructure also forms the most basic support for economic stability and growth. Broadband and public transit also need to be accounted for as they are economic drivers that attract talent and strengthen businesses by providing access to markets and workers.

Based on community conversations and survey results, access to broadband internet is the greatest public concern. In this era of telework and remote workspaces, citizens are looking to live away from population centers and work from home or a remote location (i.e. seasonal residents).

As actions listed above are completed, CEDS updates will report on progress and outline the next steps to be taken. Additionally, the CEDS updates will track:

- The number of municipalities creating and using Capital Improvement Plans (CIPs)
- Implementation of Integrated Asset Management best practices
- Changes to public transit and broadband offerings in the region



Roads in the EUP



Roads in the EUP

Priority Projects

During late 2024, the Commission conducted its annual “Call for Priority Projects.” This request is issued via direct email to Eastern Upper Peninsula economic development organizations, including tribal business development organizations. We received a variety of projects for priority consideration in the 2025 CEDS 5-Year Plan. These projects were added to other priority projects from past years which have not yet been implemented.

The projects are scored based on the following criteria on the right.

Projects are rated according to the information provided.

New Projects

The table on the following pages contains information that was submitted for new projects in 2025. Projects submitted in prior years are also listed in this table.



Job Creation	Job Retention
1-10 = 2 pts	1-10 = 2 pts
11-25 = 4 pts	11-25 = 4 pts
26-50 = 6 pts	26-50 = 6 pts
50+ = 10 pts	50+ = 10 pts
Readiness	Private Investment
Shovel Ready = 5 pts	Yes = 5 pts
In Progress = 3 pts	No = 1 pt
Planning Phase = 1 pt	
	In CEDS Plan
Matching Funds	Yes = 5 pts
Yes = 5 pts	No = 1 pt
No = 1 pt	
	CEDS Goals
EDA Investment Priority	1 pt per Goal Included
1 pt per Priority Included (Projects submitted and scored using prior Priorities)	

EDA Priority Projects 2025

Year Listed	Project Title	Project Description	Organization	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Total Score
2022	Mackinac Marine Services	<p>The Mackinac Economic Alliance (MEA), supports the expansion of Mackinac Marine Services (MMS) in order to meet the recommendations of the Mackinac Island Transportation Master Plan, supported by the Michigan Department of Transportation.</p> <p>MEA has partnered with Fincantieri Marine Group, a global company and the largest shipbuilder in the Great Lakes Region, to develop a SMART-technology integrated passenger and cargo ferry.</p> <p>MMS recently received a \$750,000 grant from the US Department of Transportation for a 200-ton boat lift to accommodate large commercial ships.</p>	Mackinac Economic Alliance	\$30 million	MEDC, Mackinac Marine Services, Fincantieri Marine Group, MDOT, USDOT, DOE	45
2025	Binational District Development	A binational district between Sault Ste. Marie, MI and Sault Ste. Marie, ON would be created to increase trade, the sharing of talent, and the accessibility of resources.	EUP Regional Planning and Development Commission	\$250,000	EDA, Federal Funding, International Cost Sharing	44

Year Listed	Project Title	Project Description	Organization	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Total Score
2022	St. Ignace Road Reconstruction	<p>The proposed project is reconstruction of a 7.9-mile segment of St. Ignace Road from M-134 east to the end of the undeveloped gravel section.</p> <p>The proposed work includes improving the roadbed, aggregate base, drainage, and asphalt surfacing to result in a road that will be long lasting, reduce maintenance costs, and support all types of traffic including commercial traffic.</p> <p>This section of St. Ignace Road would, if reconstructed, provide a direct haul route to several acres of national forest land, private forest, sand and gravel pits, recreational opportunities, and access to the developing industries including the new Maple Sawmill.</p>	Mackinac County Road Commission	\$5,000,000	DOT grants, FLAP grants, wetlands and fisheries related grants, and others.	30
2022/2025	Bay Mills Indian Community - Kings Club Redevelopment	A mixed-use development on property located at the former Kings Club Casino that will include a convenience store, deli with indoor and outdoor seating, a business incubator space, and lakefront townhomes.	Bay Mills Indian Community	\$7,202,145	Tribal Funds and Grant Funding	29
2025	Wastewater Treatment Facility	Construction of wastewater treatment facility to service the Plantation Hill residences and other BMIC properties.	Bay Mills Indian Community	\$7,702,145	Federal Funding, Grant Funding, Tribal Funding	29
2025	Marina Expansion	Expand, upgrade and improve marina.	Bay Mills Indian Community	\$6,864,900	Tribal and Grant Funding	29
2025	Stone Mountain Port Project	A 2,000 acre site in Goetzville along the St. Marys River will be mined for its estimated 2 billion tons in aggregate reserves. Funding would be needed to develop a port on said site to transport materials. It would be the only US-owned aggregate ship loading facility on the upper Great Lakes.	DeTour EDC	\$50,000,000	Federal Funding, Private Funding	29

Year Listed	Project Title	Project Description	Organization	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Total Score
2022	Mackinac Trail Road Reconstruction	Full reconstruction of Mackinac Trail from 3 Mile to 9 Mile Road including total sub-base reconstruction, new culverts, guardrails, and road surface.	Chippewa County Road Commission	\$10,000,000	MDOT, FHWA, State, CCRC, Local, Other	28
2022	Black Point Road Paving	This project is to place hot mix asphalt on a 6,400' road segment that currently has a gravel surface and to place a hot mix asphalt overlay on a 9,700' road segment that has an existing asphalt surface that is worn and in need of rehabilitation.	Mackinac County Road Commission	\$520,000	MDOT, FHWA, Local	28
2022	MDOT Project— Ashmun Bridge to Portage	Project includes cold milling, hot mix asphalt resurfacing, ADA ramp reconstructions, and pavement markings.	City of Sault Ste. Marie, MI	\$45,000	MDOT, City	28
2022	Drinking Water Projects	Water main replacement or relining in these locations as the pipes have less than ideal flow and are critical to our city's drinking water infrastructure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Riverside Drive Court Street Crossing • Meridian (W Portage) Crossing • E Spruce St Crossing • Peck and Meridian/E Portage Crossing 	City of Sault Ste. Marie, MI	\$3,900,000	EGLE SRP Loans and Grants	27
2022	3 Mile Road Reconstruction and Paving	3.0 miles of road reconstruction including sand fill, aggregate base, asphalt paving, slope and ditch restoration, traffic control, and pavement marking.	Mackinac County Road Commission	\$700,000	MDOT, FHWA, Local	27
2022	New Building Construction	Construction of a new 11,000SF Flight Line Shipping and Warehouse Terminal building.	Chippewa County EDC	\$4,400,000	EDA, MEDC, Local, Private	26

Year Listed	Project Title	Project Description	Organization	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Total Score
2022	Charles Moran Road Paving	Place hot mix asphalt on a 2.72-mile segment of Charles Moran Road that currently has a gravel surface and crush, reshape, and place hot mix asphalt on a 1.27 mile segment of Charles Moran Road that currently has a paved surface that is in very poor condition and needs to be rehabilitated.	Mackinac County Road Commission	\$813,000	MDOT, FHWA, Local	26
2022	Bridge Bundling City of SSM	To provide preventative maintenance to six (6) bridges within the City limits: W. Portage Ave, Johnston Street, Spruce Street, Fort Street, Riverside Drive, Bingham Avenue	City of Sault Ste. Marie, MI	\$750,000	MDOT Grant Pending with City Match	26
2022	Townline Road Paving	Reconstruct and place hot mix asphalt on a 3-mile segment of Townline Road.	Mackinac County Road Commission	\$400,000	MDOT, FHWA, Local	25
2022	MDOT Project - Ashmun, 3 Mile Road, I-75 B. Spur	MDOT project, in partnership with the city, to address infrastructure improvements within city limits during their road reconstruction project.	City of Sault Ste. Marie, MI	\$800,000	MDOT, City	25

Year Listed	Project Title	Project Description	Organization	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Total Score
2022	Mackinac Marine Tech Center	The Mackinac Economic Alliance (MEA) proposes a new Mackinac marine tech center as part of its plans for the region. Building upon the Great Lakes Boat Building School's success with EDA funding for boat building and education training, the next phase would include an additional Mackinac marine tech center for research development and training for improved marine fleet technology, operations, efficiency, and safety.	Mackinac Economic Alliance	\$20,000,000	MEDC, Local Bonding	24
2022	Bay Mills Indian Community Spirit Stone Trail	The Bay Mills Indian Community seeks to continue the work on the Spirit Stone Trail. About a mile left of the project has yet to be completed. In addition to completing the main section of the trail, BMIC would like to add other access points to and from the trail. The trail is essential for the community, tourists, and general population as it provides the opportunity to increase outdoor exercise; thereby, assisting in decreasing multiple health risk factors.	Bay Mills Indian Community	\$60,000	None at this time.	24

Year Listed	Project Title	Project Description	Organization	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Total Score
2022	Port Dolomite Freight Expansion	MEA proposes the expansion and dredging of Port Dolomite, which is currently limited to 650-foot freighters, to accommodate up to 1,000-foot freighters. Expansion of the mining port and addition of cargo container loading would allow for more efficient shipping and additional commerce opportunities. This expansion of the Port, with the addition of cargo container loading and freight capacity, would benefit Maple Hardwoods and other potential shippers. MEA is partnering with Maple Hardwoods, a local company, by investing in containerization facilities for Maple Hardwoods allowing for overseas shipping and facilitating international trade.	Mackinac Economic Alliance	\$5,000,000	MDOT, MEDC, Private, Local, Other	23
2025	Chippewa Landing Redevelopment	Development on the Back Bay that will include a small marina with Outdoor Outfitters with small restaurant, and cabin rentals.	Bay Mills Indian Community	\$9,000,000	Tribal and Grant Funding	23
2025	Supportive Housing—Seniors and Emergency Homes	Chippewa-Luce-Mackinac Community Action Agency is looking to build senior housing in Newberry and emergency housing in the EUP.	CLM Community Action Agency	Unknown	MSHDA	22
2025	W 14th Avenue Extension	W 14th Avenue will be extended through the Sault Air Industrial Park to prepare lots 21 and 22, that are currently land locked, for development.	Sault Ste. Marie EDC	\$2,000,000	Federal Grants, MEDC	22
2025	Data and Command and Control Center	Description: Constructing an advanced data command and control center to provide centralized monitoring, control, and coordination of various operations.	Chippewa County EDC	\$2,500,000	Federal Funding	22
2022	Building Renovations	Renovations to industrial building #435 to include Heating/Roofing/Insulation/Lighting improvements and more. Converting space to be a command-and-control center for the Michigan Launch Initiative.	Chippewa County EDC	\$10,000,000	EDA, MEDC, MDOT, MEO, Private, Other	22

Year Listed	Project Title	Project Description	Organization	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Total Score
2022	Bay Mills Indian Community - Information Technology Renovation and Expansion	Expansion of BMIC Information Technology Department. As the community has grown, so has our need for IT. The current IT building is insufficient to fulfill all the duties that are required of it. Additionally, a fire in mid-2022 showed the critical need for upgrades and repairs.	Bay Mills Indian Community	\$7,800,000	Tribal Funds and Grant Funds	22

Year Listed	Project Title	Project Description	Organization	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Total Score
2022	Bay Mills Indian Community - Continued EV Charging	The Bay Mills Indian Community would like to work towards the continuance of developing EV Chargers and Charging Stations and being able to offer these to the community and those traveling providers an opportunity for new patronage to our enterprises. Increasing these opportunities shows that BMIC is dedicated to providing alternatives to gas and diesel.	Bay Mills Indian Community	\$1,000,000	Tribal Funded and Grant Funded	22
2022	Bay Mills Indian Community - Brimley Land Redevelopment	The Bay Mills Indian Community has recently acquired land in uptown Brimley, Michigan. This land will be redeveloped as BMIC increases offerings to the community. The area has been in the progress of being cleaned up.	Bay Mills Indian Community	\$900,000	Tribal Funds	22
2025	Kincheloe Rail Infrastructure Upgrades	Replacing over 6,000 linear feet of aging 80 lb rail to facilitate industrial growth in the Chippewa County Industrial Park. In 2023, \$550,000 was received from MDOT rail that allowed for half of the project to be completed.	Chippewa County EDC	\$538,100	Federal Funding, MDOT	21
2022	Resurfacing Industrial Park Roadways	Multiple roadway construction is needed to streets within the County Industrial Park. Repairs have been needed for several years.	Chippewa County EDC	\$1,500,000	EDA, MEDC, MDOT	21
2022	DeTour Village Informational and Welcome Signage	A permanent sign announcing all the local businesses, Government offices, churches, etc. to welcome visitors and inform them of Detour's entities. Attract future private investment in the form of new business opportunities, lower cost housing development, as well as increased awareness of local businesses.	DeTour Area EDC	\$20,000	Grants, EDC Budget Funds, Private Investment	21
2022	5th Generation Hangar	Constructing a state-of-the-art hangar for fifth-generation fighter jets (like the F-35) to address the needs of military and local development opportunities.	Chippewa County EDC	\$29,000,000	FAA, MDOT, FHWA, Other	20

Year Listed	Project Title	Project Description	Organization	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Total Score
2022	Bay Mills Indian Community - Community Expansion Projects	The Bay Mills Indian Community proposes work to expand various community projects. These projects range in size and will benefit the community, those around it, and the area.	Bay Mills Indian Community	\$3,000,000	Tribal Funded	20
2025	Brimley Mixed Use Facility	A mixed-use development on property located on Michigan State Highway 221 (Main Street) that will include retail space for a franchise business, laundromat, apartments, and space for future retail development.	Bay Mills Indian Community	\$13,000,000	Tribal and Grant funding	20
2025	Broadband Development	Develop, expand and implement broadband availability and speed through fiber and wireless services by working with partners and increasing in-house capabilities.	Bay Mills Indian Community	\$8,000,000	Tribal and Grant Funding	20
2025	Housing Development	Continue to address the region's housing shortage through development of various housing options including apartments, elder housing, and single-family homes.	Bay Mills Indian Community	\$9,709,861	Tribal and Grant Funding	19
2025	Long-Term Care Facility	Construct a long-term care facility to address the needs of BMIC's aging population and improve outcomes.	Bay Mills Indian Community	\$17,000,000	Tribal and Grant Funding	18

Year Listed	Project Title	Project Description	Organization	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Total Score
2021	Sand Port Expansion and Dredging	Expansion and dredging of Sand Port and Port Dolomite would accommodate up to 1,000-foot freighters, which is currently limited to 650 feet freighters. Larger freighters would allow for more efficient and cost-effective shipping for the Sand Products and Carmeuse mining operations which, in turn, would allow for continued mine expansion and creation of further well-paying jobs. Furthermore, the addition of cargo container capabilities at Port Dolomite will allow for area manufactures like Maple Hardwoods Inc. to more easily ship their product and access global markets.	Mackinac Economic Alliance	\$10,200,000	USDOT, MDOT, FHWA, State, Local, Private	17
2022/2025	Bay Mills Indian Community - Renewable Deployment	Development and Implementation of large-scale solar energy plant.	Bay Mills Indian Community	\$26,000,000	Federal funding	17
2022	DPW—Lift Station Replacements	Replace seven (7) lift stations that are past their useful life. Most are over 30 years old.	Clark Township	\$530,000	None	16
2022	Airport Runway Repairs/ Additional Hangars/Fencing	Airport runway is in need of overband crack sealing as well as considering widening the runway and also the installation of fencing around the airport.	Clark Township	Unknown	Unknown	16
2025	Plantation Hill Roads	Improvements and paving to roads in BMIC's residential community.	Bay Mills Indian Community	\$1,000,000	Tribal Funding through BIA	16

Year Listed	Project Title	Project Description	Organization	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Total Score
2022	Mackinac Island Transportation Authority - Coal Dock	The City of Mackinac Island Transportation Authority is formed for the purpose of providing public transportation services, both within and outside of the Transportation Authority's jurisdictional boundaries, and has acquired the Mackinac Island coal dock, which requires substantial repairs and upgrades. This project will involve the reconstruction of the coal dock for future use.	Mackinac Economic Alliance	\$1,500,000	MARAD, DOT, State, Local, Private, Other	15
2025	Air Operations Center	Establishing an Air Operations Center at Chippewa County International Airport through the blending of existing and advanced technologies.	Chippewa County EDC	\$2,620,121	Federal Funding	15
2022	Hangar 428 Renovations	The EDC is seeking funds to renovate hangar #428 a 28,000SF airport hangar to increase available space at the airport. Renovations to include heating, lighting, and insulation.	Chippewa County EDC	\$3,000,000	EDA, MEDC, Private, Other	12
2025	Small Modular Reactor (SMR) Feasibility Study	Perform an in-depth study of the feasibility of placing an SMR in the EUP.	Chippewa County EDC	\$2,000,000	Federal Funding	11
2022	Acquisition and Renovation of Building #440	Renovations to include a new roof, heating, lighting, and insulation.	Chippewa County EDC	\$8,000,000	EDA, MEDC, Private, Other	11

Appendices

Appendix A: Data Sources

United States Census Bureau—American Community Survey

<https://data.census.gov/>

Headwaters Economics

<https://headwaterseconomics.org>

MI School Data

<https://mischoolsdata.org>

State of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula Career Outlook Through 2030

https://www.michigan.gov/mcda/-/media/Project/Websites/mcda/reports/2023/Region1_CareerOutlook_2030.pdf

Lake Superior State University

<https://lssu.edu>

Lightcast Economy Overview—3 Michigan Counties—Chippewa, Luce, Mackinac

MI Dept. of Technology, Management, and Budget

<https://www.michigan.gov/dtmb>

National Economic Resilience Data Explorer (NERDE)

<https://nerde.anl.gov/>

Economic Development Capacity Index

<https://disgeoportal.egs.anl.gov/EDCI/?page=Home>

American Communities Project

<https://www.americancommunities.org/#map>

United for ALICE

<https://www.unitedforalice.org/county-reports/michigan>

County Health Rankings & Roadmaps

<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>

U.P. Community Health Needs Assessment

<https://www.wupdhd.org/community-health-needs-assessment/>

USDA Census of Agriculture

<https://www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus/>

Zillow Home Value Index

<https://www.zillow.com/research/data/>

H+T Index

<https://htaindex.cnt.org/>

MEDC

<https://www.michiganbusiness.org/>

Open Data Network

<https://www.opendatanetwork.com/>

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics—Inflation Calculator

https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm

The Opportunity Project

<https://opportunity.census.gov/data/>

StatsAmerica

<https://www.statsamerica.org/Default.aspx>

Data USA

<https://datausa.io/>

MEDC Site Selector Tool

<https://siteselection.michiganbusiness.org/index.html>

EUP Regional Planning & Development Commission

<https://www.eup-planning.org/>

Appendix B: SOAR Analysis and Surveys

The goals, strategies, and objectives in our present CEDS were created using past survey results and SOAR analyses.

Strengths

- Volunteers
- Close Community
- Geographic location--Great Lakes
- Natural Resources
- Free of Natural Disasters
- Collaboration
- Sense of Community
- Natural Beauty
- Water
- Beautiful geography
- Grants available to schools
- Manufacturing Day and Vocational Trades Day
- CTE-Business partnerships
- STEM Advisory Committee
- CTE program opportunities
- CFRE building under construction--Great for programming for community
- EUPISD and partnerships across education entities in region
- Willingness to cooperate and collaborate
- Regional community support
- Cooperative agreements between partners--City-Tribe-County-Hospital-EDC
- Community involvement
- Caring and friendly community
- International location
- EDC
- Locally owned hospital
- Lake Superior State University
- High Quality of Life with no commute time
- Trails
- Outdoor recreation
- Great Lakes
- Transportation (Locks)
- Natural Resources
- A lot of Caring people for youth and community
- Resilient people
- Hiking/outdoor groups
- Outdoor recreation
- Tobacco Free Parks
- Alberta House
- Wicked Sister
- The Foundry
- Bird's Eye and Superior Cafe
- 1668 Winery, local food
- Woods & water
- Natural beauty
- Safety, predictability, and quiet for a young family
- School extra curriculars are well supported by the community
- School is well supported by the community --they always pass their millage
- Seven churches support the local foodbank and related programs which include classes on everything from finance to knitting
- Golf Course
- Zoo
- World-class snowmobile museum
- State land--hunting and camping opportunities
- Location--At the top of the lake
- Events--July 4; Snowmobile shows
- Hiawatha Sportsmen's Club
- Snowmobile trail--provides support for businesses
- Marina and break wall in Naubinway
- Iron Belle pathway, expected to grow
- Shoreline views
- US-2 Scenic Byway
- Strong desire to improve communities--passion and energy
- Work ethics
- Grit
- Lake Superior State University and Bay Mills Community College
- EUP high schools each provide at least two CTE program options for students
- CTE Programs to ladder programs
- Collaboration between schools and employers
- Higher high school graduation rates
- Government jobs with good pay
- Cold weather testing
- Local food businesses
- Retail/Tourist Industry
- A variety of businesses
- Current unemployment rate--4.5%
- Employment opportunities increasing
- Completed TLS study to investigate opportunities
- I-75, Mackinac Trail, 6 Mile--Good shape
- Reliable, Multi-Model Highway System
- Access to area via I-75 and Airport
- International airport
- Foreign trade zone
- Broadband increasing
- Outdoor recreation resources
- Construction--Bay Mills Medical Center being built
- Land and Buildings
- Agricultural industry
- Natural Resources

Strengths

- Senior contributions
- Preferred lifestyle--Two techs wanted to be in this area as it is peaceful with less stress and traffic, and recreation opportunities
- People care about the community
- Zoning is not an obstacle to business expansion
- Shovel-ready sites
- Brownfield board
- Class H Road
- Village can generate power which is helpful to businesses
- High speed internet available
- Downtown--Beautifully maintained
- Community Pride with a focus on tradition
- Low cost of living
- Trail town and Pure Michigan Trails
- Trails including 200 miles of snow trails and 1000 ATV ORV trails
- Unique attractions including Falls, Oswalds Bear Ranch and lighthouse
- Retirees with experience
- Great public sector employers--Starline, Sheplers, Carmeuse, Graymont, Hospitals
- Do not need to focus on attracting box stores
- Pipeline/tunnel
- Universities--North Central, Tech, NMU, & LSSU
- St. Ignace--"Gateway to the UP"
- Communities seen as family-friendly, low crime rate
- Infrastructure improving in St. Ignace and general area
- Momentum--We have things going and getting stronger
- EUP has cool environmental, cultural and natural assets
- Rich in history
- Abundant, productive forest
- Wide, open spaces with room to grow
- Eco Tourism is growing
- Great Lakes (Shoreline, largest fresh H2O, becoming more important)
- Natural setting which is attractive to people
- Natural Resources--Clean, Pure, Intact
- CVBs help build communities
- Mixed support from local municipalities
- Community supports business
- Small population creates more collaboration in the industry
- Supports the region's economy
- Experience rooted in the area
- Opportunity for creativity in tourism businesses
- New businesses and jobs occurring due to the tourism industry
- Opportunity for business growth--flexible, lower cost land, etc.
- Tourism is a large workforce in the area that contributes to economy and tax base
- Trails--Water & Land
- Safe area
- Four seasons with natural beauty
- Unlimited natural resources
- Bi-National Partners--Discover Ontario, Brand USA, Destination Canada
- Multiple Organizations Promote the Area--Great Waters, Byways, CVBs
- Events--Downtown music, art shows, etc.
- Great Marina
- Outdoor Activities--Snowmobiles, ATV, Beginning of the biggest trail system, camping, hiking, etc.
- Waterfront
- History
- More quaint; Slower pace
- The Alberta House
- Wicked Sister
- The Foundry
- Bird's Eye and Superior Café
- 1668 winery, local food
- Woods & Water
- Natural beauty
- Safety, predictability, and quiet for a young family

Opportunities

- Better Internet to allow for remote work industry
- Trail development & recreation signage
- Update store fronts/merchandise products
- Development Opportunities
- Eco Toursim
- Year-Round Jobs
- Housing
- More can be done to tell about St. Ignace History--Father Marquette was here (1670) and a small park is named after him
- Career and college exploration between CTE and STEM connections and collaboration
- Career & college exploration between CTE and STEM connections and collaboration
- Increase partnerships with region for training and sharing ideas to improve region
- Mental health services
- Dual enrollment with college
- Current broadband project
- Educating students for high wage, high demand careers
- Expand enrichment course at LSSU
- LSSU is working to increase summer course offerings
- CTE millage support
- Business purchasing
- Space to grow
- Increase tourism
- Trades programs
- Lake Superior State University
- Capacity for Labor
- Expand trail system (Community to Community)
- Rotary Park amenities
- Downtown Festivals
- Soo Locks and construction
- Increase ecotourism
- Partner with Sault Ontario
- Outdoor recreation
- Policy decisions based on public well-being rather than complaints
- Build more housing
- Clear sidewalks after 1500
- Collaborate on trail development
- Snow removal for sidewalks
- Collaborate on trail development
- Addiction Treatment--Local & Transportation
- More innovation and partnership in local healthcare
- Movie theater--could be a redevelopment opportunity
- Coordination of when businesses are closed to maintain services
- More hotel rooms for big events
- School attracts families--welding and wood shop
- Empty buildings and available real estate
- New mill at Graymont/Trout Lake area
- Grow school
- Top of the Lake
- Marina
- Return North Program (Retain Area Youth)
- Increase CTE programs for youth and adults
- Lake Superior State University
- Technology including software
- Niche employers with ability to attract staff
- Flexible work schedule for retirees
- Rediscover talent working in other areas (result of retirement)
- Young professional opportunities
- Identify gaps in services, businesses, and start-ups
- Businesses can bring workforce
- Elevate wages and incomes
- Underutilized talent and infrastructure
- Increase in job openings
- Number of job openings increased (4000 in UP--Starting wage \$15.85)
- Develop natural resources industry (value-added forest and food/agriculture manufacturing)
- Bi-National investment
- Border community
- Tourism
- Aerospace
- International Airport
- Foreign Trade Zone
- LSSU Campus Housing Development
- Construction of Bay Mills Medical Center
- CFRE
- Line 5 Tunnel
- Soo Locks
- Recreation
- Quality, Family-Friendly Life
- Keep seniors engaged: When someone retires/moves, the institutional knowledge is gone--How do we keep it?
- Invest UP meetings are UP-Wide, annually: Lets businesses know they are not alone with issues, generate creative ideas, etc...
- Invest UP -- Meetings here recently -- Could be really driven, get together, conversations, brainstorming, with energizing speakers such as Zig Zigler, etc...
- People come to vacation/retreat--How do we get them to invest?
- Only limited to our imagination--How do we share what we have here

Opportunities

- Promote German & Finnish Roots--Business idea
- Improve policies--Zoning and Ordinance
- Improve business--Friendliness of policy and municipal personnel
- Fiber internet available downtown and industrial park
- Newberry is ready to be a springboard for potential niche businesses
- Property available downtown for businesses
- Renaissance-Ready
- Development ready sites
- Transient/Short-term housing
- CTE/Adult Ed Opportunities--Electricians, Construction, Plumbing, IT
- Growth of jobs related to natural gas/pipeline
- Growth in contracting jobs
- Relatively low property values--can be an opportunity
- Temporary investment will stick
- Opportunities to move here based on major investments
- Opportunities to buy businesses
- "Know Before You Go!"--Especially cross border (Sleds/ATVs, items that can go across bridge)
- New/Social Media Campaigns
- Housing
- Retirees can run seasonal businesses
- ATV/ORV--Growing in popularity; Need a map of all trails
- Michigan playground
- Interest specific influencer highlighting night life
- Ale Trail/Brew Trail--Can enhance culinary tourism
- Continue business growth and creativity
- Create partnerships
- Cooking groups
- Tour Guide Business
- Recreation Activities
- Great Lakes and Several Inland Lakes
- Fishing & Hunting
- Hiking & Biking
- ATV & Snowmobile Trailhead
- Trails-Including North Country Trail, Iron Belle
- Outdoor lifestyle
- More innovation and partnership in local healthcare
- "We need a movie theater"- a small movie house, could be a redevelopment opportunity

Aspirations

- Utilize waterfront
- Multi-Use Recreation Pathway
- Thriving downtown
- Art Council
- Fresh Downtown Businesses
- Healthy Citizens
- Demographics
- Internet and Electric Choices
- More Chain Stores
- Swimming pool--School open
- Employers that care about employees
- Community College
- Year-Round Jobs
- New ideas/blood
- Develop housing (Possibly on bluff overlooking Great Lakes)
- Vocational Training/Schools
- Reliable Internet
- Update Schools and Personnel
- Less Seasonality
- Mental health services
- Employment opportunities beyond service industry
- Community investment in K-12 education --time, money, expertise, opportunities, etc.
- Economic growth
- Equal access to technology
- Affordable housing
- High paying jobs
- Build community infrastructure
- More work-based learning opportunities
- Free, reliable WIFI for everyone in region
- Recreational facility
- Improve cellular coverage
- Broadband internet
- High paying jobs
- Youth activities
- Greater investment in youth/young families
- College town promotion: "Make Sault, MI a

college town rather than a town with a college in it"

- Completion of Soo Locks
- Better fiber optics
- Skilled trades laborer availability
- Community providing jobs supporting families
- Retain residents
- Population Growth
- Economic strength
- Thriving businesses
- Have opportunities for people to continue their education and training here
- Path from Rotary Part to Brimley State Park
- Clear bike lanes during winter
- Good and plentiful housing options
- Complete sidewalk network--Route plan for snow removal for access to schools for kids
- More development
- Canal trail with businesses around it
- Developed waterfront available to the public and businesses
- Thriving economy
- Be more of a destination--"Let's spend the day in the Soo!"
- More development
- People investing in the waterfront
- Philanthropy
- More going on the waterfront
- Money from the new locks project needs to be invested smartly--cash will come in, needs to support an infrastructure that can support future growth and further investment in the Soo.
- Access to internet and cell service
- Classes after hours for community continuing education
- Technology in schools
- Make these communities places to stop

- Photo Op/Monument for the Top of the Lake
- Just like it is, with a few more stores
- More restaurants
- Need grocery store
- Vibrancy
- Fill vacant structures
- Better understanding of housing needs and deficiencies in regard to economic development
- Affordable (Market Rate) Quality Housing
- Higher quality hospitality/customer service
- Stop exporting area youth
- Growth of CTE/University collaboration --Ladder opportunities
- Continue/Improve collaboration
- Attract value-added forest product or food product businesses
- Increase economy
- Improve County, City & Local Roads
- Maintain natural resources--Stay clean and quiet
- Integrated asset management
- Full access to broadband/cell service
- Employers be flexible with wage and benefits
- Become a wage/benefit leader in USA
- Increase employment
- Quality over quantity jobs
- Training is important
- People be willing to give back to community
- "Growing" people with training to become an important part of the community

Aspirations

- Ensure that the people who want to move here have the economic opportunity to make it a reality
- Attract people who love the UP to the area
- Support for technology-based local school
- Village Police Force
- Have multiple small businesses downtown
- Keep a usable downtown
- Keep the unique, small-town feel
- Inside activities for kids such as bowling alley
- Federal loan forgiveness for bonds
- More businesses
- Promote vocational schools in elementary and middle school
- College kids coming home to area to work in summer
- Large boat repair business
- Stronger middle class (Gap between haves and have nots)
- Community/Movie Theater--Mackinac County
- Entrepreneurial networking organizations --regional and local
- RV/Snowmobile Repair near St. Ignace
- Cultural center downtown
- Cultural desire for economic prospects
- A university in Mackinac County
- Jobs for everyone who wants
- Competitive consumer opportunities-- Electric, Cell, TV, Internet
- Broadband internet
- Affordable housing (tiny houses) (Entry-level houses) (smaller lot sizes)
- Downtown housing
- Placemaking--Consistent and throughout community
- Increase population
- Define market & target branding strategies and efforts
- Ambassador Program--Trail local employees about the area
- CVB training/education for business
- Local board training & involvement
- Grow quiet/unplugged tourism
- Using old to grow the new
- Revitalize downtowns--Grow a stable economic base
- Bring back people that have moved from the area
- Attract young people and families to area
- Strengthen culinary tourism
- Regional trails wayfinding project
- Complete Brew Trail
- Adequate, good quality, affordable, single-family housing
- Grow a "shoulder" season
- Increase broadband
- Move the marina
- Capitalize on recreational opportunities
- Rent bikes
- Better use of waterfront
- Have things for young people and kids to do
- Uniform Look--Keep consistent, historic feel
- Develop waterside of St. Ignace
- Keep Tourism Rolling--Improve the look of St. Ignace--flowers, benches, etc.--Make People want to hang out
- Increase Retail
- Increase tourism to same as Mackinac City (Same amenities available)
- More development
- Canal trail with businesses around it
- Developed waterfront available to the public and businesses
- Thriving economy
- Be more of a destination- "Let's spend the day in the Soo!"
- More development
- People investing in the waterfront
- Philanthropy
- More going on on the waterfront
- The money from the new locks project needs to be invested smartly- cash will come in, needs to support an infrastructure that can support future growth and further investment in the Soo.

Risks

- Fewer home owners
- Fewer families
- Flight of young people
- Stagnant wages
- Lack of professional leadership
- Seasonality of region
- Lack of internet
- Change the old though process--Resistance to change
- "Population vs will store make it"
- Funding
- Monetary investment
- Declining population
- Lack of Planning
- Lack of Investors/Developers
- Income Restrictions
- Need to have community business owner open to change--Old school good old boy mentality
- Continued "brain drain" of youth without economic expansion
- Sustain growth
- Cost of developing partnerships
- Distance
- Declining enrollment of families
- Lack of funds
- Getting community buy-in across region
- Plummeting populations especially in small towns like Paradise
- Lack of funding/transportation to access medical care
- Enbridge gas line polluting Great Lakes
- "No Change" mentality
- Financially sustainable
- Skilled Trades
- Talent Gap
- Population decreasing
- Too much low income housing
- Rural area
- Lack of educated workforce
- Out-migration of young people
- Bad image regarding remoteness and weather
- Other communities providing alternatives to job creators/employees
- Children can't use sidewalks in winter
- Small housing supply
- Balance maintaining character and growth
- Lack of hire-able people
- Prison or hospital closures
- Schools consolidating/shrinking
- Lodging for seasonal help
- Need year-round jobs
- Season employment--accustomed to it/ reliance on unemployment
- Workforce--Lack of employees prevents businesses from opening or growing
- Need volunteers to keep organizations going
- Loss of RPI funding affects regional programs--Need for steady, yearly funding base
- Over emphasis to students going to college (and CORE curriculum) rather than skilled trades
- Broadband access/availability
- Housing needed
- Airports underutilized
- Inaccurate data available
- Opiod/drug use
- Youth leaving the area
- Work Ethics
- Need of employability skills--Youth and Adults
- Untrained/unmotivated workforce
- Softening of forest product commodity markets (e.g. hardwood lumber, siding, etc.)
- Loss of Family/Small Farms
- Season employment
- Employers be flexible with wage and benefits
- Projects such as Soo Locks hiring workforce from current employers
- Need of employees to increase production
- Smaller populations (rural areas) impact workforce
- Decline in population & wages
- Talent retention
- Low unemployment rate
- CTE skills needed
- Lack of trained employees/job seekers
- People are busy in day-to-day business--They need to intentionally try to connect, learn and grow.
- Having resources available to be a connector
- "Investing in a business is a risk"
- Finding qualified employees
- Family Housing--Hard to find rentals
- Aging population
- Need potential employees that can pass a drug test
- Limited cell coverage in the North
- Lack of local support--school system and unmaintained buildings
- Elected officials issues
- Customer service
- Prison or hospital closure
- Cell coverage
- Geographic isolation

Risks

- Seasonal unemployment
- Not enough jobs that pay a living wage
- Income disparity
- Broad economic recession hurts tourism and community
- Coordinate regional efforts
- Dwindling population
- Aging population
- Declining enrollment in schools
- Information Gathering
- Housing--Minimal Housing Inventory
- Need of Employment
- Waterside Parking Lots
- School system--Needs a local consensus of goals, failed to prepare students for college, needs revamping, etc... (questioned if the ISD can do anything to support failing school systems)
- Need grant writers/lobbyists
- County needs to formalize committees for economic development
- County pulls funding
- Rising Water Levels
- Balance maintaining character and growth
- Lack of hireable people
- Lack of guest/customer service training
- Broadband--Need reliable internet to process credit cards
- Low population
- Resources--Staff, Volunteers, Money
- Workforce
- Housing
- Aging population
- Empty buildings
- Community controversies
- Deteriorating High School and too big of building

Surveys

Four surveys were circulated; one general survey focused on workforce and development, one survey specific to education in the region, and another specific to tourism. Lastly, attendees at the Eastern Upper Peninsula Food Summit responded to open-ended questions. The results of these surveys can be found here: [EUP Regional Planning & Development Commission Board & REDAC Information | Eastern UP Regional Planning and Development Commission](http://www.eup-planning.org/eup-regional-planning-development-commission-board-redac-information) (www.eup-planning.org/eup-regional-planning-development-commission-board-redac-information).

Appendix C: REDAC Membership

The Regional Economic Development Advisory Collaborative, or REDAC, is comprised of a collection of experts from throughout the region whose combined knowledge and experience was used to address and identify viable solutions for various community and economic issues facing the Eastern Upper Peninsula—and the counties and municipalities within.

Regional Economic Development Advisory Collaborative (REDAC) - 2025	
Name	Agency/Organization
Amy Bergland	Invest UP
Amy Kraatz	Michigan LEO-Construction, Industry & Business
Angie McArthur	EUPISD
Aubrey Moore	Senator Peter's Office
Bill Henry	Consolidated Community School Services
Brad Neumann	MSU Extension
Brian Chapman	Sault Ste. Marie EDC; City of Sault Ste. Marie
Brianna Gunka	BMIC
Chris Olson	Chippewa County EDC
Dan Doyle	Sault Tribe EDC
David Goudreau	Northern Wings Repair
Dean Reid	MEA
Diane Durance	Headwaters North
Don Gerrie	USDA
Donna LaCourt	MDARD
Dotty LaJoye	CUPPAD
Erica Newland	LSSU Office of Sponsored Programs
George Kinsella	EcoMarine
Jeremy Hosking	Gov. Whitmer's UP Representative
Jerry Wuorenmaa	WUPPDR

Regional Economic Development Advisory Collaborative (REDAC) - 2025

Name	Agency/Organization
Joe Turpin	Sault Ontario EDC
Jordan Harris	Sault Area Schools
Karen Sprague	BMIC
Kathy Thomas	Chippewa County EDC
Kendal Kettle	State of Michigan--Vet. Employment Rep.
Kristi Dahlstrom	MDNR
Lee Shirey	USEDA
Leo Isleib	MEDC
Linda Hoath	SSM CVB
Lindsey Clark	MEDC - Community Development
Mariah Goos	SBDC
Mark Clymer	Clark Township
Marty Fittante	Invest UP
Matt McCauley	MEDC
Michelle Walk	Mackinac State Historic Parks
Mike Heise	Cloverland Electric
Nikki Radke	SSM EDC
Nikki Storey	Great Lakes Boat Building School
Patricia Jones	EUPISD
Paul Guindon	Sault Tribe Thrive
Paula Badour	Clark Township
Peter Petainen	International Bridge Authority
Richard Timmer	Private
Ryan Soucy	CUPPAD
Scott Marshall	City of St. Ignace

Regional Economic Development Advisory Collaborative (REDAC) - 2025

Name	Agency/Organization
Stacy Welling Haughey	MDNR
Stephanie Hopkin	Destination Northern Ontario
Susan Sliger	My Michigan Health
Tammy Henry	Luce County EDC
Terri Hill	UP Michigan Works
Tony Haller	Sault Area Chamber of Commerce
Vicki Schwab	MEDC
Vince Bevins	MDOT

Appendix D: Recent and Upcoming EDA Investments in the EUP

Lake Superior State University—Center for Freshwater Research and Education (CFRE)
\$950,000—EDA EAA Grant (CARES Act)

Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians—Crane Industrial Suites
\$3.7M—EDA Public Works Grant

Chippewa County EDC—Industrial Building Construction and Rail Spur
\$7.9M—EDA Public Works Grant

Great Lakes Boat Building School—Building Expansion Project
\$2.7M—EDA Public Works Grant (CARES Act)

MERIT—Broadband Infrastructure Project
\$3.0M—EDA Public Works Grant (CARES Act)

Luce County EDC—Strategic Plan
\$44,000—EDA EAA Grant (ARPA)

Sault Ste. Marie Convention and Visitors Bureau—I-500 Enhancements
\$2.0M—EDA Travel, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation (ARPA)



Appendix E: Public Comment Period

We uploaded our draft 2025 CEDS update to our website (www.eup-planning.org) on April 1 and left it active until May 1 in hopes of receiving public comment on our document. As of May 1, we have received no public comment on our plan.

A screenshot of the public notice on our website can be found below.



EASTERN UPPER PENINSULA
REGIONAL PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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2025-2029 CEDS Update – Public Notice of Draft

April 1, 2025 | [Uncategorized](#)

The 2025-2029 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is available for review in draft format. You can review it [here](#).

Please send any comments on this document to staff@eup-planning.org.

Recent Posts

- [2025-2029 CEDS Update – Public Notice of Draft](#)
- [RTF #11 Meeting – April 9, 2025](#)
- [Eastern UP Materials Management Planning Committee Meeting Announcement](#)
- [Invitation to Bid – Great Lakes Boat Building School Facility Expansion Project](#)
- [Whitefish Township Master Plan Public Comment Period Opened](#)

Appendix F: EUPRPDC Resolution



EASTERN UPPER PENINSULA REGIONAL PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

RESOLUTION #2025-4 – CEDS REVISED 5 YEAR PLAN

ADOPTION OF THE 2025 EUP COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDS) REVISED 5 YEAR PLAN

- Whereas,** the Eastern U.P. Regional Planning and Development Commission Governing Board has the function of developing and preparing the 2025 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Revised 5 Year Plan for Chippewa, Luce and Mackinac Counties and;
- Whereas,** EUPRPDC has revised the 2025 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) 5-Year Plan to reflect accomplishments over the past year, updated socio-economic data, reviewed the structure of development and recommend ways to improve the development process, goals, objectives, and strategies and list and review projects that will attract and retain jobs in the Economic Development District consisting of Chippewa, Luce and Mackinac Counties, and;
- Whereas,** the 2025 CEDS Revised 5 Year Plan has been developed, pursuant to CFR 303.6(b)3, and
- Whereas,** approval of the 2025 CEDS Revised 5 Year Plan is necessary for continued designation of the Eastern Upper Peninsula as an Economic Development District by the Economic Development Administration, and in fulfillment of our EDD Partnership Planning grant scope of work and special terms and conditions;
- Whereas,** the Regional Economic Development Advisory Collaborative met on April 9, 2025 and reviewed and commented on the 2025 CEDS Revised 5 Year Plan, and;
- Whereas,** concurrence with the 2025 CEDS Revised 5 Year Plan by the Regional Economic Development Advisory Collaborative (REDAC) of the District is needed to enable continued participation by eligible units of Government for EDA grant programs;
- Therefore Be It Resolved:** That the Eastern U.P. Regional Planning and Development Commission Governing Board does hereby approve the 2025 EUP Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Revised 5 Year Plan at its meeting on April 30, 2025, as recommended by the EUP REDAC.

Moved by M. Patrick, seconded by A. Watkins to adopt the above resolution, at a meeting of the EUPRPDC Governing Board on April 30, 2025.

Ayes: A. Watkins; B. Henry; C. Olson; J. Traynor; K. Freeman; M. Dost; M. Patrick; S. Smith; R. Timmer; T. Henry
Nays: -0-

Date: April 30, 2025

Chairman: 
Kelly Freeman, Board Chair

Certified by: 
Jeff Hagan, CEO

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