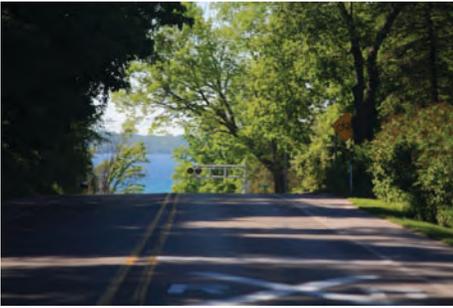


FINAL August 11, 2014



Acme Township

community master plan 2014

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INTRODUCTION



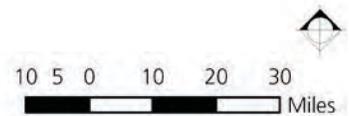
Photo: Karly Wentzloff

Figure 1. Regional location map



ACME TOWNSHIP
Regional Location

- County Boundary
- Major Highway
- State or National Park



REGIONAL CONTEXT

Acme Township is located in the northwest quadrant of Michigan's Lower Peninsula, abutting the East Arm of the Grand Traverse Bay. The lands surrounding the Bay constitute the Grand Traverse region, with topography characterized by forests, productive farmland, rolling hills formed by glacial activity, and copious inland lakes, streams, and wetlands. As these characteristics have shaped the settlements that grew up among them, the region has become known for its agricultural products, its "resort" quality, and its abundance of recreational opportunities.

Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, and Wexford Counties came together in 2007 to launch a comprehensive and far-reaching planning initiative called The Grand Vision. Three years of intensive public participation yielded six guiding principles and a new web of partnership networks across the region. Grand Traverse County, home to Acme Township, has released a master plan concurrently with the writing of this plan that expresses its intent to serve as convener, educator, and resource provider to its communities in order to help match local goals and objectives with the principles of the Grand Vision.¹ Acme Township's position at the intersection of US-31 and M-72 has brought it to the attention of the Grand Vision's "Growth and Investment" principle.

Grand Vision Principles

Transportation

A regional multi-modal transportation system that supports energy conservation

Energy

Sustainable-energy uses in construction, transportation and economic development

Natural Resources

Protected and preserved water, forests, natural and scenic areas

Growth and Investment

Unique and vibrant communities that strengthen the local economy

Food and Farming

Local farms and regional food systems as a viable part of our communities

Housing

A diverse mix of regional housing choices with affordable options

"Growth and Investment areas are based on the existing development pattern, zoning, community assets like schools and post offices, and infrastructure. In these areas, growth consists of existing towns and established contiguous areas of a township where infrastructure and services are available. Land use in these areas are of a mixed-use village form and provide excellent opportunities for new businesses and housing modeled after the region's pattern of traditional towns and villages."

— A Master Plan for Grand Traverse County, 2013

PLAN SNAPSHOT

The Acme Township Community Master builds upon several years of active community engagement revolving around the previous amendment to the 1999 Community Master Plan, revised in 2009; community efforts focused on the acquisition and redevelopment of the East Bay shoreline and waterfront as presented in the US-31 Placemaking Plan; and the recently adopted Acme Township Five-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan. In order to define key community initiatives and strategies, the Acme Township Community Master Plan uses information gleaned from the placemaking plan, a community-wide mail survey conducted by Northwestern Michigan College, and meetings with regional agencies and stakeholders from the agricultural and business communities.

Some of the key ideas advanced in the Acme Township Community Master Plan include:

- Focus on Infrastructure Improvement as means of directing planned growth to the existing business district along US-31 and M-72. The existing business district has a wide variety of redevelopment opportunities available, including local retail and business expansion, mixed use development, and higher density residential. Without public water, however, many of these properties will never be fully and economically utilized.
- The plan calls for the expansion and connection of local and regional non-motorized trails in response to community input and recommendations embedded in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
- There is a long term vision to reconfigure US-31 and M-72 to be safer and more convenient for business patrons, consumers, and residents. Planned improvements to M-72 resulting from the Grand Traverse Town Center development will begin to transform M-72 into a multi-modal transportation corridor for vehicles, buses, and people.
- The plan deliberately focuses commercial and residential development in areas that already have development or vested development rights. In this manner, commercial sprawl is limited and development is relegated to the Grand Traverse Town Center, Acme Village, and existing commercial / business properties along US-31 and M-72. As a result of this strategy, it is envisioned that a vibrant, high quality, commercial and mixed use district will be established.
- Water quality is a high priority within the Township. The plan supports the maintenance of and improvement to surface and groundwater throughout the Township, and many of the strategies outlined in the plan reinforce this overarching goal.
- The acquisition of properties along East Bay has positioned Acme Township to take advantage of recreation-based tourism as part of its economic development strategy. The development of a series of connected and well-designed parks will provide recreation opportunities for existing and new residents as well as the business community.
- The plan supports the continuation and expansion of agricultural operations and the preservation of farmland, defining characteristics of Acme Township.
- Because Acme Township is demographically older than surrounding communities, the Community Master Plan balances policies and strategies with an eye toward creating a community that is attractive to all age groups.

LAND USE CATEGORIES	1999 MASTER PLAN; REVISED IN 2009	2014 COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN
CONSERVATION AND RECREATION	The main objectives of this Conservation and Recreation category are to sustain the integrity of Acme Township’s natural ecosystems and natural resources, such as its creeks, streams, wetlands, forests, and Grand Traverse Bay shoreline, and to provide quality, safe public recreation sites, such as beaches and water access points, camping sites, hiking trails, ball fields, and other sports facilities.	Same objectives. The 2014 Future Land Use map reflects the same areas identified in the 2009 Future Land Use map revision.
AGRICULTURE	A major objective of this land use category is to create a long-term business environment for agriculture in Acme Township. This category also aims to ensure that agriculture contributes to the character of Acme Township; contributes to Acme Township’s and Grand Traverse County’s economies, now and in the future; and prevents the loss of agricultural lands by encouraging the use of PDR and TDR programs and other means.	Same objectives. The 2014 Future Land Use map enlarges the amount of agricultural designated land to include portions of the Township east of US-31 between Brackett Road and Kesner Road.
RURAL RESIDENTIAL	The objectives of this category are to provide limited and low density residential development in the rural areas of the Township where sensitive ecosystems and special natural land features such as steep slopes, creeks and streams are prevalent.	Same objectives. The 2014 Future Land Use map reflects a reduction in this designation to account for reclassification of rural residential land to agriculture and rural residential to urban residential along the East Bay Township boundary line.
URBAN RESIDENTIAL	Objectives of this category include encouraging development of quality, high-density residential living, and affordable living that will minimize the encroachment of such development on farms, forests, and environmentally sensitive areas.	Same objectives. The 2014 Future Land Use map enlarges Urban Residential to include properties previously classified as Rural Residential south of Bunker Hill Road.
COMMERCIAL	The main objectives in this category are to provide for commercial development in ways that will create an economically healthy and thriving environment for the benefit of all Acme residents and visitors to the Township, and to provide for commercial establishments that not only supply goods and services but also offer employment opportunities to Acme residents. Another objective is to encourage new commercial growth in high-density areas of the Township.	Same objectives. The 2014 Future Land Use map reflects the same areas identified in the 2009 Future Land Use map revision.
INDUSTRIAL	The main objectives of the Industrial land use category are to provide for non-intrusive industrial operations in high density areas that stimulate the economic vitality of the Township, but do not negatively impact the surrounding area, and to provide employment opportunities for residents of the Township and surrounding region.	Same objectives and the 2014 Future Land Use map reflects the same areas identified in the 2009 Future Land Use map revision.
TOWN CENTER	The objective of the mixed-use Town Center district is to build a network of shops as well as service, civic, and cultural facilities and residential neighborhoods in a concentrated area that is user-friendly to the Township resident, the general consumer, and the visitor alike.	Land use objectives are similar with the exception that higher densities and mixed-use development are strongly encouraged. The 2014 Future Land Use map reflects the same areas identified in the 2009 Future Land Use map revision.

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CONTEXT



COMMUNITY CHARACTER

As in nearly all communities, Acme Township's varied history is etched into its landscape. Wild rice growing on the Great Lakes signaled to the people of the Three Fires Confederacy of Ottawa, Ojibwa, and Pottawatomi that their journey from the east coast of Turtle Island (North America) had come to an end, and they settled among the sugar maple, elm, basswood, yellow birch, hemlock, and white pine² forests. They were traders whose routes stretched across the continent and included the French and English arrivals from the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, even as wars among the Europeans broke out on their lands. The Three Fires Confederacy signed treaties in 1836 and 1855 ceding the land in Michigan to the newly formed United States government while reserving the use of their homeland, but federal recognition of the tribe did not come until more than a century later in 1980.³

Among the European pioneers in Michigan was Village of Acme founder L.S. Hoxie, who in 1858 began transforming most of the native forested landcover into building material for the rapidly expanding Chicago area and the American west. The sudden wealth generated from this export gave rise to development: commerce, industry, and the buildings, roads,

and rails to serve them arrived in concert with Acme's lumber boom.

Those fortunes waned with the tree supply in the early 1900s. The cut-over condition of the land saved prospective farmers from having to clear their fields, although it soon became apparent that not all of the soils were suitable for agriculture. As the 20th century waxed, the area found its niche in fruit production on the fertile lands while state and federal conservation departments acquired the marginal or infertile acreage, and elements coalesced to set the stage for what we now call Acme's scenic rural character.

That character has long been prized by urban refugees seeking respite in water and woods. Chicago tourists promptly used their newly-invented cars to venture up Lake Michigan's eastern coast, and in 1911 the West Michigan Lakeshore Highway Association began planning the first improved highway from Chicago to Mackinaw City to support a neophyte resort industry.⁴ That road, called the West Michigan Pike and advertised as "Lake Shore all the Way," was completed in 1922, literally paving the way for new lodging, restaurant, and attraction opportunities. It became part of the state highway system as M-11 and joined the national highway system four years later as US-31. M-72's east-west route across the peninsula grew more slowly, but its route

between Traverse City and Kalkaska via Acme had been established by 1946 and fully paved by 1959.⁵

Today, the northern and interior portions of Acme Township are lined with productive farms, protected by one of only two Purchase of Development Right (PDR) programs in the county. Commercial development hugs the trunklines and continues to intensify as development of the Grand Traverse Town Center gets underway. The Grand Traverse Resort, owned by the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, offers a getaway experience complete with premiere golf, spa, and casino. The southwest corner of the Township provides growing Traverse City with suburbs, while residential development of a more rural nature dots the northern East Bay shoreline. And the heart of Acme Township, at the junction of US-31, M-72, and the East Bay, is undergoing intensive revitalization to connect commerce, recreation, and livability as part of the Acme Shores Placemaking Project.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Statistics can be overwhelming. As interesting as any individual fact may be, poring over pages of charts and percentages can rapidly descend into confusion. Figure 2 presents a "demographic dashboard" to illustrate key Acme Township facts and place them in

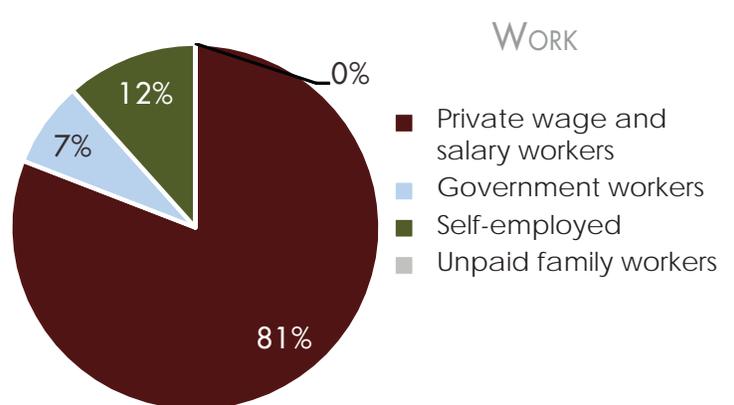
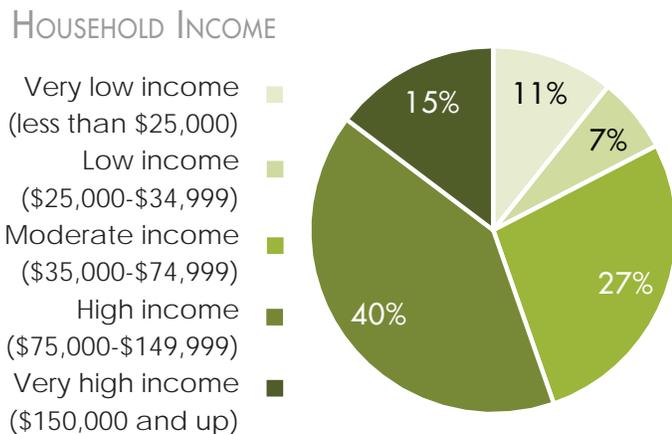
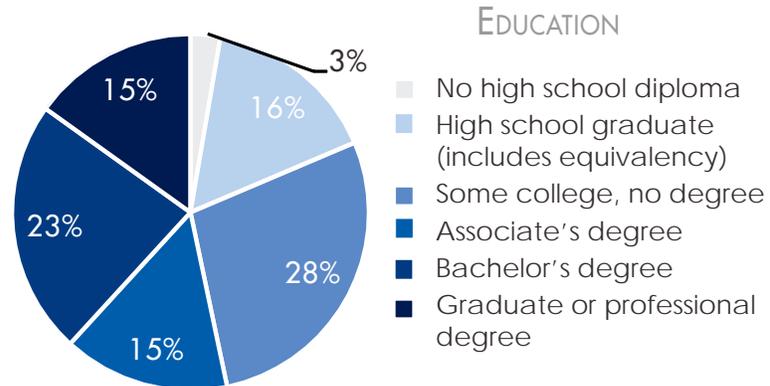
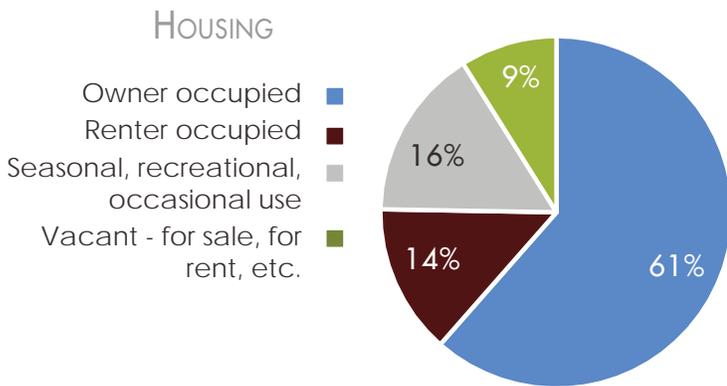
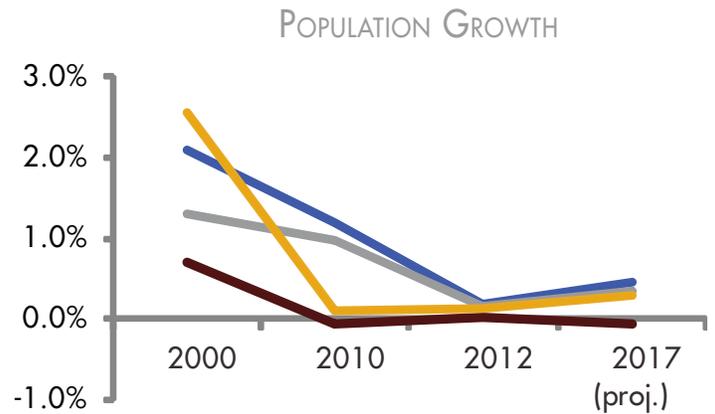
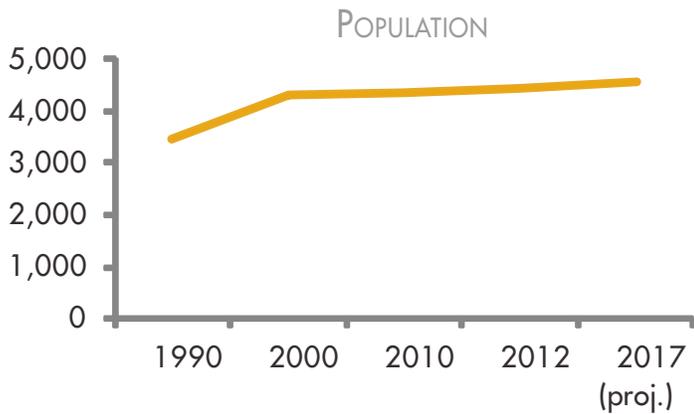


Photos: top, Grand Traverse Resort; bottom, Karly Wentzloff; right, www.saugatuck.com

Acme Township Dashboard

Figure 2. Demographic dashboard

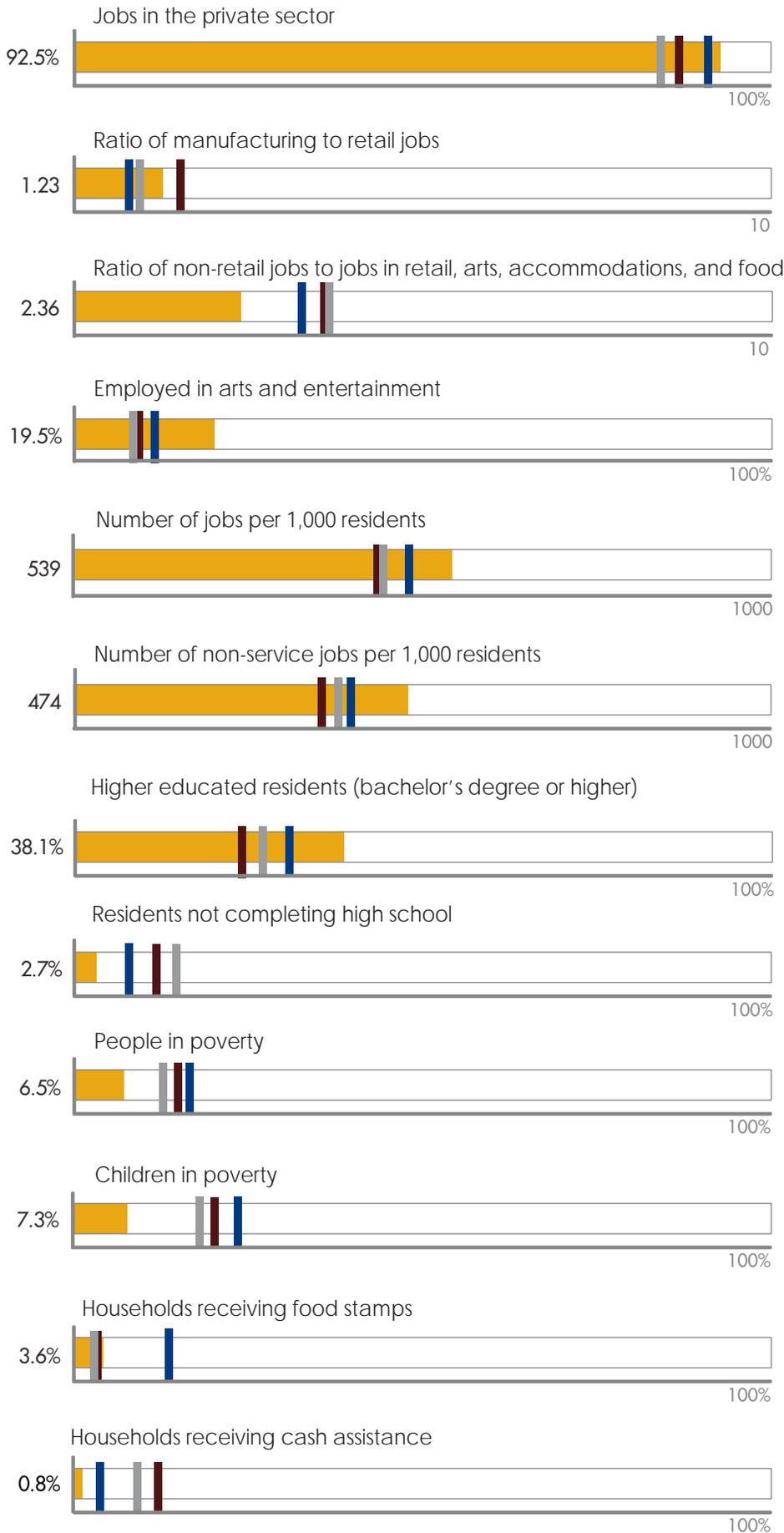
Key for population and prosperity index graphs:



Classifications modified from HUD guidelines, using the state median income of \$48,432.

PROSPERITY INDEX

HOUSEHOLDS



- 1,782 total households
- 2.45 person average household size
- \$195,500 owner-occupied median home value
- 782 median gross rent
- 75% housing units with a mortgage
- EDUCATION
- 23.9% population enrolled in school
- 97.3% high school graduate or higher
- 38.1% bachelor's degree or higher
- COMMUTING
- 95% workers who commute
- 90% commuters who drive alone
- 19.1 minute average commute
- EMPLOYMENT
- 12.6% unemployment rate
- 12.9% civilian veterans
- INCOME
- \$76,870 median household income
- \$31,923 median earnings for workers
- \$62,624 male full-time, year-round earnings
- \$42,378 female full-time, year-round earnings
- 6.5% population in poverty
- 7.3% children in poverty
- TOP INDUSTRIAL SECTORS
- 22% education, health care, social assistance
- 20% arts, recreation, accommodation, food
- 12% manufacturing

context relative to Grand Traverse County, the State of Michigan, and the United States.

Population

The 2010 Census counted 4,375 Acme Township residents, a 43-resident gain over the 2000 count. This 0.1% rate of growth was slower than the United States (0.97%) or Grand Traverse County (1.2%), but avoided becoming part of Michigan’s notorious population loss during that decade (-0.06%). These residents make up 1,806 households with an average household size of 2.42 persons, slightly larger than in Grand Traverse County (2.39) and smaller than the rest of Michigan (2.49) and the United States (2.58). More households are made up of families than in the aggregated populations (71.1% vs. 64.8-66.4%), particularly

husband-wife families (60.3% vs. 48.0-51.2%), though fewer have children in them (27.2% vs. 29-33.4%).

The median age of 46.6 is older than in any of the aggregated populations (range: 37.2-41.3 years), and more households have at least one individual aged 65 or older than in the larger populations (32.3% vs. 24.9%-25.8%). Figure 3 shows that on closer inspection, there is a particular dearth of Acme residents between about 20 and 40 years old. This situation merits attention because this age group is among the most productive, as can be seen in Table 1. They are one of the two age brackets which contribute a greater share of Acme Township’s total disposable income than the share of households it represents. During their public engagement session, Acme

Figure 3: Population by age (right)

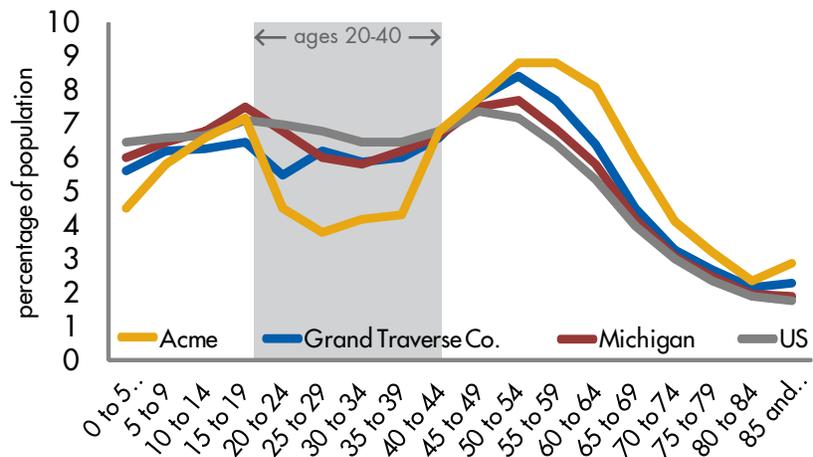


Table 1: Disposable income by age of householder

	AGE OF HOUSEHOLDER						
	<25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
Total households	40	145	238	396	441	290	270
Average disposable income	\$36,625	\$51,776	\$62,633	\$67,615	\$60,941	\$46,698	\$35,102
Share of households	2.2%	21.0%		46.0%		30.8%	
Share of disposable income	1.5%	22.3%		53.4%		22.9%	
Disposable income/households	0.68	1.06		1.16		0.74	

Township business owners particularly noted a need to attract younger families to the area.

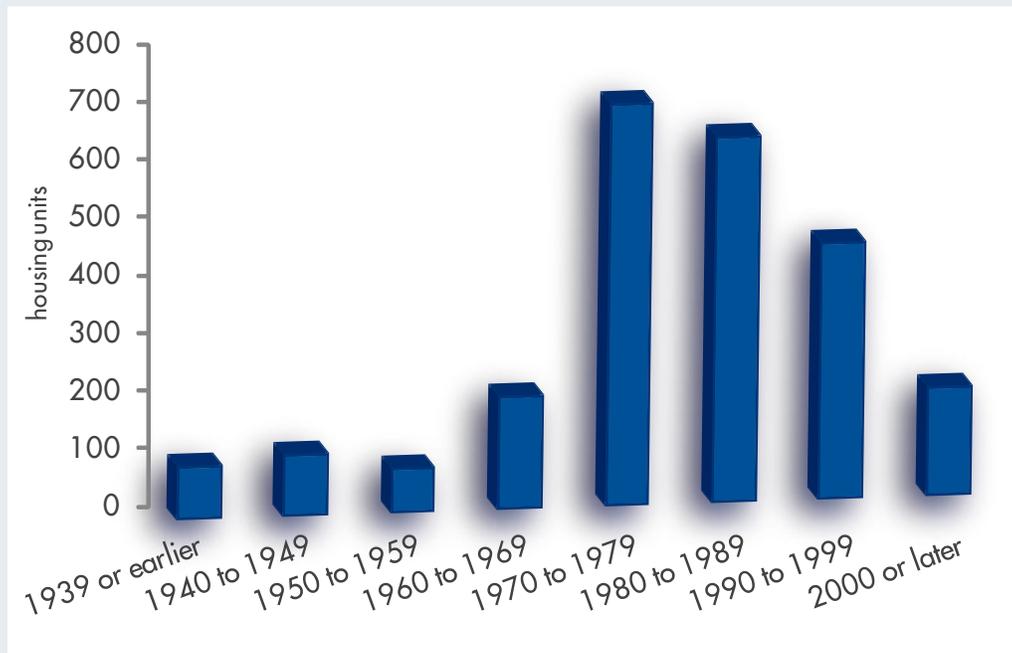
Housing

Housing construction history paints a vivid picture of Acme Township’s explosion in popularity circa 1970 (Figure 4). Before that year, the township had a total of 473 homes. Nearly twice as many were built in the following decade alone, followed by two more decades of frantic development before the housing crisis returned the pace back to the level of the 1960s. Today, there are 2,399 dwelling units in the Township, of which 1,806 are occupied. Sixty-four percent of the unoccupied units, or 15.8% of all housing structures, are for seasonal or recreational use, a number that is significantly higher than in other populations (range: 3.5-8.6%) and provides hard evidence of the

Township’s appeal to those looking for a getaway. Most homes (86.1%) are heated by utility gas, with a few using bottled, tank, or liquid petroleum gas (7.0%), electricity (3.4%), wood (1.7%), or fuel oil (0.4%).

Most of the homes (81.7%) are owner-occupied, and three quarters of the owner-occupied homes are mortgaged. The median home value is \$195,000. Thirty percent of the structures are multi-family units, with the rest either detached or attached single-family units. The median gross rent is \$782, and over a quarter of renting households (27.3%) are paying more than 35% of their household income for rent. The rental vacancy rate of 30.9% is three times that at the county, state, and national levels, perhaps reflecting seasonal rentals.

Figure 4: Housing unit construction over time



Education

Acme Township is home to a well-educated populace. It comes remarkably close to achieving universal secondary education: 97.3% of residents have a high school diploma, compared with 85.4% nationwide. Well over one third (38.1%) have bachelor's degrees, about 10 percentage points higher than in the aggregated populations, and an impressive 15% hold a graduate or professional degree.

Income

The strong link between education and income is demonstrated in Acme Township, where the median household income of \$76,870 is 146% of the national median. Almost 15% of households earn more than \$150,000 per year, more than twice the rate of Grand Traverse County (6.4%) or the state of Michigan (6.6%). Due to Acme's higher median age, slightly more people have Social Security or retirement incomes than in the larger populations (33.1% vs. 27.9-30.6% and 24.5% vs. 17.5-22.3%, respectively).

The ratio of manufacturing workers to retail workers in Acme is 1.26 (272/222), indicating an economy balanced between the two sectors and therefore best able to adjust to changes in either. Because the median earnings of retail workers are about 57% of the median earnings of manufacturing workers,

the slight tilt toward manufacturing is advantageous to the workforce.

Just under 20% of all workers are employed in the arts, entertainment, recreation, and accommodation fields, a figure that is higher than in Grand Traverse County (11.7%), Michigan, or the US (both 9%). These fields consistently rank among the lowest-paid: among all workers in the US, the median income in this sector (\$15,343) is 46% of the overall median income (\$33,149), and among year-round, full-time workers, it is 62% (\$26,303 vs. \$42,431). In Acme Township, the ratio of all workers' earnings in art, entertainment, recreation, and accommodation to overall median earnings is even smaller at 41.2%. However, there is a dramatic reversal among full-time, year-round workers in those fields, where earnings shoot up to 167.2% of the overall median. This is primarily due to the Grand Traverse Resort and its workforce. According to the Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce, the Grand Traverse Resort is the third largest employer in the Grand Traverse County with 943 employees. ⁶

The median earnings for all female workers in Acme Township are about 60% of the median earnings for all male workers. This wage gap is slightly greater than in Grand Traverse County (65%), Michigan (63%), or the United States (69%). It is slightly smaller among full-time,

year-round workers at 69%, but still lags behind the aggregated populations (range: 70-78%). These numbers offer a somewhat homogenized view of what turns out to be a quite varied landscape. As can be seen in Table 2, the highest-paying profession for all workers is Public Administration, and so many of those workers are female that a median income for males could not be computed. On the other hand, educational services, health care, and social assistance had by far the greatest number of workers, and there the females' median earnings are dwarfed by the males' (\$104,667 vs. \$32,083) despite making up over three quarters of the workforce. Only in the field of manufacturing do the women out-earn the men.

Poverty is low in Acme Township at 6.5%, as compared with 10.9% for Grand Traverse County, 15.7% for Michigan, and 14.3% for the country overall. Child poverty, which is often substantially higher than the overall poverty rate due to a single household's economic circumstances affecting several children simultaneously, is also low at 7.3%. The highest poverty rates in the township occur in female-headed households (15.1%), and female-headed households with dependent children are more than three times as likely as the general population to have had an income below the poverty level in the last 12 months. This is particularly

Table 2. Income by industry and gender

	ALL WORKERS					FULL-TIME, YEAR-ROUND WORKERS								
	% of workforce	Median earnings	% male	Median earnings: male	% female	Median earnings: female	Female earnings as % of male earnings	% of workforce	Median earnings	% male	Median earnings: male	% female	Median earnings: female	Female earnings as % of male earnings
Civilian employed population 16 years and over		\$40,805	54%	\$51,885	46%	\$31,157	60%		\$51,185	56%	\$61,719	44%	\$42,378	68%
Public administration	4%	\$70,341	20%	2,500-	80%	\$70,909	-	6%	\$70,682	9%	-	91%	\$70,909	-
Transportation, warehousing, utilities	3%	\$63,542	35%	\$86,250	65%	\$63,542	74%	4%	\$49,792	21%	-	79%	\$63,542	-
Information	2%	\$54,167	75%	-	25%	-	-	3%	\$54,167	75%	-	25%	-	-
Finance and insurance, real estate, rental, leasing	8%	\$50,625	72%	\$62,530	28%	\$29,861	48%	9%	\$51,211	74%	\$57,500	26%	\$45,781	80%
Construction	4%	\$47,679	69%	\$49,524	31%	\$29,779	60%	6%	\$48,333	66%	\$50,234	34%	\$29,779	59%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, waste management	6%	\$46,429	66%	\$46,607	34%	\$42,273	91%	4%	\$66,250	70%	\$66,538	30%	\$42,159	63%
Manufacturing	12%	\$42,604	74%	\$41,250	26%	\$43,177	105%	17%	\$42,578	71%	\$41,193	29%	\$43,177	105%
Educational services, health care, social assistance	22%	\$36,277	23%	\$104,667	77%	\$32,083	31%	20%	\$41,833	26%	\$104,000	74%	\$40,083	39%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, mining	4%	\$32,188	86%	\$40,750	14%	-	-	3%	\$52,963	100%	\$52,963	0%	-	-
Wholesale trade	4%	\$26,657	83%	\$26,250	17%	-	-	2%	\$92,589	48%	-	52%	-	-
Retail trade	9%	\$24,211	50%	\$63,075	50%	\$23,032	37%	10%	\$24,963	58%	\$63,675	42%	\$23,542	37%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, food services	20%	\$16,806	67%	\$26,029	36%	\$11,173	43%	11%	\$85,598	75%	\$86,957	25%	\$27,000	31%
Other services, except public administration	3%	\$11,250	37%	\$44,904	63%	\$6,705	15%	1%	-	100%	-	0%	-	-

salient given that over the same period, 61.4% of the women who gave birth in Acme Township were unmarried—almost twice the rate in the larger populations (range: 34.3-37.6%). Addressing the wage gap is a critical piece of the solution to this disparity, as are support systems for child care, flexible work and school schedules, and a breadth of transportation options.

Businesses

According to the proprietary Esri Business Analyst software, 245 businesses in Acme Township employ 3,736 persons. Since there

are only 2,359 employed Acme Township residents, the jobs-to-workers ratio is 1.58, meaning that there is a net influx of persons into the Township for work. While the discussion in the previous section focused on the employment of Acme Township residents, this section focuses on persons who work in Acme Township, regardless of their place of residence.

Almost half of Acme Township jobs (45.1%, or 1,684 workers) are in the 24 businesses with the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS)

code of “Accommodation and Food Services,” and nearly another quarter (22.4%) provide “other services, except public administration.” “Retail trade” has the highest number of businesses at 43 (17.6% of all businesses) and the third highest number of employees at 415 (11.1% of the workforce). “Construction” and “Professional, scientific, and technical services” each occupy just over 10% of the share of businesses (30 and 27, respectively) and 3% of the share of employees (116 and 125, respectively).



Photo: Grand Traverse Resort

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

One of Acme Township's largest and most obvious natural resources is its approximately 9.5 miles of shoreline along the East Grand Traverse Bay. Proximity to water is a draw for nearly any human habitation, and the turquoise expanse of Lake Michigan is a unique jewel. The seemingly limitless supply of freshwater has been of critical value since the early days of Acme's settlement, and its moderating effect on the otherwise harsh northern Michigan climate is similarly fundamental. Less essential,

but still pivotal, benefits include stellar aesthetics and recreational opportunities. The Grand Traverse Bay as a whole has anchored attraction to the Traverse City area throughout the region's developed history, and Acme Township's position on the "east coast" is a great privilege.

Another of Acme's important resources is its fertile soil. According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, parts of Acme Township are classified as "prime farmland," meaning the land

has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for the production of food, fiber, and forage. Producing primarily apples and cherries, much of this land is either already protected by Acme's Purchase of Development Rights program or eligible to receive such protection.

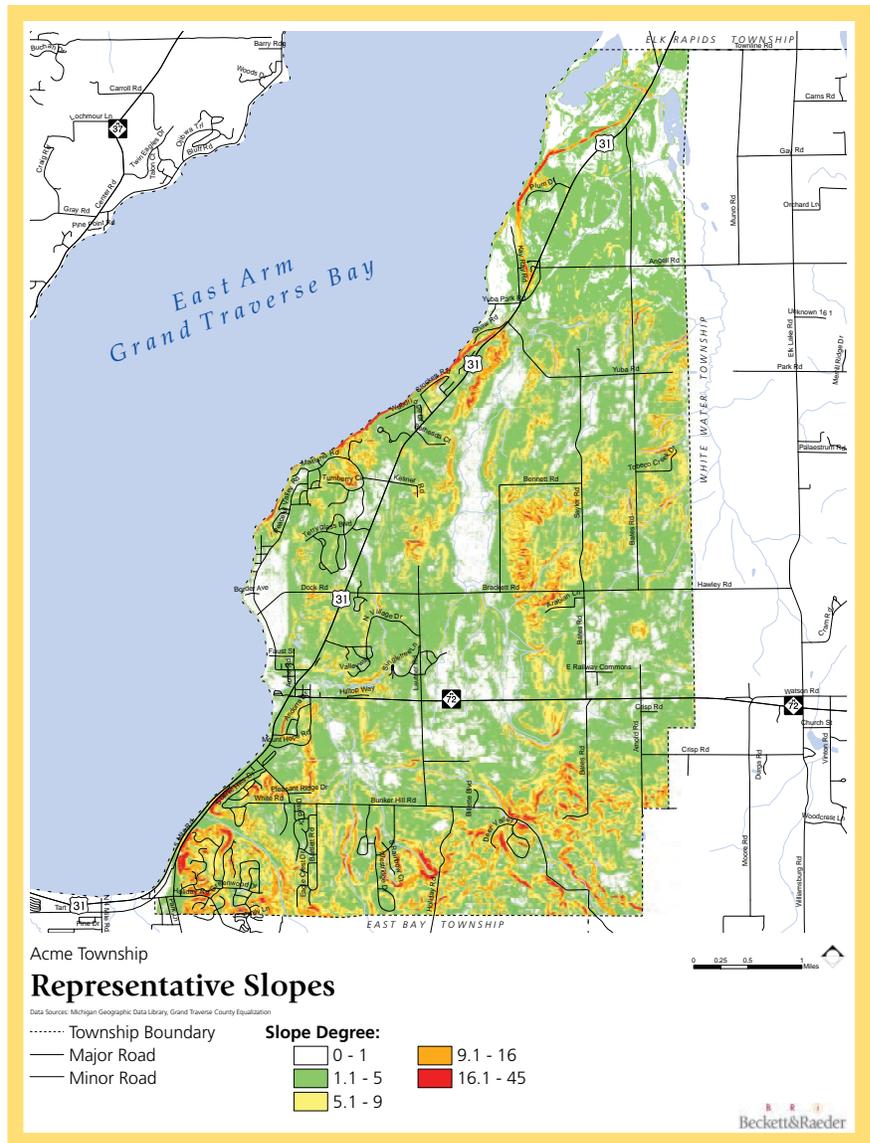
Acme's topography includes a series of glacial moraines running north and south through the Township (Figure 5). These ridgelines and valleys are part of the region's distinct setting, offering lovely views of the surrounding landscape and



brehtaking vistas of East Bay. They also play an important role in soil fertility by affecting water drainage and air circulation patterns. Figure 6 shows the areas where elevation changed at least 30 meters over a 750 meter radius to produce cold air drainage.

The Northern Michigan wine industry has been building steam since the 1970s and has begun maturing into international recognition since the 1990s. Good agricultural conditions have given rise to a cluster of vineyards and associated tasting rooms, which have begun to coalesce into a regional draw. Though a 2008 assessment of seven Michigan counties for vineyard suitability found weather conditions in Acme Township to be less than ideal due to its short growing season,⁷ its immediate proximity to a vast swath of eminently suitable land indicates that vineyard cultivation may still be possible with a few adjustments. Vineyards sited to face south or west can best take advantage of the sun's warmth during the day. Those on sloping ground can take advantage of the tendency of cooler, heavier air to sink, passing by the delicate fruit and leaves to pool in concentrated valley pockets. These circulation patterns, known as "airsheds," can be significantly affected by the built environment, as when a structure at one end of a valley blocks the flow of warmer daytime air and thus traps the frost (Figure 6).

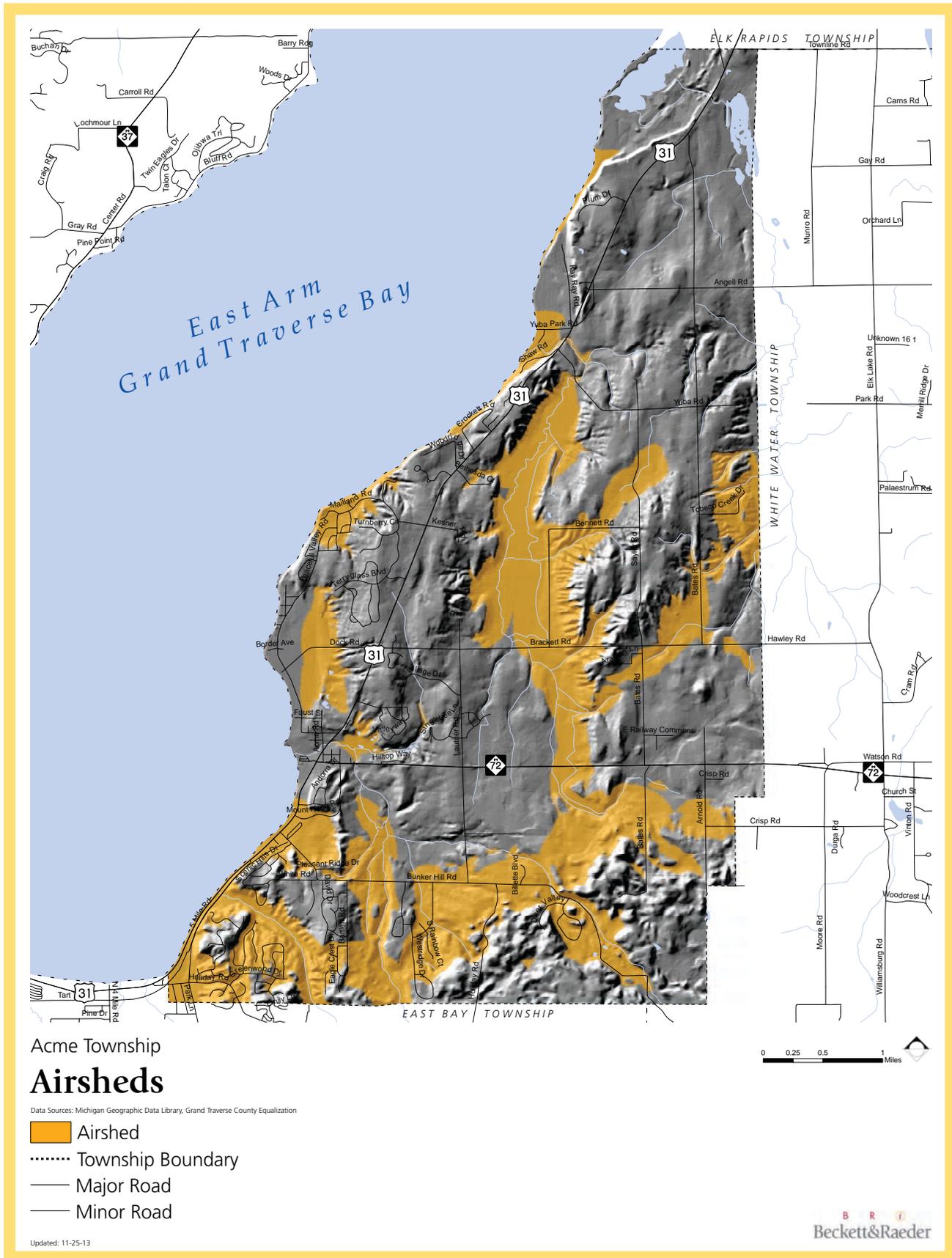
Figure 5. Representative slopes map



“At the tip of the [Old Mission] peninsula, you will stand in the center of a band, from about the 50th to 30th degree latitudes, that circles the globe like a necklace strung with some of the world’s great winemaking regions. To name but three in the Northern Hemisphere, they are Bordeaux in France, Piedmont in Italy and our own Columbia Valley of Washington and Oregon.”

— The Chicago Tribune, 2013⁸

Figure 6. Airshed map



The Hoxie House shown in Figure 7, built for founder Leonard Hoxie, has stood beside the East Bay since 1875. Most recently known as the Knollwood Motel, the parcel was among the shorefront properties purchased in conjunction with the Acme Shores Placemaking Project. The Acme Township Heritage Society, formed in 2010 and now headquartered in the Hoxie House, rallied the community around an effort to save the house through public awareness efforts and regular fundraisers.⁹ The Society secured an agreement from the Township to move the house and received an offer of a parcel of land 4,000 yards away on the 182-acre Grand Traverse Town Center development.¹⁰ The Acme Heritage Society plans to raise \$125,000 for moving and improvements so that the house can arrive at its new site in 2014, where it will become the Society's historical museum.



*Figure 7. Hoxie House
Photo: Grand Traverse Insider*

The John Pulcifer House, shown in Figure 8 and constructed in 1883 by Acme Township's organizer and first supervisor, fulfilled a promise to Mr. Pulcifer's Ohio schoolteacher wife that he would build her a fine house for accompanying him so far from home.¹¹ It remained in the family until Pulcifer's niece ceased to occupy the house in 1964, and then the un-plumbed, un-electrified house stayed vacant for the next 35 years. The Veliquette family bought the property toward the end of the 20th century in order to add the 150 acres of Pulcifer cherry orchards to the 250 adjacent



Figure 8. John Pulcifer House

acres the Veliquettes already owned. The family decided to embark on a full restoration of the home in 1999. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2001 and is now operated as the Country Hermitage Bed and Breakfast.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

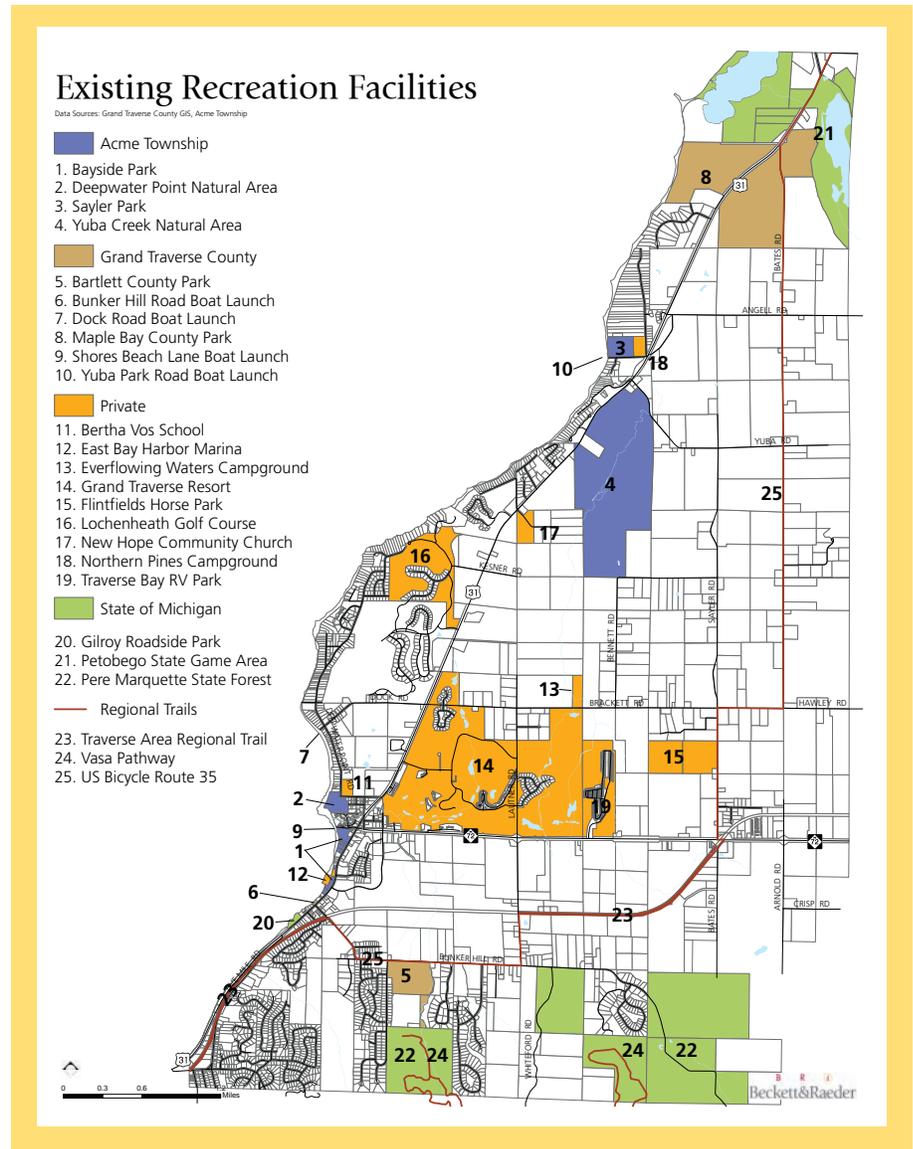
Acme Township owns four of the existing recreation facilities shown in Figure 9 and hosts 15 more which are owned by the county, the state, and the private sector. The largest Acme Township facility is Yuba Creek Natural Area, a 413-acre preserve with trails in the northern portion of the Township. Deepwater Point Natural Area, much smaller at 14.9 acres, also has trails and includes East Bay frontage as well as parking. Further north on the shoreline is Sayler Park, a 22-acre facility with three shelters, picnic tables, grills, horseshoe pits, volleyball, and restrooms.

The 11-acre Bayside Park is Acme’s smallest park, but it is the most centrally located at the intersection of US-31 and M-72. The site and its surrounding area are presently at the center of the “Acme Shores Placemaking Plan,” which began as a citizen-driven strategy to acquire and preserve shoreline properties as public parks and beaches for future generations (Figure 10). The three acquisition phases have been completed, and

the shoreline corridor has been master planned to determine and incorporate citizen preferences, address multimodal traffic concerns along the thoroughfares, and lay the groundwork for beneficial connections between local businesses and the emerging public space.

Grand Traverse County owns four boat launches in Acme Township, located at Dock Road, Bunker Hill Road, Yuba Park Road, and Shores Beach. It also owns the Bartlett Park Vasa Trailhead, which is part of the Traverse Area Recreation and Transportation (TART) trail system, and provides restroom facilities to

Figure 9. Recreation facilities map



serve them. Maple Bay County Park is a former 400-acre dairy farm which is currently being master planned. The State of Michigan offers 433 acres of natural open space at the Petobego State Game Area; 2.2 acres of beach access, picnic tables, grills, and restrooms at MDOT Gilroy Roadside Park; and boat access and parking to East Bay.

Private recreation facilities provide a greater diversity of uses. The largest is the 1,400-acre Grand Traverse Resort, with 54 holes of

golf, indoor and outdoor tennis and pools, and beach frontage. Equestrian amenities including stables and competition fields are available at Bates Horse Park. New Hope Community Church's 20-acre grounds have softball, soccer, and all-purpose fields, two tennis courts, playground equipment, and restrooms, while the International School at Bertha Vos has playground equipment and a winter ice skating rink and hut. Boat access is obtainable at East Bay Marina, and rustic camping is available at Everflowing Water Campground.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

In addition to the four Township-owned parks previously mentioned, two other community facility systems warrant Acme's attention: water and sewer, and the Township Hall/Fire Department site (Figure 10).

Presently, no public water facilities are available along portions of M-72 and US-31 Acme Township. The Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians has provided private water facilities for their Grand Traverse Resort and has contracted to provide water to

Figure 10. Marina and Bayside Park master plans



the Grand Traverse Town Center. However, such piecemeal solutions are likely to be inadequate to serve future needs. The Grand Traverse Metro Emergency Services Authority fire chief has recommended that the Township needs public water for future commercial growth, citing recent problems with a new Goodwill retail outlet on M-72 as an example. The Grand Traverse County Health Department expressed concerns about water quality, particularly as they relate to septic systems in residential development. Acme Township's

status as a regional "Growth and Investment Area" is highly predictive of greater demands on its infrastructure system, of which water and sewer are primary components. By taking the lead on the siting and construction of these infrastructure improvements, the community can both encourage development in desired areas as well as discourage the encroachment of development into areas more suited for other uses.

Acme Township is part of a collaborative venture with other

Grand Traverse Townships, and Elmwood Township in Leelanau County, known as the Grand Traverse County Septage Treatment Facility (GTCSTF), which provides Township property owners access to a sanitary sewer system and centralized treatment facility. The Grand Traverse County Department of Public Works is the facility owner.

Acme Township, East Bay Township, and Garfield Townships have constituted and been served by the Grand Traverse Metro Fire Department since 1980, which

Figure 10, continued



reorganized in 2008 to become the Grand Traverse Metro Emergency Services Authority (MESA). At the regional agency meeting hosted by Acme Township, MESA noted that it was looking for a location for a new fire station building. Construction of this facility in Acme Township could

allow for an improved Township Hall and an opportunity to include a township library.

Acme Township Hall, located at 6042 Acme Road, houses the Acme Township substation for MESA and Township Administration offices for

the Supervisor, Treasurer, Clerk, Assessor and Zoning Administrator. A large room serves as the central board room for the Trustees, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals and other committees, for which the building was not intended. It is functionally obsolete for Township business, and it is not conducive to Township operations.

Figure 11. Community facilities map



The International School at Bertha Vos is part of the Traverse City Area Public Schools (TCAPS) district. Operated as a standard elementary school until 2008, it was closed during a budget overhaul and reopened in 2012 as an International Baccalaureate school for primary-level students. The International Baccalaureate model is designed around project-based learning that connects the classroom with the community and gaining a multicultural understanding of the world. It remains part of the TCAPS system, and students throughout the district may attend tuition-free.

In addition to the facilities mentioned, the Township also owns and operates the Acme Township Cemetery located south of the entrance to the Grand Traverse Resort on the east side of US-31.

“Neighborhoods, cities and regions are awakening to the importance of ‘place’ in economic development. They are planning for a future that recognizes the critical importance of quality of life to attracting talent, entrepreneurship and encouraging local businesses. Competing for success in a global marketplace means creating places where workers, entrepreneurs, and businesses want to locate, invest and expand. This work has been described as a ‘sense of place’ or ‘place-based economic development’ or simply ‘placemaking.’ Economic development and community development are two sides of the same coin. A community without place amenities will have a difficult time attracting and retaining talented workers and entrepreneurs, or being attractive to business.”

— Governor Rick Snyder, 2011¹²

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In keeping with the state and the region, Acme Township has embraced placemaking as the heart of its economic development strategy. It is remarkably well-suited to do so, containing within its 25 square miles a topographic and developmental diversity that encompasses four of the six “transects” presented in Figure 14. Transects are zones characterized by the level of intensity of their natural, built, and social components, arranged on a continuum from the most natural places to the most urban. This classification system, developed at the turn of the 21st century as an alternative to conventional use-based zoning systems, figures prominently in the

Placemaking curriculum developed by the State of Michigan MIPlace Partnership.

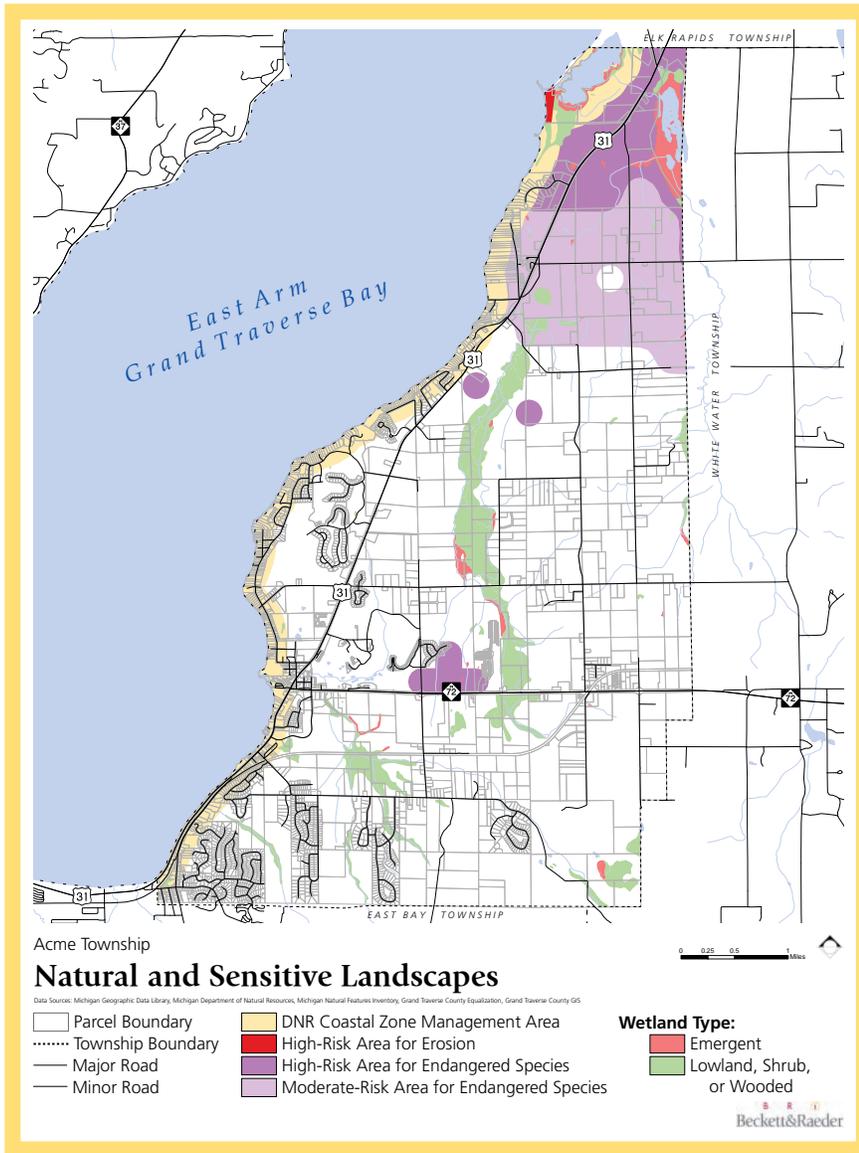
T1 – Natural and Open Space

The consequences of Acme Township’s Growth and Investment Center designation may be just as profound for its pristine areas as for its built ones. As land use intensifies at the US-31 and M-72 intersection, the tendency for that intensity to diffuse itself by “sprawling” onto adjacent land is well-known and will almost certainly occur if no preventive action is taken. Currently, nearly all of the land north of M-72 is agricultural, vacant, forested, rural residential, or conserved—and citizens like it that way. When they were asked about protecting

natural features, a majority of residents named rural character, wildlife habitat, farmlands and orchards, water quality, and the East Bay shoreline as “high priority.”

Our understanding of the economic value of undeveloped land is changing along with the global paradigm. Since the industrial revolution, cheap land and access to resources for exploitation have been the chief business input considerations. With the advent of the knowledge economy, good talent has become a more valuable resource than cheap land in many cases. Therefore, communities wishing to attract business must begin aiming to change what they offer. Understanding why people choose to live where they do is a paramount concern to the

Figure 12. Natural and sensitive landscapes map



issue of economic development. Acme Township residents have articulated clearly their appreciation for the juxtaposition of the largest commercial center in northern Michigan, Traverse City, with the open vistas provided by the operating farms, orchards, and resorts.

T2 – Agricultural

Approximately 34% of the existing land use in the Township is agricultural, primarily devoted to cherries and apples. Citizens have demonstrated their commitment to preserving this land use by passing a millage to support participation in the Grand Traverse County Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program designed to offset the financial incentive of development.

Perhaps the most overt combination of agricultural activity with placemaking for economic benefit comes in the form of agricultural tourism. Often shortened to “agritourism,” the word refers to the practice of visiting working agricultural establishments for

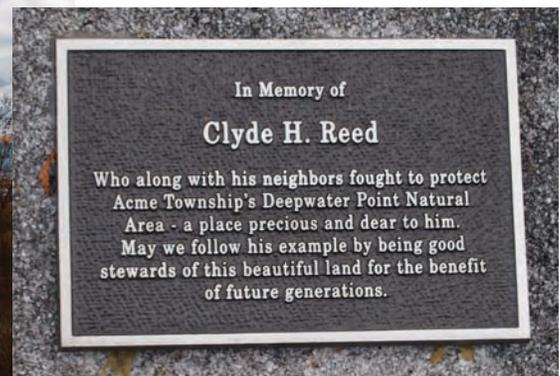


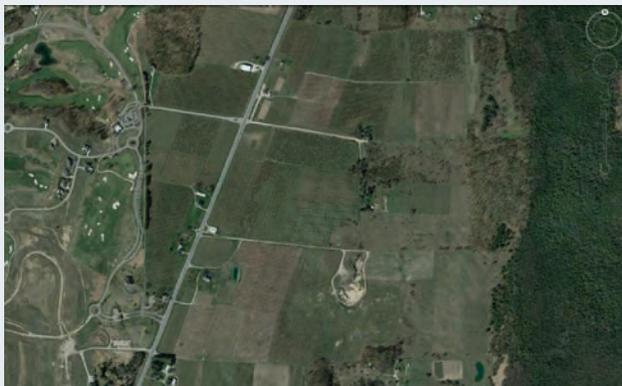
Figure 13: Transect images



THE ACME TOWNSHIP TRANSECT

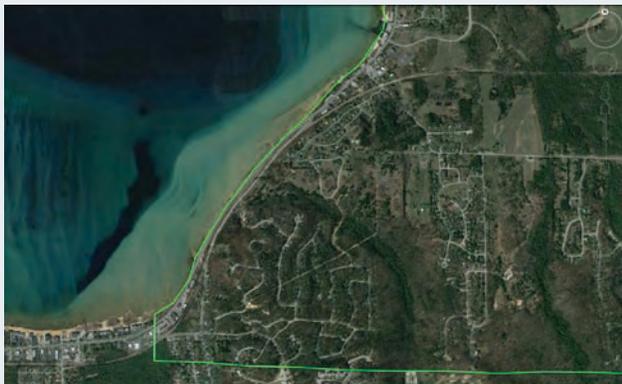
T1 - Natural and Open Space

T1 land is respected on its own merit—we don't think development can improve upon what's already there. Once a community has decided which lands it wishes to designate as T1, it can then take steps to protect them and offer respectful access.



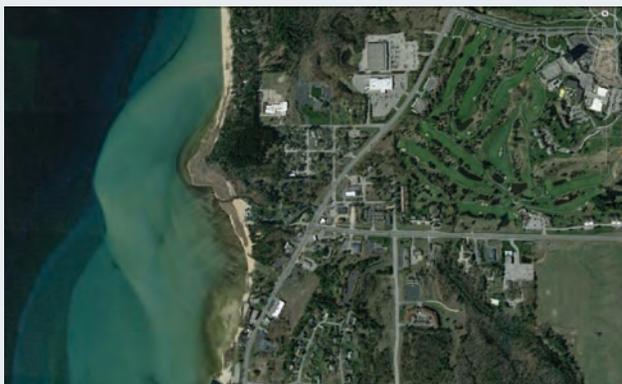
T2 - Agricultural

In the T2, humans meet the land on its own terms. We gain value from its use, but its native characteristics (soil, vegetation, habitat) tell us what those uses will be. Buildings and roads relate directly to the land-based activities.



T3 - Residential (Suburban)

T3 land has undergone suburban-style development. It is fairly low-density, with large residential and commercial lots and a curvilinear residential street pattern. Drivability is generally emphasized over walkability.



T4 - Urban Corridor

A primary characteristic of the T4 is that it is dense enough to support commercial activity, achieved through smaller lot sizes and multiple-family residential development. In its best form, this proximity of commercial and residential development creates a walkable, "complete" environment.

Photos: Google Earth

“Agri-tourism generates economic and social benefits to agri-tourism operators, their customers, rural communities, and the state of Michigan. Through on-site sales, value-added production, and services (i.e. school tours, corn mazes, and Halloween activities), agri-tourism yields the additional income that enables operators to maintain a “way of life” and the family farm. For its customers, agri-tourism provides a place to obtain fresh produce and experience nature with their families. For rural communities and the state of Michigan, agri-tourism generates employment and tourism and tax revenues, while helping to maintain open space and the viability of Michigan agriculture. By expanding product offerings, agri-tourism’s sales potential can be further increased while simultaneously providing visitors with greater choice. It is recommended that the state of Michigan provide further support for agri-tourism, which integrates Michigan’s second and third largest industries, agriculture and tourism.”

— Michigan Grape and Wine Industry Council, 2010¹³

the purpose of entertainment or education. The concept is far from new to the region—Traverse City’s famed cherries were joined by grapes in the 1970s, and no less than four wine tasting rooms opened their doors by the end of that decade¹⁴—but it has grown so rapidly as a practice that the United States Census of Agriculture included it in its study of “agricultural diversification” for the first time in 2002, and the activities so classified offered the highest average income during 2007.¹⁵ Combining as it does Michigan’s second and third largest industries, this is a uniquely local economic opportunity to be supported and encouraged.

Northwest Michigan is at the forefront of a new and growing movement to do just that by linking food production, distribution, and consumption through regional “Food Innovation Districts.” A food innovation district is “a geographic concentration of food-oriented businesses, services, and community activities that local governments support through planning and economic development initiatives in order to promote a positive business environment, spur regional food system development, and increase access to local food.”¹⁶ Such districts do away with a narrow, produce-and-ship focus to extend the benefits of agricultural production through the business community (clusters,

retail opportunities, supply chain management, skilled workforce development) and the public at large (healthier food, stronger job market, development of a food-based cultural component). They are considered a tool for “economic gardening,” the practice of spending a community’s resources to help native businesses grow and expand rather than offering incentives to established businesses to relocate within the community (“economic hunting”).¹⁷

When United States Department of Agriculture deputy secretary Kathleen Merrigan presented her organization’s 2011 finding on food hubs, including the identification of 170 already operating across the country, she did so in Michigan and mentioned Traverse City’s Cherry Capital Foods specifically.¹⁸ The Food and Farming Network makes up one of The Grand Vision’s six issue area networks. As the region focuses on development of its comprehensive Food Innovation District, individual communities with the involvement of local growers and producers can adopt a narrower focus that is particularly well-suited to their contribution.

T3 – Residential

Residential zones are not always considered as part of the creation of an economic development strategy, but they are a critical part of a community’s economic

system. They are the places that workers, shoppers, and customers must travel to and from, and thus their location and accessibility can either fuel or choke the activity. Traditional suburbs in the southern portion of the Township offer a medium-density setting attractive to many, and the fact that most travel is necessarily done by car widens residents' comfortable reach. In addition to these traditional single-family developments, the Township intends to cultivate a "mixed housing" neighborhood type close to the new developments, to include clustered residential and open space subdivisions, small-lot residences, and apartments. These slightly more dense, diverse, and close housing options change the market base of the community by creating an expanded pool of workers and customers with an incentive to work and play nearby. As the neighborhoods, Acme Village, and Grand Traverse Town Center mature, they are envisioned to join the Grand Traverse Resort to build a cohesive, interconnected, mixed-use core in the Township.

T4 – General Urban Corridor

As described by the MIPlace curriculum, strategic placemaking as an economic development approach is specifically targeted to key activity centers, transportation corridors, and nodes of intersection. Acme Township's position at the nexus of US-31 and M-72 (Figure 14) offers two corridors and a development

Figure 14. Road classification map



“Traditionally, through thousands of years of human settlement, urban streets have performed multiple functions. Mobility was one of the functions, but economic and social functions were important as well. Retail and social transactions have occurred along most urban thoroughfares throughout history. It is only in the 20th century that streets were designed to separate the mobility function from the economic and social functions.”¹⁹

node, contributing significantly to its selection as a Growth and Investment Area in Grand Traverse County.

In the case of US-31 and M-72, the Grand Traverse Resort and Spa anchors the corner. Its contributions to the local economy are twofold: it draws tourist dollars from outside the community, and the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians is the largest employer within the community.

US-31 and M-72 are both considered “principal arterials” by the Federal Highway Administration’s National Functional Classification System. These roads provide the highest degree of mobility available without limiting access through the use of on- and off-ramps or grade-separated intersections. Traditionally, this has meant a road design that is fully auto-centric, with wide rights-of-way and turning radii, high speed limits, and few if any accommodations for other modes of transportation. The Acme community is an excellent example of the limitations of this single-focus approach. As settlements take shape around heavily-traveled nodes in order to benefit from the activity generated there, the character of the area undergoes a shift from a place that is simply passed through to a place with its own set of diverse needs and users which are not accommodated by the principal arterial.

The Institute of Transportation Engineers has taken a bold step in recognizing these shifts by partnering with the Congress for the New Urbanism to author “Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach.”¹⁹ This publication expands current thinking about roadway systems beyond basic engineering for vehicular speed and volume to consider network linkages, community character, adjacent land uses, multimodal travel choices, and environmental concerns. By making these design choices carefully, communities like Acme can continue to enjoy the benefits of their heavily-traveled location while simultaneously creating an attractive and multi-functional “place” that fosters its own economic activity.

Vacancies in the traditional business district along the US-31 corridor signal a readiness for departure from that model and offer potential for infill redevelopment. Two large-scale commercial placemaking projects, shown in Figure 15, are underway along the M-72 corridor:

- Acme Village: This is a late-1990s planned development which focused on professional offices and health-care related businesses. Based on recent market demands, this concept may be re-visited by the owner and modified accordingly.
- Grand Traverse Town Center (formerly known as Village at

Grand Traverse) is a planned mixed-use development. Components of the planned development include retail, restaurant and entertainment uses, as well as, single family and multiple family residential.

The shoreline urban parks system along US-31, far from being an accessory or “extra” feature, plays a defining role in Acme’s use of placemaking as an economic development strategy. Placemaking proceeds from the premise that human-scaled, well-designed spaces influence the behavior of people by attracting them, and that a critical mass of human activity yields economic benefit. The new Bayside/Marina Parks System enjoys an enormous advantage in that its creation was citizen-driven—its importance to the public was indicated even before its existence—and it has been designed with clear linkages to the adjacent business and mixed-use districts. This parks system has the potential to be the “face” of Acme Township, a unique and memorable feature that serves as a brand for the overall community.

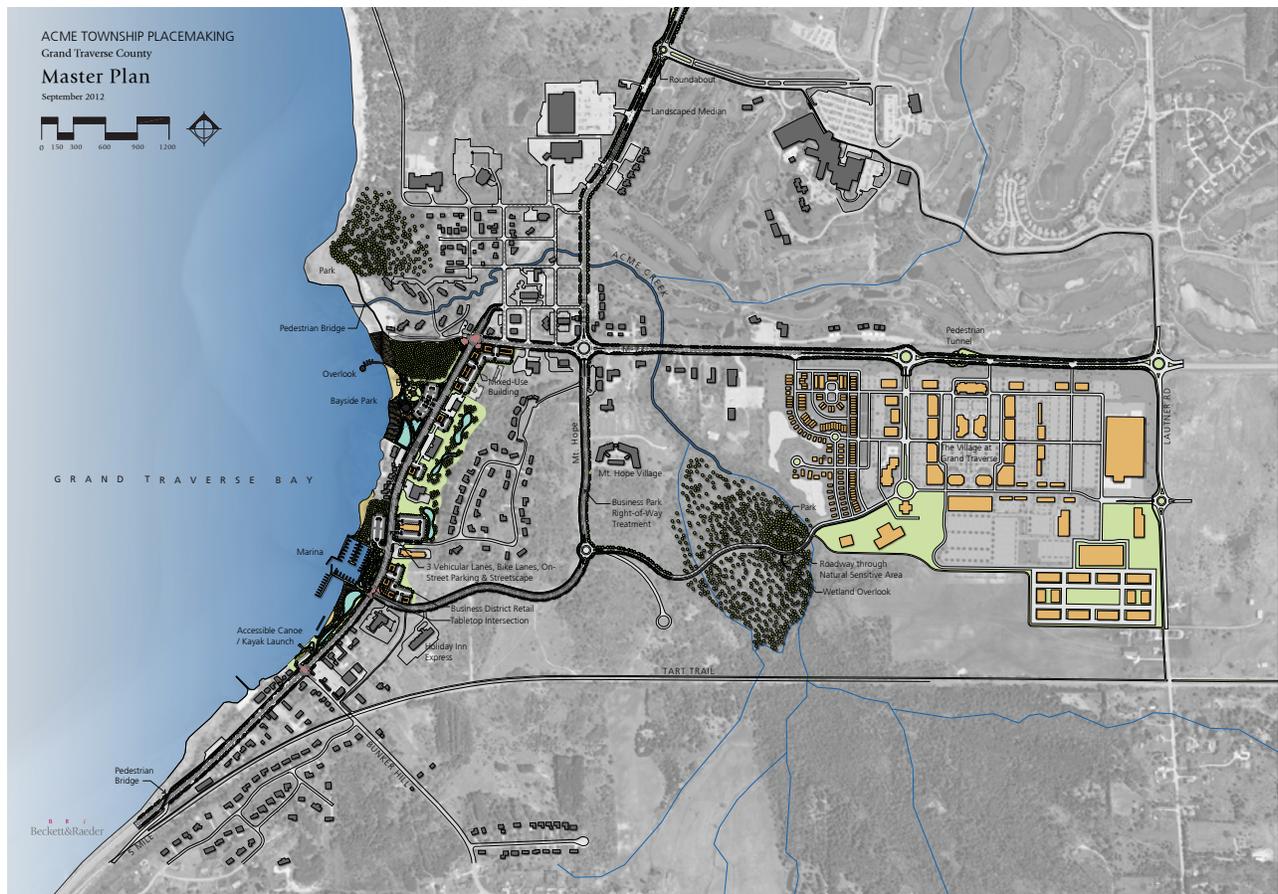
Acme Township residents cited recreation/tourism as their top priority for development (55.1%). Because the economic benefits of parkland are not represented in a single transaction, they can be easy to overlook or misunderstand, but a growing body of research

has consistently documented such benefits. The Trust for Public Land’s 2003 publication “The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space” offers an overview. “Numerous studies have shown that parks and open space increase the value of neighboring residential

property. Growing evidence points to a similar benefit on commercial property value. The availability of park and recreation facilities is an important quality-of-life factor for corporations choosing where to locate facilities and for well-educated individuals choosing a place to live. City parks such

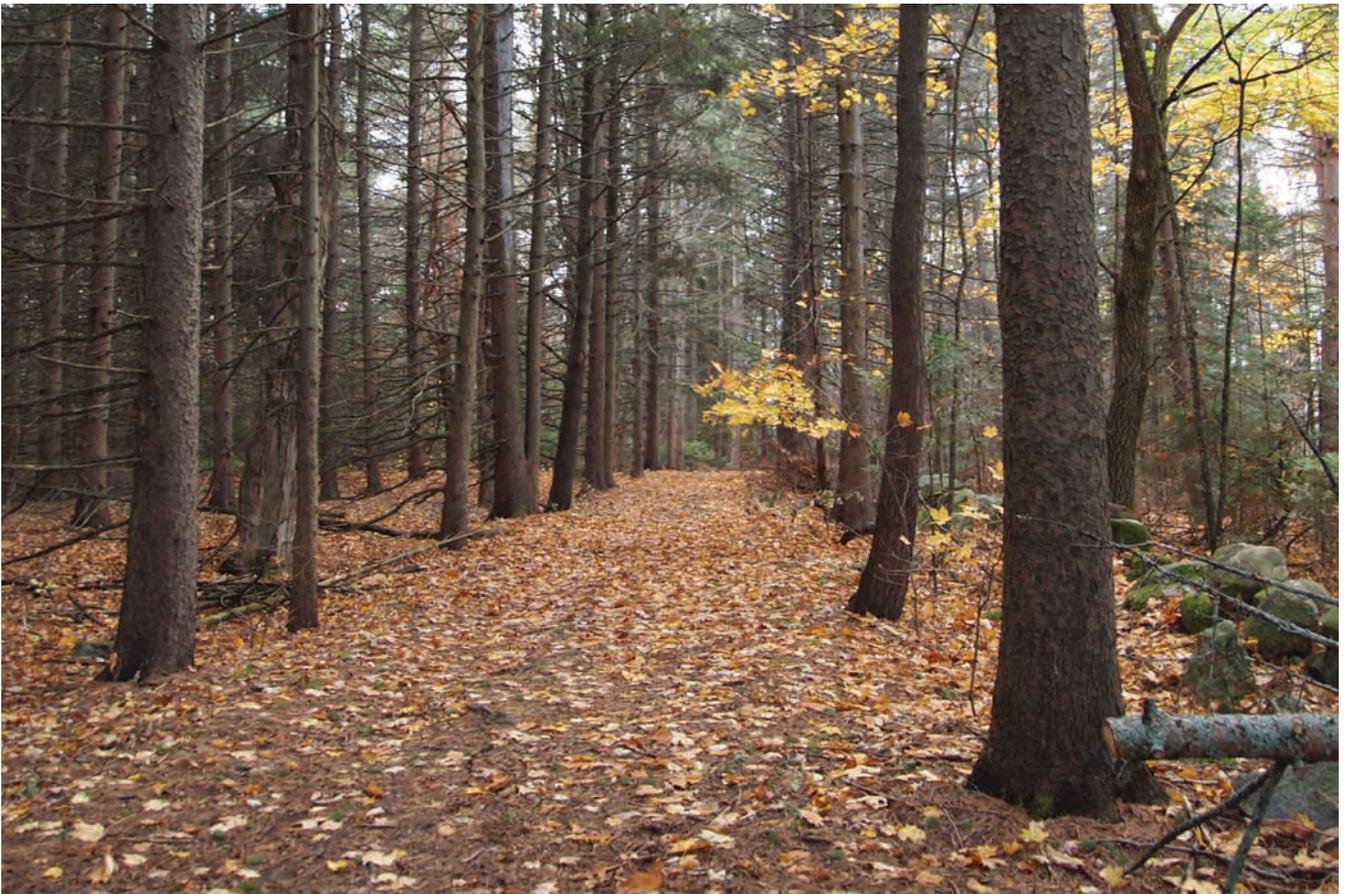
as San Antonio’s Riverwalk Park often become important tourism draws, contributing heavily to local businesses.”²⁰ The paper’s text and bibliography go on to quantify parks’ further contributions to a community’s health, environment, infrastructure, and social fabric.

Figure 15. Acme Township Placemaking Project master plan

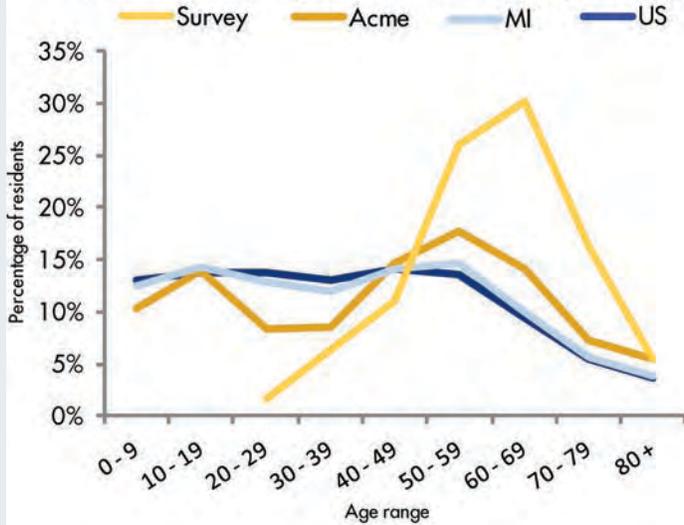


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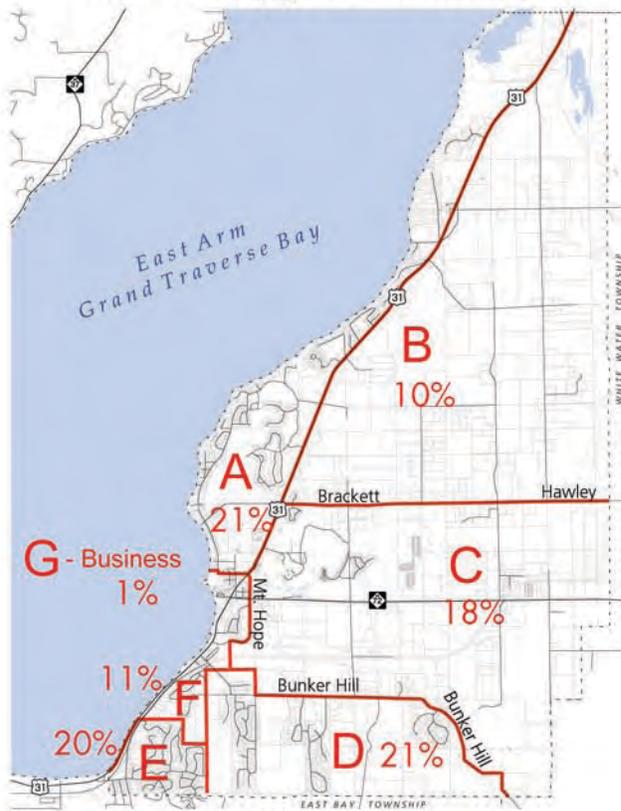
PREFERRED FUTURE



What category below includes your age?



Please indicate in which area of the township you are located.



COMMUNITY VISIONING AND EXPECTATIONS

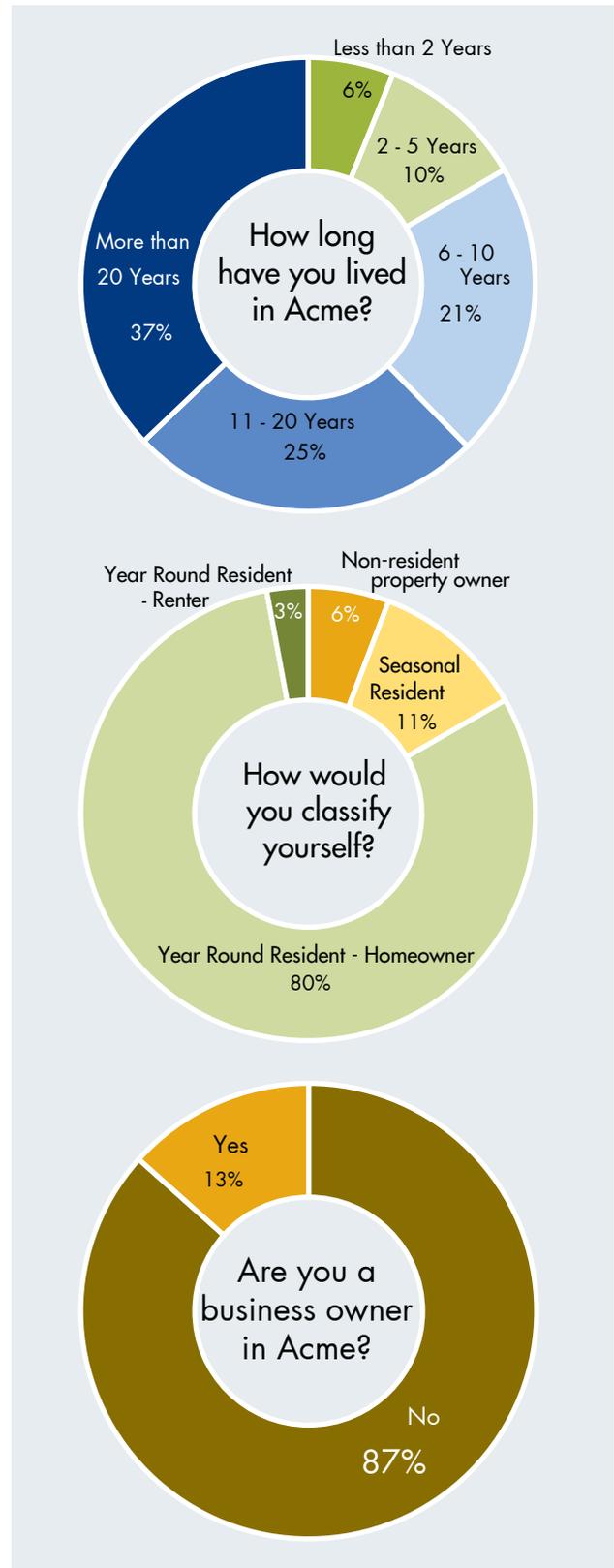
Community Survey

The primary method of collecting public opinion for use in this Master Plan was a community-wide mail survey sent to 2,400 Acme Township households and business April 9, 2013. A total of 584 completed surveys constituted an approximate 24% response rate; the overall sample consisted of 499 resident/non-business owners and 77 business owners (eight respondents did not designate a status). The overall margin of error, based upon a contact database of 2,922 households and businesses combined, was +/-3.63%.

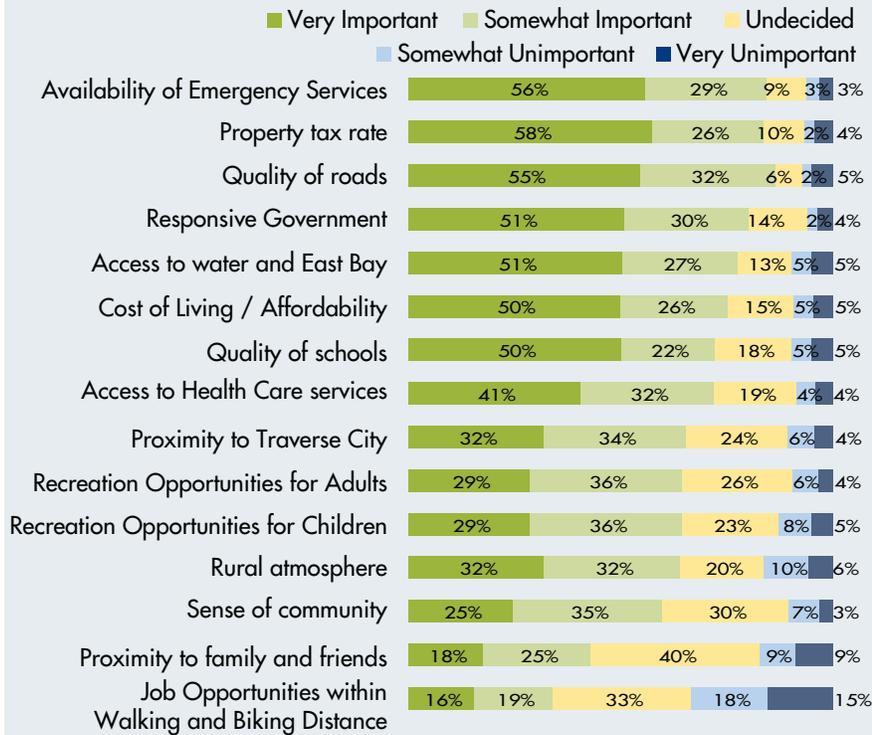
Respondents were given a series of 16 issues and asked to both indicate the issue's importance to them and to rate Acme Township's performance with regard to it. Issues most frequently identified as Very Important include Property Tax Rate, Availability of Emergency Services, and Quality of Roads (58%, 56%, and 55%, respectively). Acme Township received the highest ratings (Excellent, Above Average) regarding Proximity to Traverse City, Access to Water and East Bay, and Availability of Emergency Services (31%, 29%, and 25%, respectively). With regard to the issues assessed, the largest gap between importance and rating of Acme Township is found with Quality of Roads.

Eighty-eight percent of survey respondents indicated they are Somewhat or Very Satisfied, overall, with the quality of life in Acme Township. Concerning satisfaction with current services, respondents expressed the highest levels of satisfaction with Recycling Center and Emergency Medical Services/Fire Protection, while the lowest levels of satisfaction were assigned to Road Condition/Maintenance, Zoning/Blight Enforcement, and Public Transit Service. Regarding a variety of issues which could be pursued within Acme Township in the next 10 years, the majority of respondents indicated they believe Road Maintenance/Reconstruction should be pursued "Even if it raises my taxes," while the majority also indicated they believe Recycling Center and Senior Services should be pursued "Only if it does not raise my taxes." In addition, the majority of respondents indicated they do not believe Web/Televised Township Meetings, Community Newsletter (mailed), or New Township Hall should be pursued.

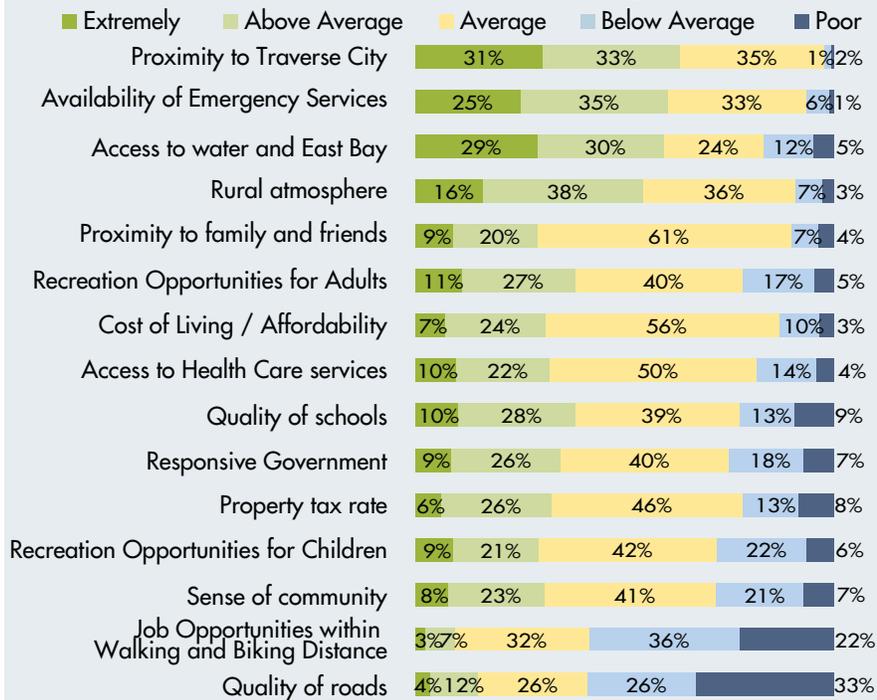
When presented with a list of statements regarding options for growth and development in the township, approximately 50% indicated they would prefer to "Encourage new growth and development," while 32% expressed preference for "Maintain current rate of growth and development." Approximately 39% of survey respondents indicated they are Likely to vote to continue the township's current special property tax millage for Farmland Preservation when it is up for renewal in 2013-2014; approximately 31% of respondents indicated they are not likely to vote in support of renewal. Respondents most frequently identified Recreation/Tourism, Retail (locally owned), Restaurants/Entertainment,



How important is this issue to you?



How would you rate Acme Township with regard to this issue?



and Residential (single family) as high priority for development in Acme Township (55%, 53%, 49%, and 41%, respectively). Similarly, respondents were asked to rate each of several characteristics based upon priority for protection. While five out of six characteristics were rated High Priority by the majority of respondents, Water Quality for Streams/Watersheds/ East Bay and East Bay Shoreline received the strongest support, with 83% and 75%, respectively, assigning High Priority ratings.

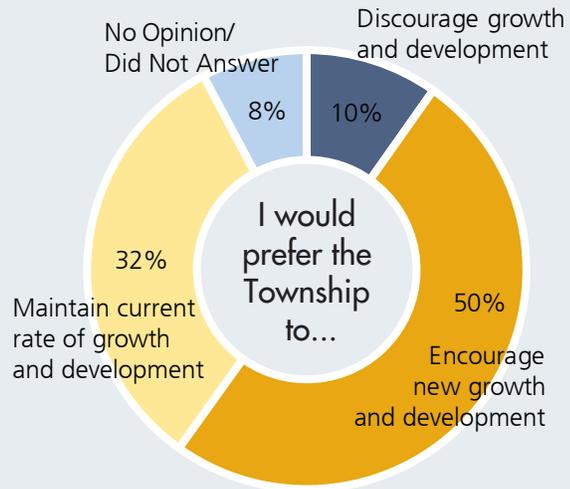
Concerning desirability when planning for US-31 in Acme Township between M-72 and 5 Mile Road, the majority of respondents rated "Promote safe, fast and efficient traffic flow" and "Meet the needs of vehicular traffic" as Very Desirable (60% each); approximately one-third of respondents rated "Should remain the same" Very Undesirable. With regard to desirability when planning for M-72 in Acme Township between Lautner Road east to Arnold Road, the majority of respondents (62%) rated "Promote safe, fast and efficient traffic flow" as Very Desirable, while 47% rated "Retain opportunities for agriculture" as Very Desirable; 48% and 46% of respondents rated "Strip

commercial development” and “Industrial/Warehousing,” respectively, Very Undesirable.

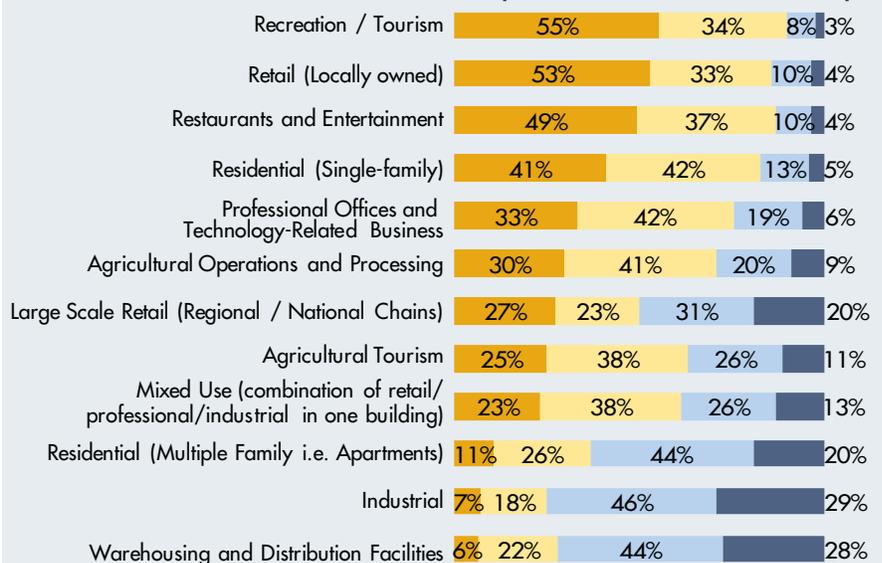
When considering the current amount of several types of housing in the Township (Senior Citizen, Low/Moderate Income, Work Force Housing, Assisted Living), the majority of respondents, in each instance, indicated there is “The Right Amount;” however, 46% of respondents indicated there is currently “Too Little” Senior Citizen Housing and 42% indicated there is “Too Little” Assisted Living.

With regard to a series of zoning issues, the majority of respondents rated “Junk/Trash Quantity Restrictions,” “Noise Regulations,” and “Signs-Size Regulations” High Priority (61%, 58%, and 51%, respectively). In addition, the majority of respondents (64%) rated “Guest House on same lot as Primary House” a Low Priority.

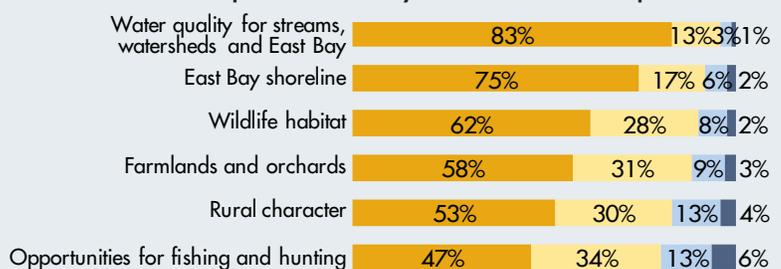
Respondents most frequently cited Grand Traverse Resort, Bayside Park, and TART Trail as public/private outdoor parks, trails and/or indoor recreation facilities used “Several Times a Year” (51%, 38%, and 32%, respectively). With regard to recreational facilities/services initiatives, the majority of respondents



Rate each of the following as a priority for... development in Acme Township.

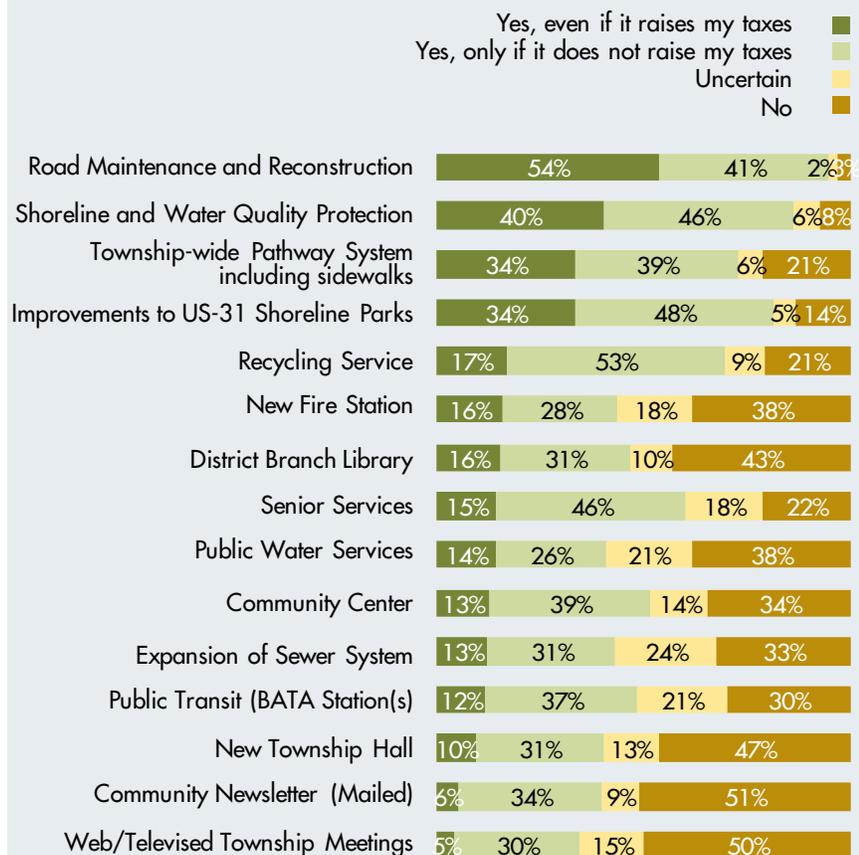


protection by Acme Township.

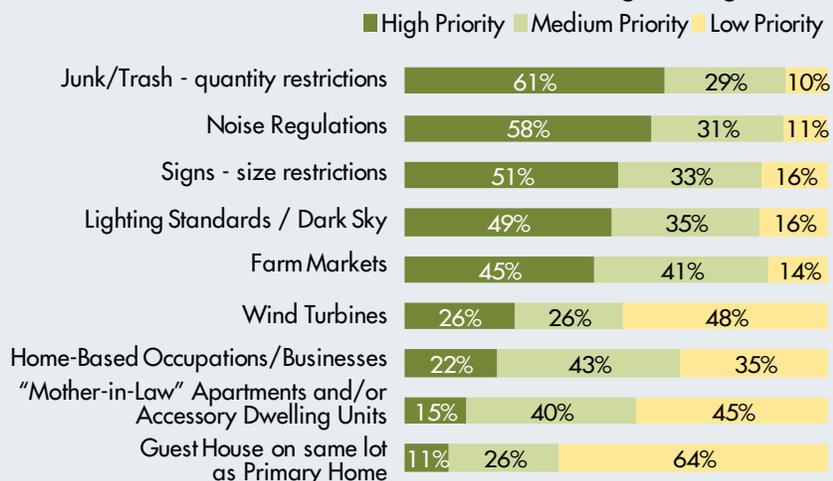


■ High Priority ■ Medium Priority ■ Low Priority ■ Not a Priority

With regard to funding, do you believe the following initiatives should be pursued in Acme Township over the next 10 years?



Rate each of the following zoning issues



indicated they "Strongly Agree" Acme Township should support the development of trails that connect with other adjacent parks and the TART Trail, Acme Township should have an adequate public boat launch, and Parks and recreation facilities/services are important to our community and worthy of taxpayer support (62%, 56%, and 54%, respectively). When asked to indicate which of several recreation facilities/activities Acme Township should plan for and develop, top three cited as "First Choice" include Fishing Access Areas, Non-Motorized Trails, and Swimming Beach (49%, 47%, and 46%, respectively).

Regional Agency Meeting

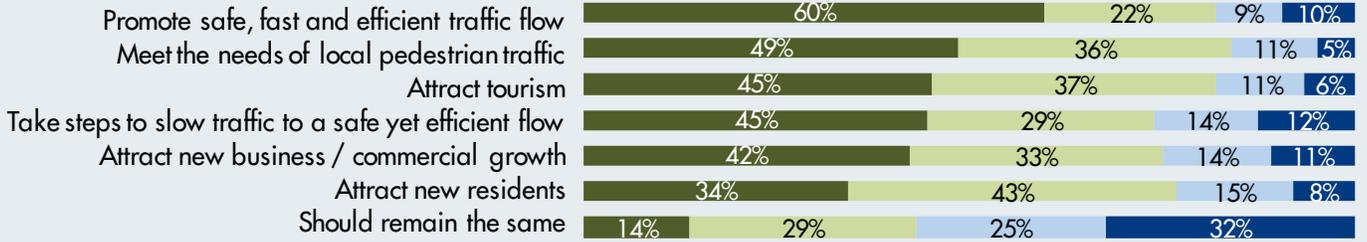
In the interest of collaboration, shared resources, and good communication, 39 representatives from adjacent and inclusive jurisdictions and area agencies were asked to join Acme Township representatives for a discussion of mutual goals and concerns. A short survey was distributed along with the invitation. The work session, held on February 5, 2013 at the Bayview Inn Bar and Grill, was attended by 17 of the invitees.

A large portion of the conversation focused on motorized and nonmotorized transportation. The Michigan Department of Transportation provided an update

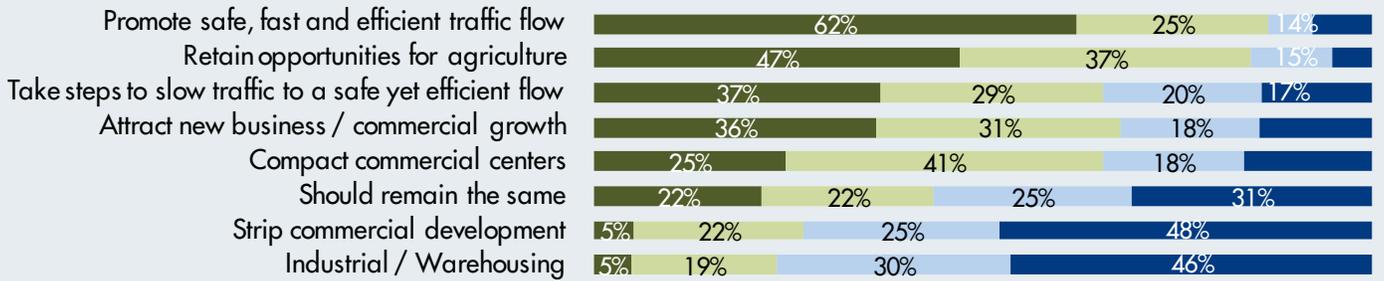
Please rate each of the following in terms of desirability when planning for...

■ Very Desirable ■ Somewhat Desirable ■ Somewhat Undesirable ■ Very Undesirable

US-31 between M-72 and 5 Mile



M-72 between Lautner Road and Arnold Road



Visual Preference Survey

M-72



Existing condition with sidewalks
37%



Landscaped right-of-way with shared pathway
31%



Landscaped median with shared pathway
37%

US-31



Existing conditions
22%



3 lanes with on-street parking, bike lanes, sidewalks
43%



3 lanes, sidewalks, lights, retail/office buildings closer to US-31
21%

on planned projects, including construction along US-31 between Three Mile and Holiday Roads and potential pedestrian improvements at two locations. East Bay Township and the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians (GTBO&C) both mentioned an interest in pedestrian safety and access management along US-31. Whitewater Township joined as the discussion turned to M-72; a signal or roundabout at the entrance to the Turtle Creek casino was suggested twice. The Traverse City Area Transportation and Land Use Study, currently working on a long-range transportation plan (2015), offered to review the future land use plan and make any needed changes to the regional traffic demand model.

Traverse Area Recreation and Transportation Trails encouraged the use of Complete Streets as a strategy for expanding road access to a broader range of users. The agency's stated priority was completion of the linkage between Bunker Hill and Lautner Roads, and working with the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy to use existing County roads to connect Acme Township with Elk Rapids. The Bay Area Transportation Authority expressed a desire to collaborate on bus and transit stops, suggesting a regional wayfinding system including Acme, East Bay, and Elmwood Townships as well as Traverse City. It also noted the potential for an Acme Township transfer station. The Disability Network advocated

projects that are walkable, bikeable, and/or connected to public transit, and offered to review the master plan and site plan for issues related to accessibility.

The Grand Traverse County Planning and Development department reiterated its identification of Acme Township, specifically at the US-31 and M-72 interchange, as a "Growth and Investment Area," adding that these are "priority areas for implementation of [the Grand Vision's] land use, economic development, and housing programs" and that the County "is also interested in the expansion and development of the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Counties trust lands and the impact on tax revenues." However, the Grand Traverse Metro Fire Department cited the availability of public water as a priority for new development, and the GTBO&C mentioned water as a "critical element" in the development of the Grand Traverse Town Center. The GTBO&C partnered with the GTTC for water services, and stated that while it has no immediate plans for its 168 acres, it is in master planning discussions and intends to provide its own infrastructure.

Other issues included water quality, which was a primary concern of both The Watershed Center and the Grand Traverse County Health Department. Low impact development stormwater

practices, e-coli monitoring in the East Bay, and particular attention to septic systems in residential development were recommended. The Northwest Michigan Council of Governments reported that it is working on a regional energy policy that will include the Township, and the Grand Traverse Metro Fire Department said it was looking for a new fire station building.

Business Owner Meeting

All members of the Acme Township business community were invited by mail to an input meeting on February 6, 2013; a small questionnaire and relevant sections of the previous master plan accompanied the invitations. Approximately 40 business owners attended the meeting, which was held in the conference room at Hope Village.

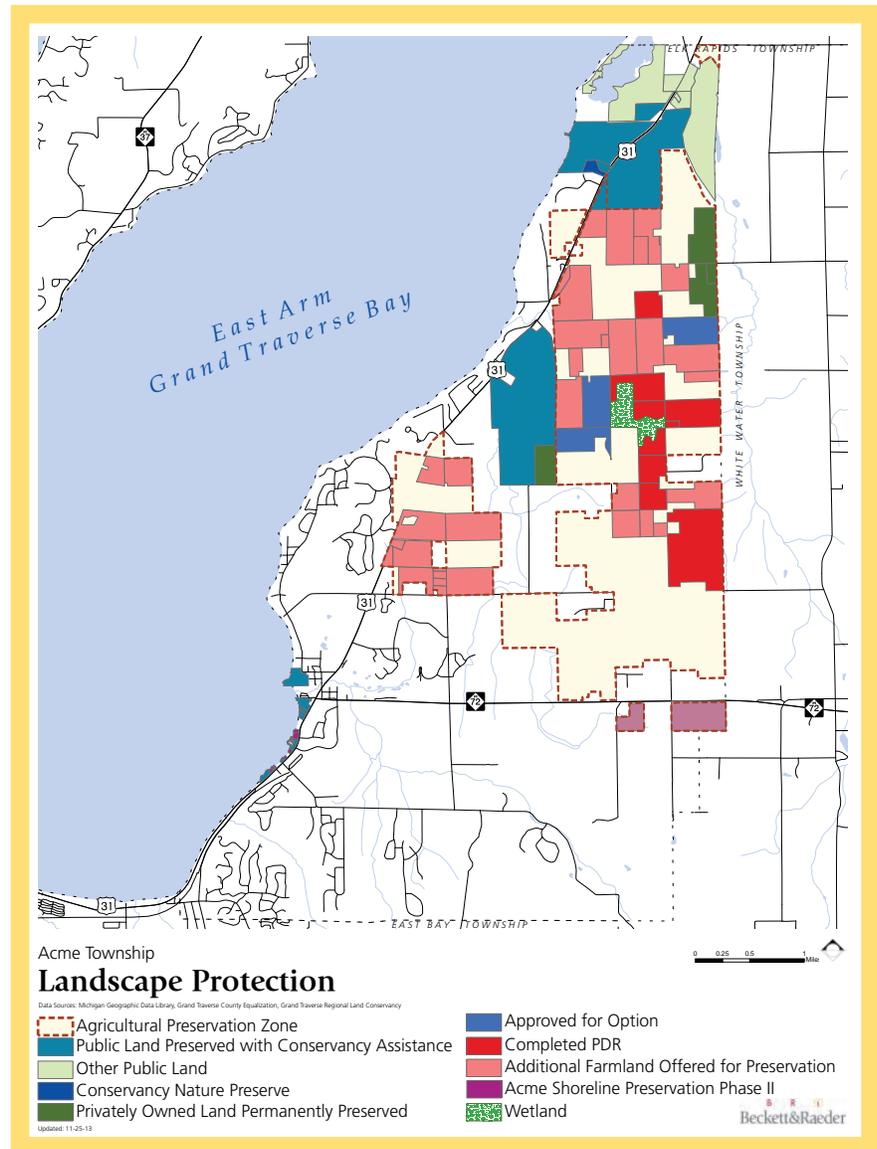
When asked what services they required from the Township, the business owners cited water, sewer, underground utilities along the shoreline parks, road improvements, traffic control such as a left-turn arrow from US-31 onto M-72 and a signal light at the Grand Traverse Resort, signage, expanded or improved recreation facilities (specifically, a new soccer field and repaired volleyball court), and a more professional Township website to attract new business. Planning and zoning recommendations included reduced building setbacks along US-31 and M-72, expanded uses in the industrial district, use of

Figure 16: Landscape protection map

incentives to attract business, and an expedited permitting process. Participants repeatedly emphasized cooperation between government and the business community, as exemplified by the statement that “government and businesses need to work together to create an atmosphere where commerce drives capital, creates jobs, spurs growth in housing sales, preserves land, etc.” Finally, attendees expressed a “need to attract Millennials [people born between 1980 and 2000] and younger families” who could become business owners themselves and thus increase economic activity. They recommended an active social media presence and a peer-conducted marketing campaign.

Agriculture Community Meeting

Several members of Acme Township’s farming community gathered at Acme Township Hall on January 30, 2013 to discuss master planning issues relevant to agriculture. A primary concern was the desire for more flexibility with regard to the use of their property. They recommended zoning changes which would encourage related uses within an existing agricultural operation, such as a farm market, wine tasting room, restaurant serving locally produced fare, and other agricultural tourism uses. They also wished to expand that flexibility to include other commercial uses, such as the ability to lease out available accessory buildings



“Acme Township’s agricultural lands are an economically important resource. These lands support a locally important and globally unique agricultural industry, which includes excellent fruit production and processing, dairy, livestock, food from grains, and vegetables, as well as nursery and greenhouse crops. The climate, micro-climate, topography, and accessibility of the area make Acme Township uniquely suited for the production, processing, and distribution of agricultural products on a regional, national, and international level.”

— Acme Township Protection of Development Rights Ordinance ²¹

regardless of whether the incoming tenant intended to conduct farming activities in them. Permitting the construction of additional family homesteads on the property without subdividing the parcel was another suggestion.

With regard to residential development in general, participants overall favored a clear delineation between agricultural and residential uses. Concerns about encroachment of residential development into active agricultural areas included issues related to spraying, equipment use, noise, and hours of operation. They recommended maintaining a 1 unit per 5 acre density for rural development, with the possibility of reviewing clustered development at 1 unit per 2.5 or 2 acres. Defined development, as in a hamlet or small settlement, was preferred. Other issues cited were management of deer and other invasive species and traffic speeds on US-31, particularly north of M-72, which present a safety issue when moving machinery across the road or traversing the highway between parcels.

Farmers in attendance viewed Acme Township's purchase of development right (PDR) program as the single most useful resource available to protect existing farms from future encroachment, though they

expressed a preference for a less restrictive program. In 2004, Acme Township became one of only two communities to pass an ordinance participating in the Grand Traverse County Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program (Figure 16). Under the agreement, the County establishes criteria for eligible lands, determines whether PDR applications should be accepted, approves the restrictions on the subsequent easement, establishes the prices, and oversees compliance monitoring. For its part, the Township establishes the amount of matching funds to be available on an annual basis (voters approved a 10-year, 1-mill levy that is expected to raise \$3.1 million through 2014), decides the allocation to be awarded to each application, and coordinates its efforts with the County.

Acme Shores (Placemaking) Visioning

In keeping with the concept of "placemaking" as a way to form lasting connections between people and spaces, the Acme Shores Coastal Redevelopment Project relied heavily on community engagement. A website was launched at www.acmeshores.org to host general information, a calendar of events, a photo gallery, project documents, and a communication link between the public and the

Leadership Team members. To gather input about the priorities of the redeveloped shoreline's potential users, a meeting was held with noncommercial property owners along US-31 in addition to a community-wide public meeting. Leadership Team members also hosted a public "Meet Your Beach" day on the redevelopment site, at which they spoke one-on-one with attendees and collected comment cards. About 72 citizens came to the public meeting, and about 80 shared their opinions at the beach. The top priorities from each session are summarized in Table 3.

After the plans and drawings for a revitalized Acme Township were completed, the public was again invited via postcard to a community meeting and offered the opportunity to provide feedback. This time, over 100 citizens came to view the drawings in person, and 223 unique visits were made to webpage hosting digital versions. Comment cards were distributed which gave an overview of the project, listed the public priorities incorporated in the plan, and presented small versions of the overall and park plan drawings. In addition to providing their positive and negative preferences, respondents also offered some additional ideas, presented in Table 4.

Table 3: Acme Shores visioning summaries

NONCOMMERCIAL PROPERTY OWNERS ON US-31	COMMUNITY-WIDE PUBLIC MEETING	"MEET YOUR BEACH" DAY
Balance of residential, commercial, recreational uses	US-31 bypass to the east	Access via foot and bicycle
Beach resembling state park at 3 Mile Road	Complete streets with walking and biking trails	Cleaner beach, including vegetation
Walkability / bikeability; link with TART	Open, pristine, beautiful beach and improved marina	Amenities: playground, buoys, picnic tables, accessible mat, restroom

Table 4: Acme Shores open house comments

LIKES	CONCERNS	OTHER IDEAS
Local US-31 bypass option; reduced lanes and speeds on US-31	Traffic: roundabouts, impact of lower speed on tourism	Parking area suggestions, including for trailers
Walkability and bikeability	Cost: can taxpayers afford it, loss of tax base to parkland	Encourage concerts, festivals, restaurants
Integration of nature, development, open space	Whether boat launch would work as expected	More kid-friendly areas
Aesthetic and swimming improvements	Parking for commercial district and boat launch	Nonmotorized water launches
Boat launch and associated parking		Process: establish "authority" for implementation; measure expectations so they can be delivered upon; continued regional collaboration
Process: consensus master plan		

The cornerstone...is derived from the first stone set in the construction of a masonry foundation, important since all other stones will be set in reference to this stone, thus determining the position of the entire structure.

- Wikipedia

COMMUNITY CORNERSTONES

As defined by its name, “cornerstone,” the Acme Township cornerstones are the key components of the community building process, which in turn has its foundation in the Grand Traverse County Master Plan and the Grand Vision. When the foundation, cornerstones, and building blocks lock together, they construct a well-defined community which is supported by county and regional initiatives.

The cornerstones presented on the following pages are derived from the community input process and shaped by Acme Township’s planning commission and elected officials. They represent the overarching goals of the community and are supported by specific objectives and strategies, here called “building blocks,” that the community will take to achieve its goals.

CORNERSTONE: FOCUS ON INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT.

About 90 miles of road run through Acme Township. Just over half of them (46.8 miles) are rated “poor” according to the state’s Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER), a mandatory visual survey conducted by transportation professionals, and another 31.7 miles are rated “fair.” Overall, then, just 13% of the Township’s roads are in good condition. Residents have taken notice, responding to the community survey with top-frequency statements like “We should pursue road maintenance even if it raises my taxes” (54.9%), “I am very dissatisfied with the roads” (39.7%), and “Acme Township is doing a poor job on the quality of its roads” (33%).

There is also a need for public water to serve the business district. At a meeting of regional agencies and neighboring communities convened for the purpose of discussing the Acme Township Master Plan update, the Grand Traverse Metro Fire Department called public water for new commercial growth “a priority for new development,” and members of the business community also cited water, sewer, and stormwater as the top services they need from Acme Township. Discussions regarding the need for a public water system reference back to the Acme Township Infrastructure Citizens Advisory Committee Township/Tribal Bulk Water Agreement Task Force in 2005. Further, the Grand Vision identified the portion of Acme Township in proximity to US-31 and M-72 as a “Growth and Investment” area for development, job creation, and new housing.

The lack of public water and the inability to meet building and fire codes is a particularly pressing issue for the redevelopment of the US-31 and M-72 corridors. The Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians has partnered with the Grand Traverse Town Center for water, a critical element of development for that property, and a potential partnership with the Township may be a reasonable and cost effective solution.

Building Blocks

1. Complete an assessment of all public roads and utilize PASER System to determine the status of road conditions, and create a database to establish priorities and funding levels. (Community Survey Table 7, 9, 10)²²
2. Continue collaboration with the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians on infrastructure projects, especially public water. (Community Survey Table 7)
3. Incorporate into Township projects, properties, and Ordinances specific practices and provisions to improve the quantity and quality of stormwater treatment and handling, especially low event storm flows. (Community Survey Table 14)
4. Prepare a capital improvements programs for the Township which include strategies and potential budgets for water, sanitary sewer, stormwater, and road improvements. (Community Survey Table 10)
5. Collaborate with Metro Fire on the location of new Fire / EMS station. (Community Survey Table 7 and 9)



CORNERSTONE: DEVELOP A TRAIL SYSTEM THAT CONNECTS TO LOCAL PARKS AND THE TART TRAIL.

The Traverse Area Recreation and Transportation (TART) trail begins its journey toward Traverse City from the intersection of M-72 and Bates Road in Acme Township. From there, a bike route provides a connection to the VASA pathway into the Pere Marquette State Forest. Acme Township residents would like to see this non-vehicular mobility extended through more of their community. Over a third of survey respondents (34.5%) said they visit the TART or VASA trails at least once a week, and another 27.1% said they visit several times a month. A full 90% of residents agreed that “Acme Township should support the development of trails that connect with other adjacent parks and the TART trail,” with 62% offering “strong” agreement. When asked to select a recreation facility/activity Acme Township should plan for and develop, 99.9% of residents included “non-motorized trails” as one of their top three choices.

TART and the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy (GTRLC) are currently coordinating efforts to create a non-motorized connection with Elk Rapids, Charlevoix and the existing Little Traverse Wheelway to Petoskey and beyond. In addition, TART encourages the use of Michigan’s Complete Streets legislation as a strategy for expanding access to the street network for all users. Further, 55.1% of households in the Acme Township Resident and Business Survey noted Recreation/Tourism as a future economic growth activity for the Township. (Community Survey Table 13)

Building Blocks

1. Establish a formal agreement with the Grand Traverse County Road Commission regarding the classification and utilization of a “community street” based on their March 22, 2005 memorandum to the Township. As stated in the memorandum, “this proposed addition (community street) would allow a developer to reduce the width of asphalt from 30 to 24 feet and place the utilities inside the road right-of-way. What the Road Commission wants in return is for the developer, or future owners, to maintain the right-of-way outside the 24 foot roadway (including raised edges, curbing, shoulders, ditches etc.). The property owners and the utilities would also be required to hold harmless the Road Commission from any liability if the maintenance is not performed.” This type of street cross-section is ideal for vehicles and pedestrian because it allows for the non-road right-of-way to be used for sidewalks/pathways. (Community Survey Table 10)
2. Work with TART and Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy on the establishment of the BR-US 35 bike route through the Township along Bates Road to Elk Rapids Road. (Community Survey Tables 21, 22 and 23)
3. Preference should be given to trail locations in scenic areas which have minimal agricultural activity. (Community Survey Table 13)
4. Collaborate with MDOT, regional entities, and other local governments on a shared pathway network connecting the communities along the US-31 corridor. (Community Survey Table 22)
5. Establish public and private road standards for community streets in residential neighborhoods with densities exceeding 3.5 dwelling units per acre. (Community Survey Table 4)
6. Consult the 5-Year Parks and Recreation Plan for Township-road bike paths when reviewing new development projects for their incorporation and implementation. (Community Survey Table 4)
7. Collaborate with the Grand Traverse Town Center and MDOT on the implementation of the pedestrian tunnel under M-72. (Community Survey Tables 10 and 17)
8. Collaborate with MDOT and GTRLC on a pedestrian tunnel on US-31 at Maple Bay Farms. (Community Survey Tables 10 and 15)



CORNERSTONE: RECONFIGURE US-31 AND M-72 TO PROMOTE SAFE, FAST, AND EFFICIENT TRAFFIC FLOW WHILE MAINTAINING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL ROAD USERS.

Of the 1,464 crashes recorded in Acme Township by Michigan Traffic Crash Facts between 2004 and 2012, it is estimated that about 35% of them happened on US-31 between M-72 and 5 Mile Road, and another 6% took place on M-72 between Lautner and Bates Roads. Clearly, improved traffic safety in these locations can have an appreciable impact on the overall traffic safety of the Township. Residents felt similarly about both intersections: just under a third of residents said that the status quo at each of them is “very undesirable,” and another quarter called it “somewhat undesirable.” At a meeting convened to discuss planning and zoning issues specific to the agricultural community, attendees said that traffic speeds on US-31, especially north of M-72, are a safety issue when moving machinery across the road or traversing the highway between parcels.

The traffic issue is part of a delicate balance required for full utilization of the parks along the bay and the appropriate redevelopment of the corridor. About 60% of residents said it would be “very desirable” to “promote safe, fast, and efficient traffic flow” at each intersection. Just under half of respondents (48.6%) also felt it was “very desirable” to “meet the needs of local pedestrian traffic” on US-31 between M-72 and 5 Mile Road, and about the same percentage of respondents (47%) said it was “very desirable” to “retain opportunities for agriculture” along M-72 between Lautner and Arnold Roads. Successful placemaking along these corridors and nodes will take an integrated approach to both the proposed solutions and the jurisdiction of the problem-solvers. The Michigan Department of Transportation has included pedestrian improvements as part of planned construction along US-31 between 3 Mile and Holiday Roads, likely in the form of small median pedestrian refuges in two locations. East Bay Township has articulated concerns about US-31 that it shares with Acme Township, including speed, pedestrian safety, and access management. Both the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians and Whitewater Township are interested in traffic control measures at the entrance to Turtle Creek Casino, while East Bay and Whitewater Townships each have a shared interest in the form and quality of new development.

When asked to select a future configuration for US-31, 42.5% of survey respondents selected the option that included right-of-way landscaping, bike lanes in the road, and sidewalks. For M-72, 36.5% of respondents selected the landscape median with sidewalks and 30.5% selected the option calling for right-of-way landscaping and sidewalks.

Building Blocks

1. Collaborate with other US-31 communities to reduce the speed to 35 mph along certain portions of US-31 especially where pedestrian crossings would be appropriate.
2. Work with MDOT when road improvements are made on US-31 to implement the recommendations in the Acme Township Placemaking Plan. The recommendations include raised intersections at US-31 and M-72, US-31 and Mount Hope Road, and US-31 and Bunker Hill Road, a traffic signal at the Mount Hope Road

intersection, sidewalks and other pedestrian improvements. (Community Survey Table 15, 16 and 18)

3. Collaborate with BATA to install transit stops along US-31 and M-72. (Community Survey Table 9)
4. Work with MDOT to secure a signalized intersection at US-31 and Mount Hope Road to meet the needs of local pedestrian traffic and provide a safe crossing to Bayshore Park. (Community Survey Table 15)
5. Collaborate with the Grand Traverse Town Center and MDOT on the implementation of the pedestrian tunnel under M-72. (Community Survey Tables 10 and 17)
6. Collaborate with MDOT and GTRLC on a pedestrian tunnel of US-31 at Maple Bay Farms. (Community Survey Tables 10 and 15)
7. Standardize and install a street address labeling system along the M-72 and US-31 corridors to help identify businesses and properties for customers and emergency services.



CORNERSTONE: CREATE A VIBRANT, HIGH-QUALITY, COMMERCIAL AND MIXED USE DISTRICT.

Acme Township is noted as a “growth and investment center” in the six-county Grand Vision for northwest Michigan, specifically at the US-31 and M-72 corridors. This designation has the potential to transform both the look and feel of one of the busiest parts of Acme Township, particularly in conjunction with the forthcoming Grand Traverse Town Center. Residents felt it was “somewhat” or “very” desirable to attract new business and commercial growth on US-31 (75.2%) and M-72 (67.7%), and they also had definite preferences related to its form: 73.1% of residents found strip commercial development either “somewhat” or “very undesirable,” while 65.3% found compact commercial development either “somewhat” or “very desirable.” The business community requested traffic calming measures and a reduction in setbacks to 100’ or less; comments from that meeting also expressed a desire to “get the buildings down on the shoreline” and a “need to see something happening” along the shore.

The Township recently completed the Acme Township Placemaking study, which consolidates and connects the US-31 corridor between M-72 and 5 Mile Road with Acme Village and the Grand Traverse Town Center. The vision for this area is to establish a planned mixed use district which extends from Bayshore Park along the East Bay shoreline to Lautner Road. This area is planned to include more dense and compact residential and commercial development achieved through vertical mixed uses and the integration of amenities for walking and bicycling.

Building Blocks

1. Continue collaboration with the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians on infrastructure projects, especially public water. (Community Survey Table 7)
2. Review and modify the zoning ordinance to allow for greater residential density and vertical real estate development. (Community Survey Tables 11 and 13)
3. Consider the use of a form based code to effectuate the change outlined in the Acme Placemaking Plan. (Community Survey Table 11)
4. Ensure that off-street parking lots are inter-connected and properties have sidewalks wide enough to encourage outdoor dining, displays, and pedestrian activity.
5. Collaborate with other US-31 communities to reduce the speed to 35 mph on US-31. (Community Survey Table 17)



CORNERSTONE: MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF SURFACE AND GROUNDWATER THROUGHOUT THE TOWNSHIP, REGION AND THE GRAND TRAVERSE BAY WATERSHED.

Access to water and East Bay is “very important” to 50.5% of survey respondents. 43.1% of residents believe that shoreline and water quality protection should be pursued in the township over the next 10 years even if taxes must be raised to do it, and another 48.6% believe that it should be pursued if it does not raise taxes. Altogether, then, a total of 91.7% of residents support a focus on water quality. Asked about protection priorities, respondents cited “water quality for streams, watersheds, and East Bay” and “East Bay shoreline” most frequently as a “high priority” (83.4% and 75% respectively). Both the Watershed Center and the Grand Traverse County Health Department monitor the quality of the water in East Bay; the Watershed Center also encourages the use of low impact development stormwater practices in Acme Township.

Building Blocks

1. Adopt a new stormwater ordinance which includes an emphasis on low impact development and other techniques to manage the quantity and quality of storm water in new and redevelopment projects. (Community Survey Tables 10 and 14)
2. Incorporate low impact development (design) techniques into the zoning and stormwater ordinances, especially those that address low event storms, such as rain gardens and bioretention, rooftop gardens, sidewalk storage, vegetated swales, buffers, and strips. Other techniques include tree preservation, roof leader disconnection, rain barrels and cisterns, porous pavement and pavers, soil amendments, and impervious surface reduction. (Community Survey Tables 10 and 14)
3. Collaborate with the Watershed Center and the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians on E. coli and other water quality monitoring in East Bay and the Acme and Yuba Creek tributaries, and at nearby stormwater outflows.
4. Reinforce in the zoning and stormwater ordinances the use of riparian buffers adjacent to tributaries and wetlands and provisions to protect environmentally sensitive areas. (Community Survey Table 14)
5. Consult with the Grand Traverse Bay Watershed Protection Plan (December 2005, as updated) as it relates to Acme Township and those strategies focused on East Bay. In particular, measures which establish and promote land and water management practices that conserve and protect the natural resources of the watershed, such as, providing adequate setbacks for buildings, minimize development clearings by landowners and establish riparian buffers along waterways and tributaries, and protecting wetlands.
6. Continue to monitor legislative changes relating to hydraulic fracturing (“fracking”) and modify, where appropriate, revisions to the zoning ordinance relating to local control.



Photo, bottom: Karly Wentzloff

CORNERSTONE: ENCOURAGE RECREATION-BASED TOURISM.

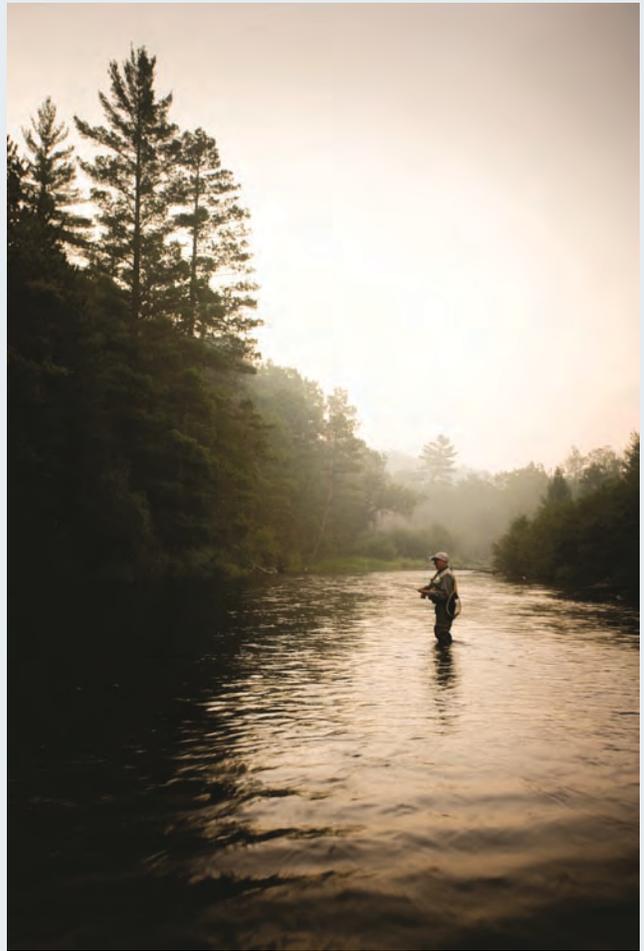
About half of survey respondents (50.2%) want to “encourage new growth and development,” and the greatest number of respondents (55.1%) cited “recreation / tourism” as a high priority for economic growth. In addition to widespread support for trail development (62.4% expressed “strong” support), 56.4% of residents “strongly agree” that the Township “should have an adequate boat launch facility,” and 54% “strongly agree” that “parks and recreation facilities and services are important to our community and worthy of taxpayer support.” When asked, “What services to you require from Acme Township?” members of the business community cited fixing the volleyball courts and expanded recreation facilities such as soccer fields. When asked to select their top three recreation activities, residents chose fishing access, non-motorized trails, and swimming on the beach.

The Township, in conjunction with the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy (GTRLC), has procured properties along East Bay for public recreation and open space. This effort was visually realized when the former Mountain Jack Restaurant and adjacent motel were demolished to reveal a long-hidden vista of East Bay and Lake Michigan. Phases 1 and 2, at a total cost of about \$7.3 million, focused on the acquisition and clearing of properties adjacent to Bayside Park, including The Shoreside Inn, The Willow Beach, The Knollwood Motel, The Sun N’ Sand Motel, Mountain Jack’s Restaurant, and a vacant parcel north of Mountain Jack’s. The main house of the Knollwood Motel, formerly known as the Hoxie House (built in 1875 for Leonard Hoxie, founder of Acme), will be moved to a new location and maintained by the Acme Heritage Society as a historical museum.

To prepare the community for this eventuality, the Township commissioned a placemaking plan which included Bayshore Park and the newly acquired properties. Concurrently, the GTRLC, in conjunction with Grand Traverse County, acquired Maple Bay Farm with its unique and diverse ecosystems in the northern portion of the Township. Combined, these facilities create an enviable collection of active, passive, and natural parks.

Building Blocks

1. Implement the Action Plan in the Acme Township 5-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
2. Collaborate with other agencies to establish a water trail along West Bay, East Bay, and Lake Michigan for canoeing and kayaking. (Community Survey Tables 13 and 23)
3. Implement the proposed boat launch at Sayler Park and increase water access at other properties owned by the Township. (Community Survey Tables 13, 14, and 22)
4. Work with TART and Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy on the establishment of the BR-US 35 bike route through the Township along Bates Road to Elk Rapids Road. (Community Survey Tables 21, 22, and 23)
5. Implement proposed improvements for Bayshore Park. (Community Survey Tables 10, 13, and 22).
6. Work with MDOT when road improvements are made on US-31 to implement the recommendations in the Acme Township Placemaking Plan. The recommendations include raised intersections at US-31 and M-72, US-31 and Mount Hope Road, and US-31 and Bunker Hill Road, a traffic signal at the Mount Hope Road intersection, sidewalks and other pedestrian improvements. (Community Survey Table 15, 16 and 18)
7. Coordinate efforts with other bayshore communities to develop a regional wayfinding system and implement a local wayfinding system based on that regional network.



Photos: Grand Traverse Resort

CORNERSTONE: SUPPORT THE CONTINUATION OF AGRICULTURAL OPERATIONS AND PRESERVATION OF FARMLAND.

The community recognizes the value of farmland as an economic component of the local economy and also its intrinsic value as a rural landscape. Through the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy's purchase of development rights (PDR) program supported by a dedicated Acme Township millage, 220 acres of land is permanently protected. About 40% of survey respondents reported that they were "likely" to vote to continue this millage when it is up for renewal in 2013-2014, while another 20% were undecided and 10% did not reply. At a meeting convened to discuss planning and zoning issues specific to the agricultural community, representatives cited PDRs as "the single most useful resource to protect existing farms from further encroachment" and stated a preference for a less restrictive program than the one currently in use.

Agricultural community members also expressed a desire for zoning that allows them maximum flexibility in the use of their land for economic viability. Examples included zoning for related uses within an agricultural operation (e.g., farm markets, wine tastings, food service, agriculture-based tourism), allowing an "enterprise within an enterprise" such as leasing accessory buildings for non-farm operations, and building an additional family homestead on a property without subdividing a separate parcel. They were concerned about their relations with the inhabitants of residential development, noting that encroachment into active farmland raises issues related to spraying, equipment use, noise, and hours of operation. It was suggested that the current density of 1 dwelling unit per 5 acres of residential development be maintained, and that a possible option for 1 dwelling unit per 2 to 2.5 acres of clustered development be considered.

Approximately 63% of survey respondents selected agriculture-based tourism as medium to high priority for potential economic growth. Likewise, 88.6% rated farmland and orchards as a medium to high priority for protection.

Building Blocks

1. Continue the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program. (Community Survey Tables 12, 13 and 14)
2. Re-evaluate the agricultural zoning district and other agriculture-related zoning ordinance provisions to determine if modifications should be made to provide greater flexibility and uses with the district. (Community Survey Table 14)
3. In concert with the agricultural community, determine and map the location of airsheds within the Township. Further, incorporate provisions in the zoning ordinance to minimize their disturbance in areas zoned for agriculture.
4. Work with other Grand Traverse communities to promote and encourage other agricultural opportunities that are based on local food and fruit production.
5. Support regional food processing, production and distribution initiatives that provide added job growth and economic development for the Township and region.



Middle left and bottom photos: Karly Wentzloff

CORNERSTONE: CREATE A “COMMUNITY” ATTRACTIVE TO ALL AGE GROUPS.

Over half (56.1%) of all Acme Township residents who responded to the community survey were between 50 and 69 years of age. This age bracket represents just 31.8% of Acme residents as a whole, and less than a quarter of the populations of Michigan and the United States as a whole (24.6% and 23% respectively). The survey response demographics are an exaggerated version of the actual demographics in the township. Of particular note is the dip in population among people in their 20s and 30s—the generation known as “Millennials.” Their absence has been noticed by the business community, which has stated that the township needs to attract this cohort of younger families and business owners.

A separate cross tabulation of survey responses by age group highlighted distinct differences of opinion between those younger than 50 and those older than 50. For example, those residents under-50 age are willing to pay extra taxes for a Township pathway system, whereas residents over-50 crowd are not. Similarly, the younger cohort places a high priority on restaurants and entertainment, but the over-50 respondents identified it as a medium priority. “Quality of schools” and “Recreation opportunities for adults” was a high priority for younger respondents and a somewhat important priority for older residents.

Building Blocks

1. Developing codes for higher density mixed use development that attracts younger professionals and families and older “empty-nester” households. (Community Survey Tables 11 and 13)
2. Ensuring affordable, accessible housing in the Township. (Community Survey Table 19)
3. Creating transportation plans that work for all ages and abilities. (Community Survey Table 10)
4. Promoting walkability and public transportation. (Community Survey Tables 10, 15, 22 and 23)
5. Creating opportunities for intergenerational interaction.
6. Establishing an advisory group, creating goals and objectives to become a community for all ages.
7. Ensure that the zoning ordinance encourage small business development which creates job opportunities for local residents.



ACME TOWNSHIP FOUNDATION

A well-constructed building is built on a good and sturdy foundation. The cornerstones presented on the previous pages define the goals and strategies of Acme Township’s citizens and leadership. In the long term, understanding their relationship to county and regional initiatives allows the Township to leverage assets available from those organizations, as well as to position itself as a “collaborator” and a “partner.” Table 5 shows how the Acme Township’s cornerstones fit within the County and Grand Vision goals and guiding principles.

Table 5. Cornerstones and foundations

ACME TOWNSHIP CORNERSTONES	FOUNDATION: GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY MASTER PLAN GOALS	FOUNDATION: GRAND VISION GUIDING PRINCIPLES
Focus on infrastructure improvement	Plan for Transportation and Infrastructure	
Develop a trail system that connects to local parks and the tart trail.	Plan for Transportation and Infrastructure	Regional Multi-Modal Transportation System
Reconfigure US-31 and M-72 to promote safe, fast, and efficient traffic flow while maintaining a safe environment for all road users.	Plan for Transportation and Infrastructure	Regional Multi-Modal Transportation System
Create a vibrant, high-quality, compact commercial and mixed use district adjacent to the US-31 and M-72 corridors.	Revise development standards Plan for Town and Village Centers Address Housing Needs	Unique and Vibrant Communities A diverse mix of Regional Housing
Maintain and improve the quality of surface and groundwater throughout the township and in east bay.	Plan for Transportation and Infrastructure	Protect and Preserved Water, Forest, Natural and Scenic Areas Sustainable-energy uses in Construction, Transportation and Economic Development
Encourage recreation-based tourism.	Grow the Local Economy	Protect and Preserved Water, Forest, Natural and Scenic Areas
Support the continuation of agricultural operations and preservation of farmland	Preserve agricultural and rural	Local Farms and Regional Food Systems as a viable part of the economy
Create a “community” attractive to all age groups.	Collaborate and Plan Together	

TOWNSHIP PRIORITIES

Park System Along US-31

Acme Township, in partnership with the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, has expended \$3.5 million dollars and hundreds of hours of personnel and volunteer effort to acquire the former “Mountain Jack’s” property and other obsolete commercial properties for waterfront parks. Once the demolition of these buildings was completed in the summer of 2013, the waterfront along East Bay, long inaccessible to the community, was open. Plans are underway by the Parks Advisory Board to develop a system of connected parks which extend along US-31 from M-72 to Bunker Hill Road.²³ Once completed, this waterfront park system will provide a variety of outdoor recreation facilities for the community and serve as a destination of regional residents and tourists. This new “place” will also create opportunities for adjacent businesses and provide a platform for other mixed uses seeking to locate on an active urban waterfront.

As illustrated in the Acme Shores Placemaking process, the waterfront parks and the Grand Traverse Town Center, if connected by a

new internal road, can provide the downtown (Town Center) that was envisioned in the previous master plan. Combined with a Form Based Code to replace the various business zoning districts, this area can become a mixed use district providing a variety of retail, restaurant, entertainment and housing venues.

Public Water for Growth

Without a reliable source of potable water, growth will not occur as planned. For an area to develop as a compact, mixed use district, it needs a sufficient source of public water to satisfy the needs of consumers and residents, and to meet the requirements and standards of fire safety codes. The US-31 and M-72 corridors and the Acme Village property require public water. The Grand Traverse Town Center has an agreement with GTBO&C to provide water to the 188 acre mixed-use development. The Township will need to leverage this investment with a connection to a larger water network. Regardless of ownership or management, public water is a necessity to appropriately plan for and leverage development in this growth and investment corridor.

Connecting GTTC with Acme Village

Both the GTTC and Acme Village developments incorporate cross-access opportunities to connect with each other. This connection is critical to create an alternate internal access between the projects, resulting in a continuous road network between Lautner Road and US-31. The low-lying land along the Acme Creek corridor where both developments show stub streets and/or cul-de-sacs is an area of concern. In addition, it is not a requirement of either project to make the physical connection, only to provide for it. As a result, Acme Township will be required to serve as the conduit to make the project happen. When connected, the Township will have a planned roadway which balances the demand for vehicular traffic with the need to create a pedestrian environment. It will also provide a potential alternate route for evacuation.

Public Facilities

Both the Fire Department and Township Hall are in need of replacement. Although a new Township Hall is rated as a low priority by residents, the current facility is functionally obsolete for both operations and is not

an efficient or private workspace for Township administration.

One potential site is the property in the southwest portion of the Grand Traverse Town Center, near Acme Creek and the adjacent wetlands, which is designated as an institutional campus. The township hall should provide modern, technologically outfitted office space with defined offices, conference rooms, and a large assembly room for Board and Committee meetings. If practical, a district library branch would be appropriate to serve all age groups residing within the Township.

Agricultural Preservation and Expansion

As discussed previously, the Township has a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program that is being used by some agricultural property owners. During the meeting with the agricultural community, it was noted that the interest in the PDR program exceeds the funding for it. In addition to the PDR, the Township has adopted an Agricultural Tourism ordinance to provide property owners with other revenue opportunities. Another outcome of the meeting advanced the point that agriculture today is different than ten years ago and the need to review Township ordinances to lower the barriers which prevent ag-related activities.

Revitalization of the Business District

Traditional zoning ordinances have done a wonderful job of segregating land uses to an extent where vehicular transportation is the only practical way of getting from point A to point B. Unfortunately, this form of land development has resulted in some stark and extremely pedestrian-unfriendly environments where little activity outside of the car occurs. Subdivisions are developed without sidewalks, commercial buildings are surrounded by asphalt, and there is an absence of connectivity between uses. Another outcome of traditional zoning is that private property bears little relationship to the public space. Coupled together, these factors create wide streets void of pedestrian traffic, set buildings 50 to 100 feet back from the property line, and result in an expanse of asphalt (road and parking lots) sometimes two-thirds the width of a football field. A solution to this condition is planning and regulating the private and public space together, and the most effective tool is a Form Based Code. The results are private development that is conducive to pedestrian activity and mixed uses, and public spaces that are designed for both pedestrians and cars.

Road Maintenance

The condition of Acme Township's roads is top of mind among citizens who completed the survey. In addition to expressing dissatisfaction about the quality of infrastructure, many also added comments citing specific issues and areas. As noted in the Cornerstones, just 13% of Acme's roads are in good condition, so the Township's location at the nexus of US-31 and M-72 is an asset that could benefit from investment. According to the national transportation research group TRIP, Michigan motorists pay \$320 per year in extra vehicle repairs and operating costs due to driving on roads in need of repair; the Federal Highway Administration estimates that "each dollar spent on road, highway, and bridge improvements result in an average benefit of \$5.20 in the form of reduced vehicle maintenance costs, reduced delays, reduced fuel consumption, improved safety, reduced road and bridge maintenance costs and reduced emissions as a result of improved traffic flow."²⁴ The Michigan Transportation Team, a partnership of businesses, organizations, and citizens working to improve the state's transportation infrastructure, estimates that the state's roads and bridges could be maintained "at a high and safe level" if each motorist paid \$120 more annually.²⁵

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STRATEGIES AND LAND USE



Photo: Karly Wentzloff

COMMUNITY FRAMEWORK

Since the adoption of the previous Acme Township Master Plan in 1999, the Township has done an admirable job of implementing the recommendations that have guided the development of the Township (Figure 17). Specifically, commercial development has been concentrated along the US-31 corridor and within the area designated as the “Town Center,” farmland has been retained, and parkland has been acquired along East Bay.

Agricultural land uses are often considered part of a strategy to retain rural character and open space. However, agricultural land uses in Acme Township are considered a significant part of the local and regional economies. Rural landscapes and viewsheds are residual value added by successful agriculture, and the previous master plan carefully delineated the extent of this resource.

Residential development, designated south of M-72 and along the west side of the US-31 corridor, faltered between 2007 and 2012, resulting in the Township seeing a minimal amount of housing product added to its inventory. In 2013, housing construction began to increase as available market supply declined.

Although sometimes viewed as an anti-growth strategy, the current development pattern is tremendously

advantageous because it has prevented commercial sprawl and fragmented development along the M-72 corridor. In addition, the agricultural resources of the Township have remained intact, and some of the farms and orchards have opted to participate in the Acme Township PDR (purchase of development rights) program. The combination of concentrating commercial development in districts and nodes and working with the agricultural community to preserve productive farmland has positioned the Township well as a future growth and investment area.

The contextual framework of the Township can be divided into six broad land development patterns: Agricultural & Sensitive Lands, Residential–Shoreline, Residential–Neighborhood, Mixed Use Neighborhood, Resort and Tourism Related, and Trade and Warehouse (Figure 18).

1

Agricultural & Sensitive Lands

Agricultural lands are one of the primary land development patterns in Acme Township. The general geography extends north of Brackett Road and east of US-31 to Whitewater Township. A smaller unit of agricultural land is located south of M-72 bounded by M-72, Crisp Road, Lautner Road and Moore Road. Most of the eligible PDR agricultural properties are located north of M-72, with the

exception of the two areas south of M-72 and east of South Bates Road and southeast corner of M-72 and Arnold Road.

Also located within this zone are the Yuba Creek Natural Area, Petobego State Game Area, Maple Bay County Park, and properties owned by the State of Michigan in the southeast corner of the Township.

2

Residential - Shoreline

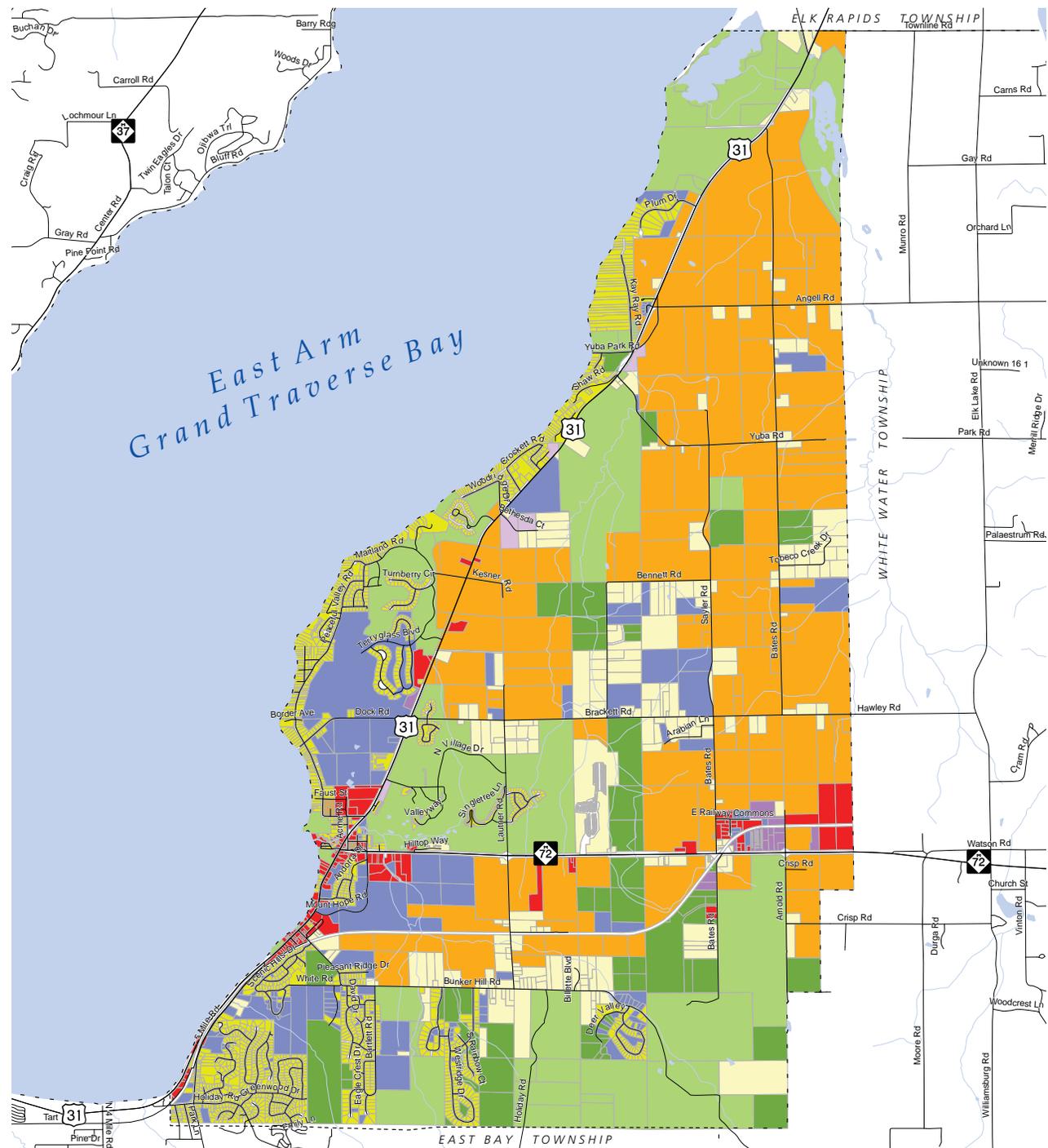
This zone occurs west of US-31 and north of M-72. Within this zone are different patterns of residential land development, including individual properties, condominiums, and planned subdivisions. For example, properties along Deepwater Point Road consist primarily of individual parcels with waterfront access to East Bay. As Deepwater Point Road converges into Peaceful Valley Road, there are several small developments grouped around Clearwater, Windale, and Haven Hill Lane. Lastly, there are planned developments which include LochenHeath, Ridge Top, Bayridge, and Windward Ridge.

3

Residential – Neighborhood

This land development pattern occurs exclusively south of Bunker Hill Road to the township’s border with East Bay Township. Within this area, there are forty-one (41) suburban-style subdivisions and/or condo developments including

Figure 17. Existing land use map



Acme Township

Existing Land Use

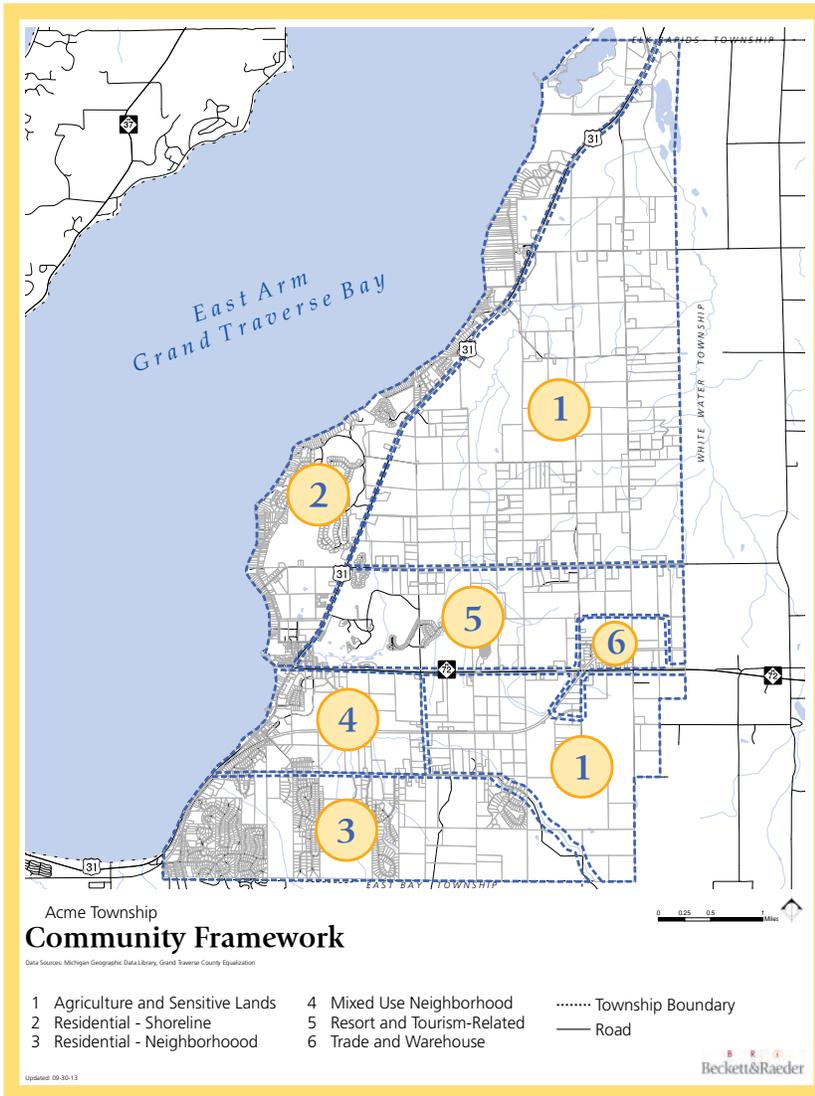
Data Sources: Michigan Geographic Data Library, Grand Traverse County Equalization

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Agriculture | Mass Assembly | Social / Institutional |
| Commercial / Business | Recreation / Conservation | Vacant / Undeveloped |
| Forest | Residential - Rural | Township Boundary |
| Industrial | Residential - Urban | Road |



Updated: 07-12-13

Figure 18. Community framework map



Cranberry Woods, Springbrook Hills, Wellington Farms, Holiday Pines, and Sherwood Estate, to name a few. Many of these homes are situated on lots of 1/2 acre or less along curvilinear streets which rely on a collector road, such as Holiday Road or Bunker Hill Road, for primary access. Void of sidewalks and lacking an integrated street network,

these subdivisions are primarily vehicular oriented, lack connectivity between neighborhoods, and are not walkable. Because the neighborhoods rely on Holiday Road and Bunker Hill Road for access, these roads accommodate more daily traffic than a similar subdivision with a more connected street network would experience.

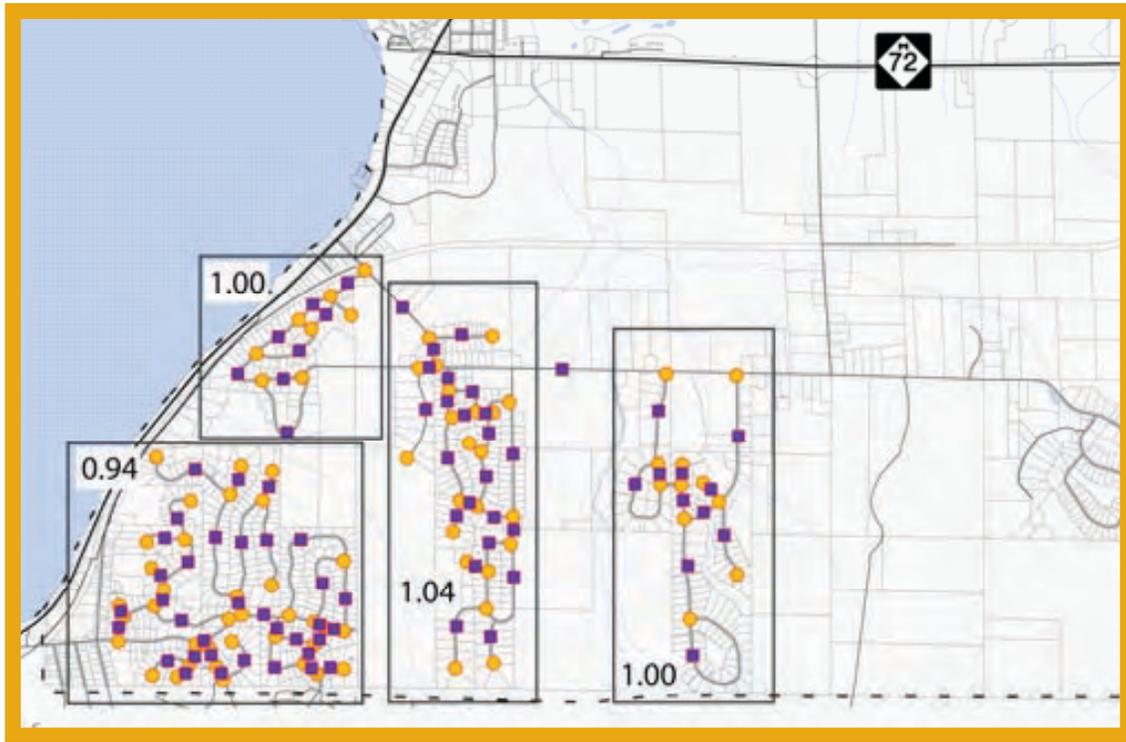
Street connectivity works when there are few dead-end streets and cul-de-sacs, and many points of access into and out of a residential neighborhood. Frequent intersections (nodes) create block lengths (segments or links) that are amenable to walking, bicycling, and transit. The connectivity index of a neighborhood can be measured by dividing the number of street segments by the number of street nodes (intersections and cul-de-sacs). A fully connected neighborhood has a connectivity index of 2.5. As illustrated in Figure 19, the connectivity index for Acme Township residential neighborhoods ranges from .94 to 1.04, which is an underperforming score. Unless these neighborhoods can be connected in the future, there is little that can be done to elevate this index. A lesson learned is not to encourage this form of residential neighborhoods development in the future.

4

Mixed Use Neighborhood

This is an emerging land development pattern in the Township. Generally bounded by M-72, US-31, Bunker Hill Road and Lautner Road, it includes planned developments known as the Grand Traverse Town Center and Acme Village along Mount Hope Road. These developments include a variety of mixed land uses including residential, retail, professional

Figure 19. Residential neighborhood connectivity index



offices, and institutional. Residential development includes a mix of single family and multiple family residential. This zone was included in the Acme Shores Placemaking Plan and based on current vested development approvals will develop into a mixed use district and business district for Acme Township. The 1999 Community Master Plan, as amended, established this zone as the Town Center for the Township, focusing commercial and mixed development within a district rather than along M-72 in the form of commercial sprawl. The opportunity to define Acme Township as a Growth and Investment Center within the Grand Traverse Region

will be determined by the eventual build-out of this zone.

5

Resort and Tourism Related

This is a unique area of the Township which extends east of US-31 between Brackett Road and M-72 to Whitewater Township. Within this area are the Grand Traverse Resort and Spa, the Bear and Wolverine Golf Courses accessed from US-31, the RV Park on M-72, and Horse Shows by the Bay located on Bates Road. Just over the Township border with Whitewater Township is the Turtle Creek Casino and Hotel. The largest property owner within this zone is the Grand

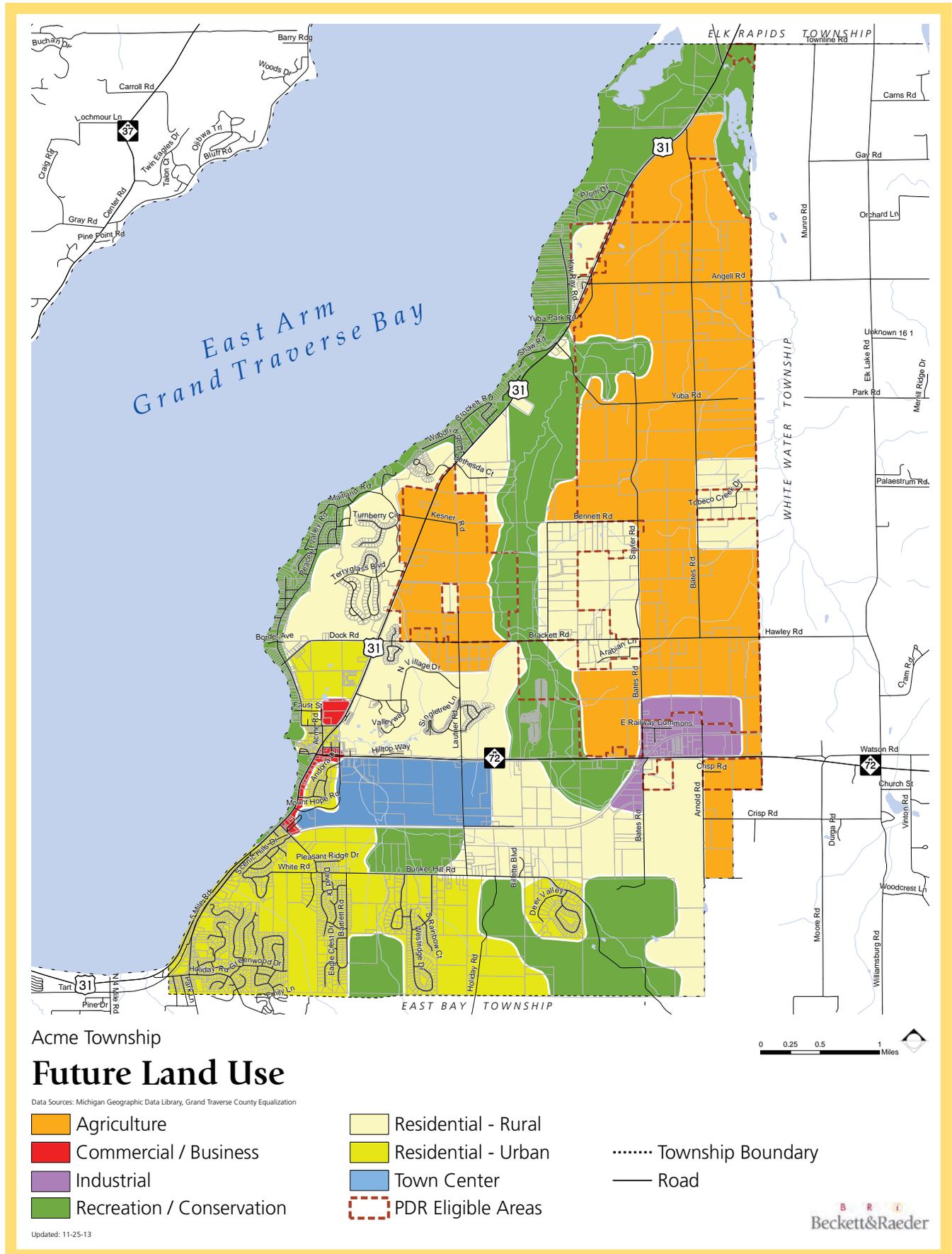
Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians.

6

Trade and Warehouse

The Trade and Warehouse area is a limited geographic area, approximately 130 acres, located in the eastern portion of the Township. The primary area is bounded by E. Railway Commons Road, Bates Road, Arnold Road and M-72. In addition, there is a portion of the zone that extends along South Bates Road adjacent to the Great Lakes Central Railroad. The Great Lakes Central Railroad (GLCR) which provides freight service to Traverse City, runs through this area.

Figure 20. Future land use map



FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES

Conservation and Recreation

The Conservation and Recreation category encompasses land use for a large variety of recreation activities, and also land areas designated for conservation that have important natural resources and sensitive ecosystems. Some of the major existing areas with highly sensitive ecosystems in the Township include Acme Creek in the south, Yuba Creek and its extensive greenways and wetlands in the middle region, and the Petobego wetlands and pond in the far north. Other areas with important natural resources are the easterly shoreline of East Grand Traverse Bay, much of which is already privately owned and developed as residential, and the forested lands in the south of Acme Township with some of the oldest red oak and quaking aspen trees in Grand Traverse County. Additionally, there is an important network of greenways and wildlife corridors surrounding many of the creeks and streams that protect the stream habitat, including local and itinerant fauna and many kinds of local flora. Many existing parks, campgrounds, and water-access areas are found throughout the Township for the use and enjoyment of all residents, and these are noted in detail in the Recreation Inventory of the Township's Parks and Recreation Master Plan.²⁶

The main objectives of this Conservation and Recreation category are to sustain the integrity of Acme Township's natural ecosystems and natural resources, such as its creeks, streams, wetlands, forests, and Grand Traverse Bay shoreline, and to provide good quality, safe public recreation sites, such as beaches and water access points, camping sites, hiking trails, ball fields, and other sports facilities. Given the importance placed on the lands in this category, Acme Township aims to work with other township, county, state, and federal authorities to maintain and conserve natural resources, including groundwater, within and adjoining the Township's lands. In connection with conserving the Township's natural resources, this land use category also provides for the establishment of wildlife habitat corridors.

The intended uses in this category include, but are not limited to: parks; campgrounds; other recreation uses such as fishing, hunting, hiking, trails, and sports fields; and the preservation of natural resources and wildlife habitat. In addition, development that is not intended for conservation or recreation must be carefully tuned to the needs of the natural environment and Acme Township's goal of preserving open space. Residential development on conservation land is encouraged to use cluster housing, open-

space development, or planned-unit development. Land uses in the Conservation and Recreation areas should comport with the policies and actions outlined in the Cornerstone entitled, "Maintain and Improve the Quality of Surface and Groundwater throughout the Township and in East Bay."

Agricultural

The Agricultural category comprises land that is under active agricultural use and that is resistant to demographic and economic pressures that make other agricultural land likely for future development. Agricultural land is usually not served by public sewer or water supply and is generally distant from the high-density areas of the Township which is planned for and accommodated south of M-72. The terrain of existing agricultural lands consists of gently rolling hills and level fields interspersed occasionally with small forest areas. Land uses adjacent to the streams and wetlands of Yuba Creek should use sound environmental stewardship and ecological practices in order to conserve natural resources and protect highly sensitive ecosystems as well as ground- and surface-water. Acme Township's farmlands contribute substantially to the local and regional economy, open space, and natural resource base of the community, and so this category also encourages the establishment of linkages and corridors for wildlife habitat.

A major objective of this land use category is to create a long-term business environment for agriculture in Acme Township. This category also aims to ensure that agriculture contributes to the character of Acme Township; contributes to Acme Township's and Grand Traverse County's economies, now and in the future; and prevents the loss of agricultural lands by encouraging the use of PDR and TDR programs and other means.

The intended uses in this category include, but are not limited to: farms under active cultivation; farmsteads and accessory structures; agriculture-related industries; agriculture-based enterprises; nurseries and green houses; and other agriculture-friendly forms of development. Land uses in the Agricultural areas should comport with the policies and actions outlined in the Cornerstone entitled, "Support the Continuation of Agricultural Operations and Preservation of Farmland." Residential development should use conservation designs through cluster housing, open-space development, or planned unit development. The Township contemplates that residential developments must work around extant agricultural uses, and in some circumstances the current density of 1 dwelling unit per 5 acres should be lowered to 1 dwelling unit per 2 or 2.5 units if cluster and/or open space (farmland) subdivisions are used.

The PDR-eligibility map is overlain on the Future Land Use Map (Figure 20) in order to qualify for state funding.

Rural Residential

The rural residential category encompasses areas in Acme Township with special natural features that shall be preserved in the environmentally significant areas as identified on the Future Land Use Map. This category also encompasses those areas of rolling hills and open spaces that were formerly agricultural or are in a transitional state from agriculture to residential and complementary uses. The density is generally low to medium, with single-family houses built on large-scale parcels. The land features in this category include level fields, gently rolling hills, steep slopes, thick woodlands, wetlands, creeks, and streams. In all new residential construction, conservation-development designs shall be used to retain the vegetation, natural features, and open space existing on the developed sites. Land uses adjacent to the streams and wetlands of Yuba Creek should use sound environmental stewardship and ecological practices in order to conserve natural resources and protect highly sensitive ecosystems as well as ground- and surface-water.

The objectives of this category are to provide limited and low density residential development

in the rural areas of the Township where sensitive ecosystems and special natural land features such as steep slopes, creeks and streams are prevalent. However, conservation-development designs will be strongly encouraged to prevent sprawling development that undermines the integrity of open space and agricultural uses, and appropriate buffers should be planned to minimize the impact on existing agricultural uses. Another important objective is to encourage responsible stewardship among landowners in the development of the land so that the natural features are preserved to the fullest extent, especially in the areas with highly sensitive ecosystems and where special natural features abound, through the use of cluster housing, open-space development, and planned-unit development.

In the areas with highly sensitive natural features and ecosystems, the Township shall insist on conservation development in order to protect the most sensitive land by clustering housing on the least sensitive land. Land uses in the Rural Residential areas should comport with the policies and actions of the Cornerstones.

Urban Residential

The urban-residential designation comprises high-density areas, including established residential neighborhoods in the southwest region of the Township as well as established and future

development on land suitable for high-density single- or multiple-family development. This category contemplates small lots in order to absorb population growth and check sprawling development, and includes affordable housing. Although the Urban Residential designation does not contemplate mixed commercial and residential uses, developments in Urban Residential should otherwise comport with the policies and actions detailed in the Cornerstone entitled, "Create a Community Attractive to All Age Groups."

Objectives of this category include encouraging development of good quality, high-density residential living, and affordable living that will minimize the encroachment of such development on farms, forests, and environmentally sensitive areas. This category is also intended to encourage a walking community with good neighborhood sidewalk systems and promote connections within and between housing developments in general as a means to increase the connectivity index.

Primary uses within this category are single-family detached homes, attached single-family structures such as townhouses and duplexes, and multiple-family residences such as stacked ranches, apartment buildings, group living quarters, manufactured homes and mobile home parks. Other complementary uses such as churches, schools, and parks would be permitted.

The Urban Residential section contemplates the existence, and continued existence, of the GT Resort and its ability to develop as a resort, with commercial uses as part of the Resort's core business.

Commercial

The Commercial category is characterized by land use for retail stores and service-oriented businesses that provide daily shopping, convenience and comparison shopping, and professional offices that service Acme Township residents and others in the region. The existing commercial lands lie mainly along M-72 and a short strip of Highway US-31 N, the major federal and state roadways running through Acme Township, with motor vehicle transportation needed to reach most business venues along these trunk lines. An existing shopping area on Highway US-31 N, which is also a vehicle-oriented complex, provides a large grocery store and a large discount store; many small office complexes are also located off the two major trunk lines in the Township. There is a small commercial district on the northeast corner of US-31 and Bunker Hill Road.

The intended uses in this category include, but are not limited to: grocery stores, bakeries, garden supply stores, banks, laundries, pharmacies, hardware stores, gas stations and automotive service business including car sales,

supermarkets, general merchandise stores, restaurants (fast and non-fast food types), coffee shops, professional offices of various kinds, and personal service businesses (hair salons, spas and so on).

Town Center

This category of land use encourages the development of an integrated, walkable, mixed-use, high density area located in the core of the Township as envisioned in the Acme Shores Placemaking Plan. The hallmark of this future land use will be the seamless connection between public and private properties with well-designed buildings and public spaces, streetscapes, landscapes, signage, access and circulation for both motor & non-motorized traffic and pedestrians, facilities for public transportation, low impact storm water control, dark sky sensitive lighting, and other elements that reflect and add to a vibrant business district. As noted in the Master Plan, new commercial developments shall take place in high-density areas so that infrastructure installation, wherever needed, will be carried out efficiently. The main objectives in this category is to provide for commercial development in ways that will create an economically healthy and thriving environment for the benefit of all Acme residents and visitors to the Township, and to provide for commercial establishments that not only supply goods and services but also offer employment opportunities to Acme residents. Another objective is to

encourage new residential growth with densities upwards of 14 to 18 units per acre.

Public infrastructure, water, sanitary sewer, roads, and non-motorized pathways will be required to fully develop and link properties into a cohesive community mixed use district. For the Town Center to work effectively and efficiently, connections among Acme Village, the Grand Traverse Town Center, the former Lautner Commons project property, and the Grand Traverse Resort and Spa are essential.

The intended uses in this category include, but are not limited to: general merchandise stores, restaurants (non-fast food types), coffee shops, professional offices of various kinds, motels, furniture stores, and personal service businesses (hair salons, spas and so on). This category also contemplates the possibility of mixed-use with residential dwellings above the first floor. Land uses in the Commercial areas should comport

with the policies and actions of the Cornerstone entitled, "Create a Vibrant, High-Quality, Compact Commercial and Mixed Use District," "Focus on Infrastructure Improvement," and "Encourage Recreation-based Tourism."

Industrial

The Industrial category encompasses land use for light industrial, trade-related business and warehousing enterprises in the Township. The existing uses currently are located along state highway M72 and Bates Road (an area comprising some existing development of higher density industrial and business uses). This region is seen as appropriate for the location of any future light industrial facilities that should develop with good management of signage, landscaping, utility lines, and related facilities and other possible features such as towers for cellular communication. While special areas in the Township are designated for large-scale light industrial facilities, it is compatible with the Acme Master Plan to also

encourage the development of home occupations and concomitant cottage industries in or out of this area.

The main objectives of the Industrial land use category are to provide for non-intrusive industrial operations in high density areas that stimulate the economic vitality of the Township without negatively impacting the surrounding area, and to provide employment opportunities for residents of the Township and surrounding region. Sound access management planning should be included in any new industrial developments.

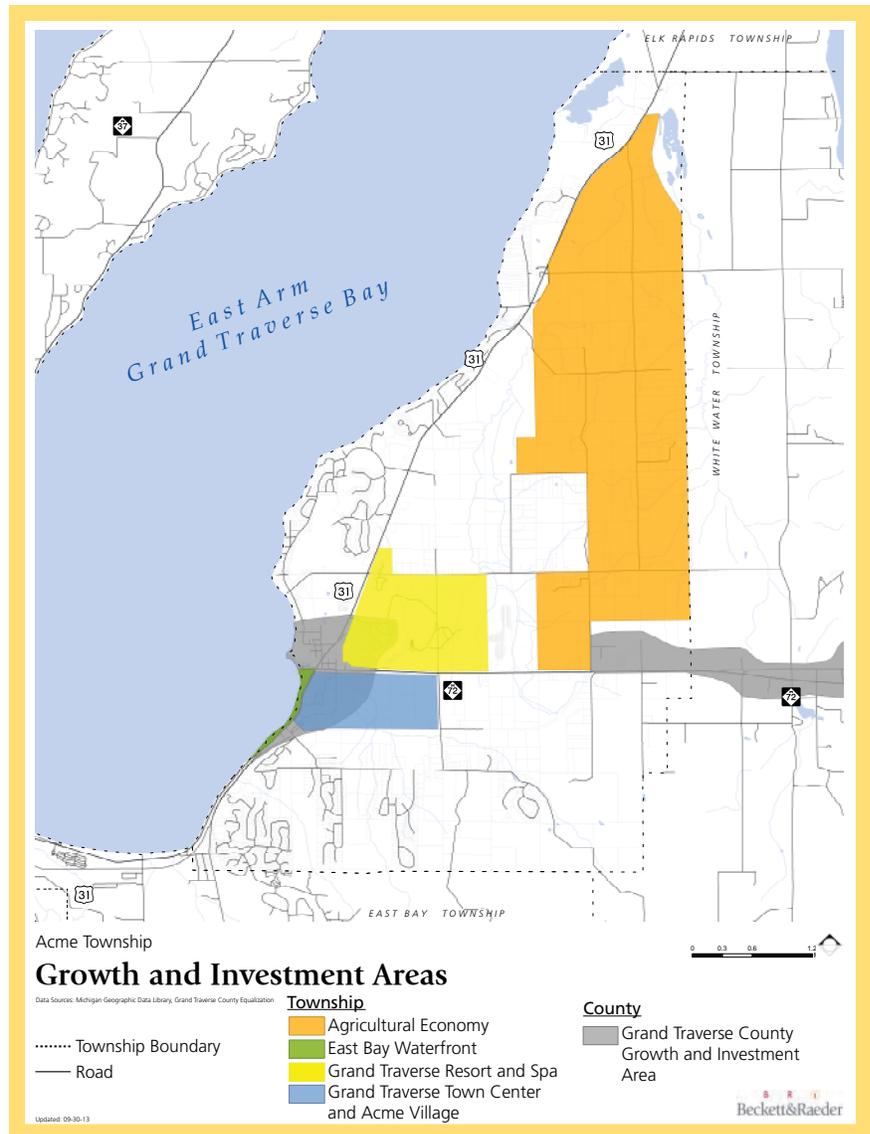
The intended uses in this category include, but are not limited to: enclosed wholesale facilities, warehouses, high technology industries, light manufacturing, telecommunications industry, and other non-intrusive industrial enterprises. Land uses in the Industrial area should comport with the policies and actions of the Master Plan.

GROWTH AND INVESTMENT AREAS

This plan delineates four growth and investment areas for the Township, shown in Figure 21. These include the agricultural properties north of M-72, the Grand Traverse Resort, the commercial mixed-use zone created by the connection of GTTC and Acme Village, and the East Bay waterfront. The agricultural, resort, and commercial growth and investment areas are primarily focused on private development, and the East Bay waterfront is focused on public development. It is a reasonable strategy for public sector investment in the waterfront because of the leverage and multiplier effect it will have on the local economy. Public parks and open space create economic development and place and, in turn, attract private investment.

A component of the Grand Traverse Town Center project is the redesign of M-72 to accommodate two roundabouts on M-72 and one roundabout on Lautner Road at the GTTC entrance. M-72 will undergo a significant realignment in 2015-2016 to include medians and a pedestrian tunnel under M-72 which connects GTTC with the Grand Traverse Resort. These road improvements, in conjunction with non-motorized trails and corridor amenities, will redefine Acme Township.

Figure 21. Growth and investment areas map



Distinguishing growth and investment areas helps to strategically focus limited resources in zones to maximize the greatest potential gain. This is an advantage when partnering with other agencies which need reassurance that their funds will be expended toward a defined community priority. In some

communities this is called “strategic doing,” where alignment of community priorities and recognition of these priorities by other network collaborators results in funding and implementation.

At the local level, infrastructure and regulatory requirements should be

evaluated to ensure that they do not inhibit investment and development.

ZONING PLAN

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act of 2008 requires the inclusion of a zoning plan in the master plan.²⁷

The zoning plan calls attention to changes that need to be made to the current zoning ordinance in order to bring it into alignment with the new master plan (Figure 22). Specifically, the zoning plan looks to show the relationship between the future land use map and the

zoning map, and to suggest ordinance revisions to strengthen that relationship. The changes suggested are necessary in order to help implement specific aspects of the master plan (Table 6).

This zoning plan anticipates few changes to the basic residential districts. At the nexus of US-31, M-72, and the East Bay shoreline, where significant long-range growth and investment are expected to occur, Acme Township is developing a form-based code district.

Form-based codes are a departure from traditional zoning in that they focus less on the use of a parcel and more on the form of development, both private and public. The proposed US-31 / M-72 form-based code intends to merge public infrastructure standards with private development regulations to create a viable business district that is equally shared between cars and pedestrians. Key elements include better land use balance, expanding the uses permitted by right and expediting the review process, bringing buildings closer to the street to facilitate walkability, increasing density of multiple family dwelling units, and the integration of low impact development stormwater technologies.

Figure 22. Zoning plan map

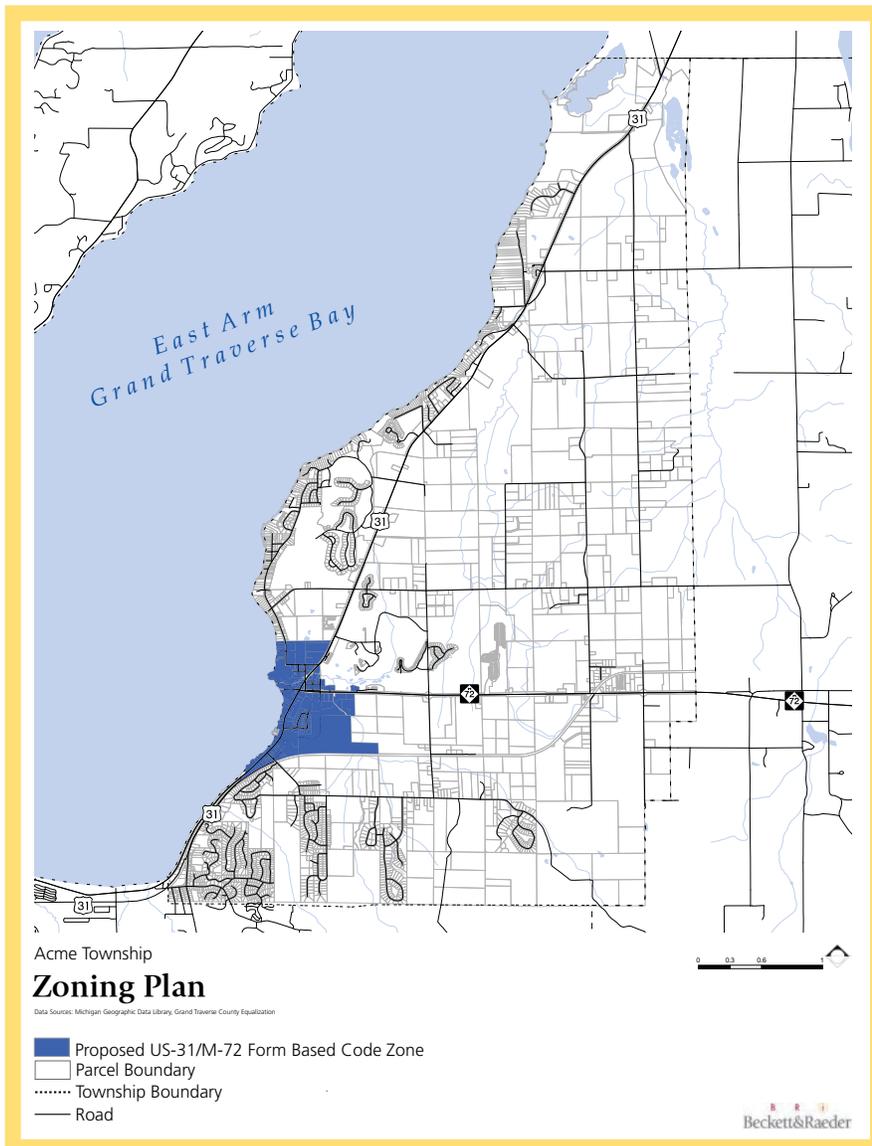
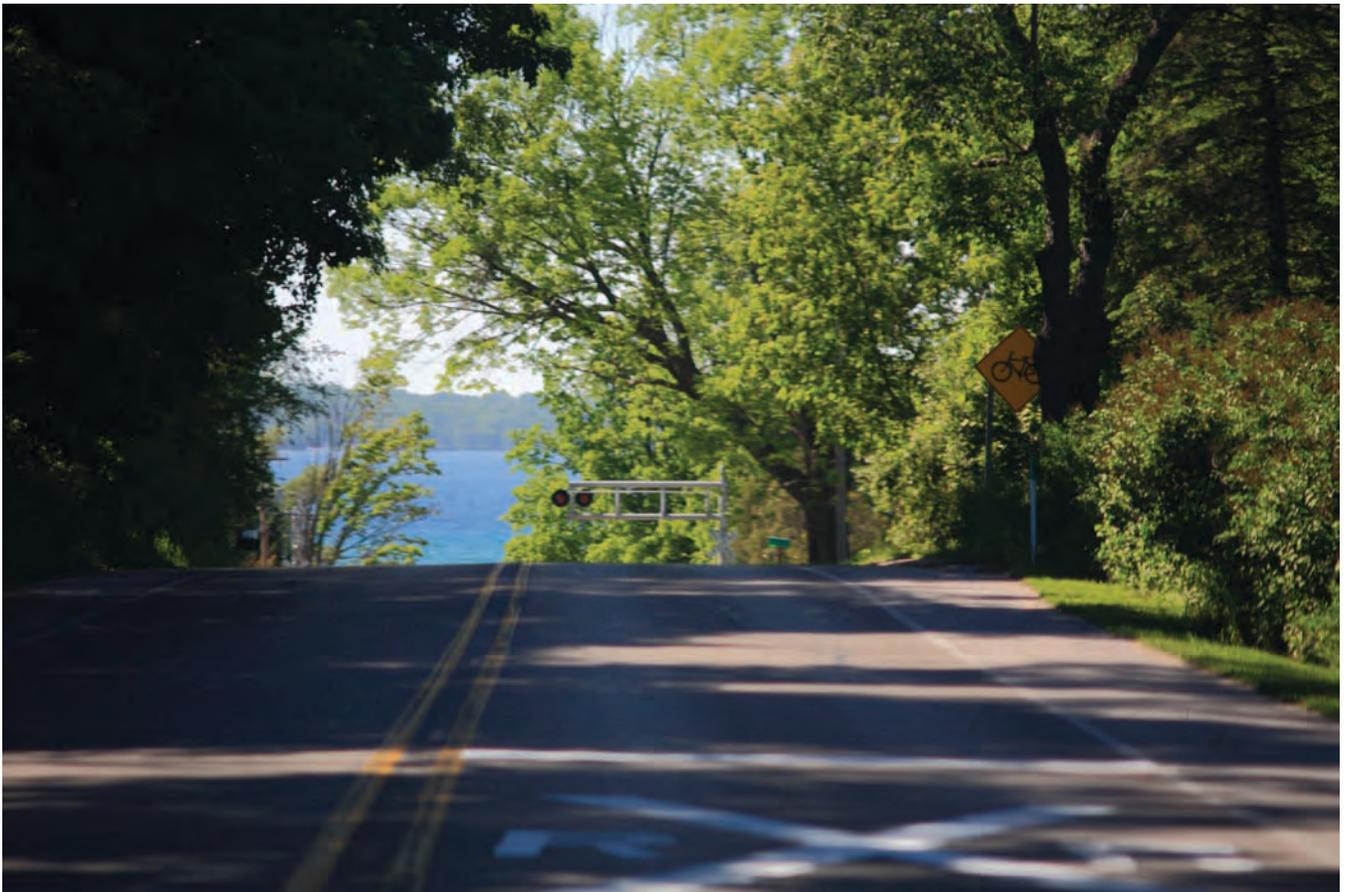


Table 6. Zoning chart

SPECIFIC DISTRICT REVISIONS					
EXISTING ZONING DISTRICTS	USES (GENERAL)	SETBACKS	LOT SIZE (MINIMUM)	PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS	PROPOSED ZONING DISTRICTS
AGRICULTURE A-1	Agricultural Production – Crop Agricultural production – Animal Forestry Lumber and Wood Products Riding Stables Single Family Detached	FRONT 50' REAR 40' SIDE 25'	5 Acre	Increase Permitted Uses by Right to reflect the variety of agricultural enterprises associated with a fruit and crop agricultural economy. Also delete Section 9.25 relating to Wineries and incorporate wineries and distilleries in the A-1 District.	AGRICULTURE A-1
SHORELINE BUSINESS B-1S	Offices Neighborhood Business Personal Services Single Family Residential	FRONT 30' REAR 35' SIDE 5/10'	15,000 Sq.Ft. Business N/A	Delete District. Incorporate portions of the district into the Form Based Code known Commercial Shoreline (CS)	COMMERCIAL SHORELINE CS
PROFESSIONAL OFFICE B-1P	Banks Printing Establishments Offices Professional Studios	FRONT 40' REAR 35' SIDE 15'	15,000 Sq.Ft.	Delete District. Incorporate portions of the district into the Form Based Code known as Commercial Corridor (C)	COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR C
GENERAL BUSINESS B-2	Entertainment Facilities Neighborhood Business Banks Personal Services Restaurants	FRONT 40' REAR 25' SIDE 25'	10,500 Sq.Ft.	Delete District. Incorporate portions of the district into the Form Based Code known as Corridor Commercial (C) and Commercial Flex (CF)	COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR C COMMERCIAL FLEX CF
URBAN RESIDENTIAL R-3	Single Family Duplexes Multiple Family Mixed Use Development Wholesale Trade	FRONT 35' REAR 10' SIDE 30'	15,000 Sq.Ft. To 20,000 Sq.Ft.	Delete District within the Form based Code Area and replace with Mixed Housing Neighborhood with higher densities	MIXED NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING MNH
OVERALL ZONING ORDINANCE					
Existing Zoning Ordinance				Complete overhaul of the zoning ordinance.	

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IMPLEMENTATION AND ACTION



ACME TOWNSHIP ACTION PLAN

The success of the Acme Township Community Master Plan will be benchmarked against the implementation of a number of programs and projects which are based on the outcome of the resident and business survey and the Master Plan Cornerstones.

Master plans were devised to ascertain population growth and use that information to plan for an appropriate allocation of land uses, such as residential, apartments, retail, community facilities, and industry. Most master plans were based on the assumption that population would grow and need space to develop. Today, population is either declining or stabilized; aging in place and evolving into single person households. As a result, master plans focus more on reducing barriers that inhibit quality growth and redevelopment and have become community strategic plans.

The Action Plan is segmented into nine categories; projects and programs are identified within each category. Each project and program is described with a priority and general timeframe needed to accomplish it (Figure 23).

Table 7 identifies the projects and programs that reflect the intent of the community and, at the same time, adhere to planning best practices. These actions leverage opportunities and integrate them together to form a cohesive, well functioning, and stable community.

Figure 23. Action plan map

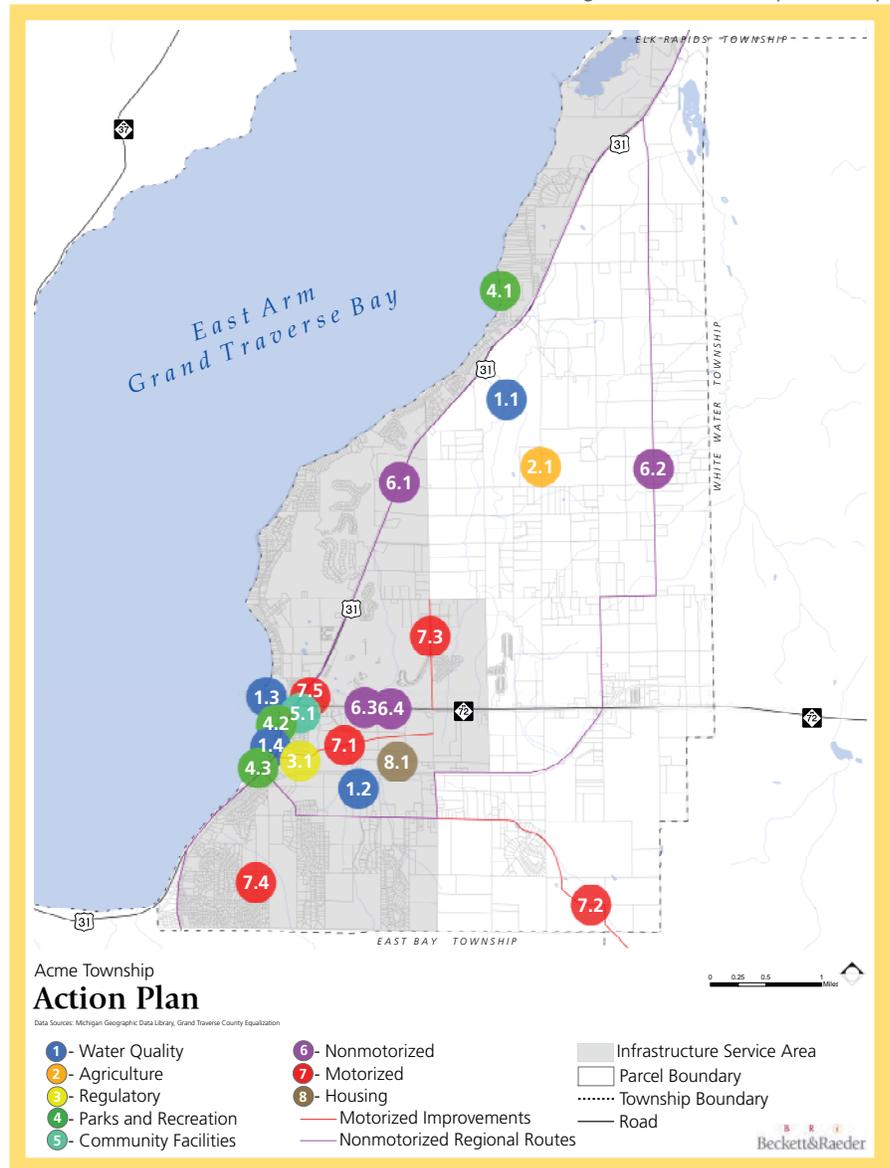


Table 7. Action plan

1	WATER QUALITY
	Conduct and continue water quality testing to monitor the effectiveness of storm water .treatment projects and the presence and source of any bacterial agents.
1.1	Yuba Creek Natural Area
1.2	Acme Creek within the Grand Traverse Town Center project area
1.3	Bayshore Park
1.4	Bunker Hill Boat Launch
2	AGRICULTURE
	Continue the Township’s effort to preserve farming and orchard operations.
2.1	Continue the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program
3	REGULATORY
	Revise the Acme Township Zoning Ordinance.
3.1	Revise the business districts zoning along the US-31 and M-72 corridor to a Form Based Code
3.2	Revise the Acme Township Zoning Ordinance to expedite and streamline the Special Use Permit (SUP) process, and the stormwater ordinance to include low impact development (LID) provisions.
3.3	Streamline the structure and provisions of the current code.
4	PARKS AND RECREATION
	Implement key projects identified in the Township’s 5-year Parks System Plan
4.1	Construct a MDNR boat launch at Saylor Park.
4.2	Implement the improvements proposed for Bayshore Park.
4.3	Implement the improvements proposed for Bunker Hill Boat Launch.
5	COMMUNITY FACILITIES
	Plan for and install a potable water system.
5.1	Formalize an arrangement with the GTB to provide potable water to Infrastructure Service Area.
6	NONMOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION
	Connect Township assets with the regional nonmotorized pathways and trails.
6.1	Collaborate with adjacent communities and regional agencies on the US-31 nonmotorized trail.
6.2	Collaborate with adjacent communities and regional agencies on the US-BR53 nonmotorized trail.
6.3	Collaborate with the GTB and developers of the GTTC on the installation fo the M-72 pathway.
6.4	Collaborate with the GTB, MDOT and regional agencies on the installation of the M-72 tunnel.
7	MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION
	Provide Township residents and business with access to a balanced transportation network.
7.1	Facilitate a Complete Streets connection between Acme Village and the Grand Traverse Town Center.
7.2	Improve Bunker Hill Road to serve as a county collector to Supply Road.
7.3	Improve Lautner Road south to Bunker Hill.
7.4	Facilitate a road maintenance capital improvements program focused on the improvement of public roads in the residential neighborhoods south of Bunker Hill Road.
7.5	Coordinate with BATA locations for bus stops and a transfer station in the Township.
8	HOUSING
	Provide a variety of housing for existng and future residents.
8.1	Coordinate with NWMCOG and Grand Traverse County on a housing Target Market Analysis.
8.2	Revise the Acme Township Zoning Ordinance to provide for a mix of housing types and densities.
9	ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY
	Provide opportunities for training and continue education.
9.1	Continue the policy of providing training and continuing education for Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeal members.

PLACEMAKING ASSESSMENT

As previously mentioned, Acme Township has joined the region and the state in directing its attention to the concept of “placemaking” as a guiding principle for thinking about its built and natural environments (Table 8). In general, placemaking simply refers to the process of creating quality spaces that attract people. As a central component of Michigan’s current economic development policy, “strategic placemaking” refers to the process of creating quality spaces at strategic locations, such as activity centers, connecting nodes, and thoroughfare corridors, for the purpose of attracting and retaining a pool of talented workers who can generate economic activity.

This is a serious departure from the model of economic development which dominated the 20th century, and the reason is simple: economic conditions have fundamentally changed. The “old economy” was driven by fossil-fuel-dependent manufacturing, which meant that the chief resources were cheap land

and access to raw materials and transportation lines. If a community could attract companies with incentivized land costs and relaxed regulations, then workers would settle near those companies and the community’s tax base, would grow—people followed jobs. A high-quality environment and place-based amenities were luxuries to be considered only where available.

Michigan was vastly successful under the old economy, but a decade of job loss and population decline has made it clear that those conditions won’t be returning. The “new economy” is global, technological, and connected, and the chief resource is human innovation and talent. As monolithic enterprises have frequently shown themselves to be unreliable wealth generators for any given community or individual over the long haul, talented, well-educated people have begun choosing a place first, and then finding or creating a job when they get there—a case in which economic activity follows people. Communities wishing to host such economic activity need to lure its generators, and a high-quality

environment and place-based amenities attract those talented workers.

This basic calculus underlies Michigan’s MIplace curriculum, a strategic initiative supported by the current gubernatorial administration and crafted by a wide range of agencies and organizations invested in a better Michigan (www.miplace.org). The comprehensive curriculum advocates asset identification, regional coordination, attention to social and educational opportunities and outcomes, entrepreneurial support, a human-scaled built environment, fully integrated multimodal transportation choices, and robust, meaningful participation by its citizenry as a basic skill set to be employed by any community on the path to prosperity. The following table presents specific elements of each of these guiding principles and ties them to contents within the Acme Township Master Plan, demonstrating the township’s commitment to its talented workers, economic success, and quality of place.

“Placemaking is a community-based approach involving the discovery and implementation of practices that make our communities distinctive, economically viable, accessible, and visually pleasing. Placemaking capitalizes on a local community’s assets, inspiration and potential, creating good public spaces that promote people’s health, happiness, and economic well-being.”

— Northwest Michigan Council of Governments²⁸

Table 8. Placemaking assessment

PLACEMAKING ASSESSMENT		
GUIDING PRINCIPLES	ELEMENTS	MASTER PLAN INITIATIVES
What do we have? ASSETS	Identify and define the community's centers, nodes, and corridors	The master plan utilizes the presence of M-72 and US-31 as regional corridors and advances the concept of creating a mixed-use business and residential district by linking Acme Village with the Grand Traverse Town Center. The Master Plan also places emphasis on improvements to Bayshore Park System to provide residents and visitors with a greater sense of place. Assets such as Deepwater Point Natural Area and the Yuba Creek Natural Area are identified as natural assets and designated accordingly in the Future Land Use Map.
	Identify all natural, historic, and cultural resources and explicate their benefit to the community	
Where do we fit in? REGIONALISM	Identify the community's relationship to its region	The Cornerstones and Building Blocks use the Grand Traverse County Master Plan and the Grand Vision as the Foundation to link local goals and objectives with county and regional expectations. The concept of developing within the Growth & Investment Areas designated in the County Master Plan and the Grand Vision were used to create the framework for the Future Land Use Map and Action Plan. The SmartCode transects used to bundle land development into common characteristics was used to prepare the Township Framework Plan and Form Based Code referenced in the Zoning Plan. Lastly, community residents identified the maintenance and improvement of water quality has a high priority which is consistent with the vision of the Grand Traverse Bay Watershed Plan. The Action Plan recommends the continuation of periodic stream and bayshore water quality monitoring and the use of low impact development storm water technologies to manage water quantity and quality.
	Identify the community's place on the transect	
	Explicate the community's values with regard to its adjacent undeveloped land	
	Understand how the community figures into other (regional, CEDS, watershed, etc.) plans	
What do we love? FUN	Identify issues of greater than local concern	
	Identify the social events that define the community and explicate their benefit to the community	Locally, through the efforts of the Acme Business Association the community comes together during its Fall Festival. It is envisioned that the planned improvements to the Bayshore park system will create a venue for additional events and social gatherings. On a regional scale there are a variety of events throughout the year including the winter VASA held in Acme Township, the Cherry Capital Festival and various art and cultural fairs throughout Northwest Michigan. The Master Plan process did not quantify the impact of the arts on the community.
What do we have to offer? TALENT	Quantify the economic impact of the arts on the community	
	Clearly understand and assess the educational level of the community, including specialized areas or fields	The Dashboard noted that educational attainment of Township residents exceeded County and State benchmarks. Similarly, the Township has a very high percentage (97.3%) of residents that have completed high school. In addition, the Township has a high percentage of retirees that come out of managerial, administrative and educational careers which creates a potential pool of gifted volunteers. Due to Acme Township's proximity to Traverse City many residents live in the township but work in Traverse City. Regionally, there is a direct linkage between educational attainment and jobs but not as much as the local level. The focus to establish a mixed-use business district in the township may provide the venue for local job opportunities this reducing the need to commute.
	Explicate the linkages between the educational and business communities	

What do we contribute? ECONOMICS	Identify and assess the community's "anchor institutions": largest employers, purchasers, landowners	The largest employer in the township is the Grand Traverse Band which owns and operates the Grand Traverse Resort and Spa. Due to the size of the property they are also the largest land owner in the Township. In addition to the entertainment and service employment provided through the Resort the agricultural community is the second largest employer and landowner in the township. When consolidated agricultural operations constitutes the largest land ownership in the Township. As a result, the Resort and the farm community are the anchor institutions in Acme Township. Both anchors are affected by the economy and markets. The agricultural community is further affected by the weather. Local businesses have been impacted by the national economy but are also affected by local conditions such as regulatory issues, speed of traffic along US-31, lack of connectivity between businesses, and fragmented development patterns. Due to the separation of properties and lack of connectivity the local business district is very vehicular-dependent. Acme Township lacks an identifiable core.
	Identify local entrepreneurs and understand the risk associated with entrepreneurial ventures in the community	
What is our habitat? BUILT ENVIRONMENT	Minimize the limitations placed on home occupations	
	Understand the relationship between our infrastructure systems and the natural environment	The Master Plan recognizes the importance that natural features (East Bay, Yuba Creek, Acme Creek, natural areas, etc.) have on local land use development, agriculture, and locational preferences for living. The plan firmly reinforces the continuation of agricultural operations north of M-72 and promotes more concentrated and higher density development within the Acme Village and Grand Traverse Town Center area for a mixed business and residential walkable neighborhood. The housing mix within the Township is very stratified and there needs to be additional types of housing for all age and income groups. The Action Plan calls for a Target Market Analysis as part of the NWMCOG/MSHDA study. Further, the proposed form based code increases multiple family densities from three dwelling units per acre to eighteen to provide flexibility within the market and increase the available housing mix. Particular emphasis should be on affordable housing for service and agricultural employees who know commute into the Township for employment.
	Rethink separation-by-use as the guiding principle of land use decisions	
	Locate all areas of the community which offer walkable opportunities to live, work, and shop	
	Quantify the community's housing mix	
	Identify and remove barriers to energy independence	
How do we close the gaps? TRANSPORTATION	Explicate and quantify the community's thoroughfare mix, including routes for pedestrians, bicycles, and transit	
	Assess the community's parking needs on an aggregate basis	
	Quantify the community's dependence on vehicular travel	
How do we foster self-government? PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT	Understand and assess the relationship between our transportation options and our development patterns	
	Document the public's involvement in decisions at all scales	The Community Master Plan used community engagement input from the Acme Shores Placemaking efforts in 2012, a community survey conducted by NMC in 2013, and special sessions with the business community (ABA) and the agricultural community. In addition, a special project web site (www.acmefuture.org) was used to post information throughout the planning process.
Integrate two-way communication with the public into standard practice		



APPENDIX

ENDNOTES

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