

Comins Township

DRAFT for Public Review



Master Plan
2026-2031

Where Values Are Rooted In Our Community

Community Character

Preserving what Makes
Our Community Unique

Quality of Life

Enhancing Services,
Recreation, and Well-Being

Vibrant and Balanced Economy

Supporting Opportunities,
Innovation, and Growth

Acknowledgments

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Open, Township Supervisor

Amanda Barajas, Clerk

Kevin Salsbury, Treasurer

Blake Snyder, Trustee

John Kuziel II, Trustee

PLANNING COMMISSION

Kyle Yoder, Chair

Michelle Knepp, Co-Chair

John McConnell, Secretary

Jerry Kunnath, Member

John Kuziel II, Member

MASTER PLAN ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY:

Northeast Michigan Council of Governments
(NEMCOG)

80 Livingston Blvd., Suite U-108

Gaylord, MI 49734

www.nemcog.org



This plan was developed through the assistance of the MSHDA Housing Readiness Grant.



Comins Township

2090 E. Miller Road, Fairview, MI 48621 | 989.848.5811

www.cominstwp.com

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

About Comins Township.....	5
About the Master Plan	7
About the Master Plan Update Process.....	9

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Housing	13
Existing Land Use	22
Natural Resources.....	28

COMMUNITY VISION, VALUES, & GOALS

Community Vision	49
Community Values	49
Implementation Actions.....	51
Goals, Objectives, and Actions.....	52

GROWTH FRAMEWORK

Overview	61
Future Land Use	62

APPENDIX

Community Profile	73
Community Services and Utilities.....	77
Community Survey Results	83
Adoption and Implementation	96





Introduction

Comins Township developed this Master Plan through a collaborative process to address pressing community issues such as the local housing shortage.

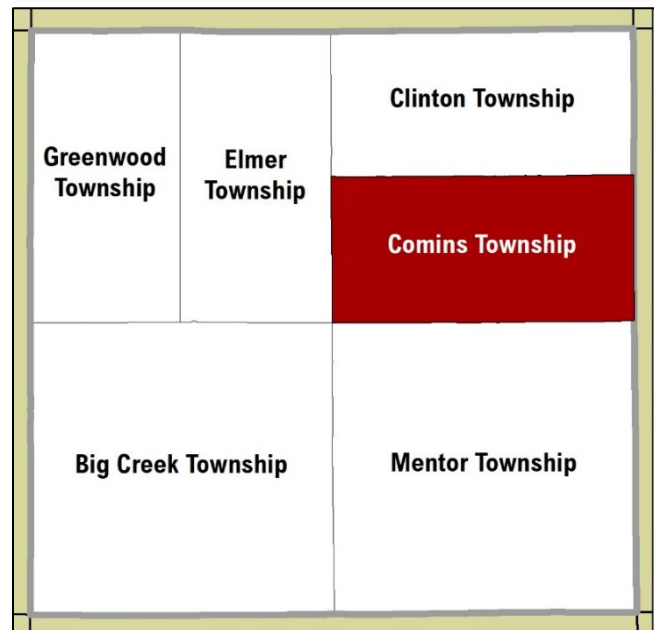
Community input from residents, businesses, and stakeholders helped shape the Plan's vision, goals, strategies, and Future Land Use recommendations.

This section provides an overview of the Township's history, location, planning process, and public engagement efforts.

ABOUT COMINS TOWNSHIP

Location

Comins Township, located in Oscoda County in Northeast Lower Michigan, is a distinctive area known for its expansive farmland, the commercial hub of Fairview, and some of the finest natural resource-based recreational opportunities in the state. Outdoor activities include ORV and walking trails, camping, hiking, fishing, and hunting. The township's extensive trail systems, alongside thousands of acres of pristine Jack Pine Forest, the scenic AuSable River corridor, and a network of inland lakes, streams, and wetlands, make it both a highly desirable place to live and a popular destination for outdoor recreation.



History of Comins Township

The history of Comins Township, Michigan, is rich and deeply rooted in the broader development of Oscoda County. In the late 19th century, the region was heavily influenced by the lumber industry, which cleared vast tracts of timber between 1870 and 1899. As the forests gave way to open land, a forward-thinking land agent recognized the area's potential for agriculture and reached out to Amish and Mennonite communities in Ohio and Indiana.

Drawn by the promise of fertile farmland, many Amish and Mennonite families settled in the Fairview and Comins areas. Despite early hardships, these settlers established strong roots and contributed significantly to the township's growth and vitality. Their legacy remains strong today, with many residents maintaining Mennonite heritage. The values of hard work, community support, and neighborly cooperation that shaped the township's early years continue to define its spirit.

While the lumber industry helped shape the township's early identity, it remains an important part of Comins Township's economy and culture today. Visitors to Fairview, located at the crossroads of M-33 and M-72, will find a welcoming community that honors its past while planning for the future. Known as the "Wild Turkey Capital of Michigan," Fairview is also recognized for the flocks of wild turkeys that roam the area.

As Comins Township continues to evolve, it remains committed to supporting the recreational, commercial, and quality-of-life needs of its residents while welcoming visitors. With a strong sense of community, a commitment to excellence, and a deep appreciation for its heritage, the township looks to the future with pride and purpose.

Themes

Recurring themes shaped community discussions and policy guidance during the Master Plan update and are expected to continue affecting Comins Township over the next five years.

Preserve Community Character and Natural Resources

- Protect Comins Township's rural, agricultural, historic, and natural character while guiding compatible development.

Support a Strong Quality of Life

- Foster a safe, healthy, connected community through housing, recreation, services, infrastructure, walkability, and civic engagement.

Encourage Responsible Growth and Economic Opportunity

- Support thoughtful growth, local businesses, agriculture, tourism, housing, and jobs while ensuring development fits the community and has adequate infrastructure.

Strengthen Community Planning and Engagement

- Use effective planning, zoning, communication, partnerships, and public engagement to guide decisions, address changing needs, and keep the Master Plan active. See the Appendix's Community Profile for additional background on trends and statistics considered during the planning process.

ABOUT THE MASTER PLAN

Role of the Plan

The purpose of the Comins Township Master Plan is to provide guidelines for future physical development of the community while protecting water resources, other natural resources, and rural township character. This plan presents background information for the township and the surrounding area, including social and



economic data, description, and mapping of natural resources, housing inventory, and inventory of existing community facilities. The background information is analyzed to identify characteristics, changes, and trends occurring in Comins Township. Community concerns are identified based on the Township Board and planning committee's comments and input provided at public meetings and public surveys. Community goals and policies are presented to guide future development based on these background studies, key land use trends, and community issues. These goals, along with a map of existing land uses, provide the basis for the Future Land Use Map. The Future Land Use Map recommends locations for various types of future development within the township.

Legislative Authority

According to Michigan law, a zoning ordinance must align with an adopted Master Plan to be valid and enforceable. The authority to develop the Master Plan is provided through the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended. Public Act 33 of 2008 requires the Planning Commission to hold a public hearing before the final adoption of a Master Plan, as well as when the Planning Commission alters, amends, or expands the scope of its Master Plan after its original adoption.

Master Plan Elements

Purpose of the Master Plan

The Master Plan establishes a long-term framework for guiding future growth, development, and land use. It reflects current community conditions and identifies goals and policies to help guide decisions over the next five to ten years.

Role of the Master Plan

The Plan provides a comprehensive view of the community's land use, resources, infrastructure, and future needs. It incorporates community input and establishes a shared vision to help guide zoning, development, infrastructure investments, and other community decisions.

Using the Master Plan

The Master Plan is a policy guide rather than a regulatory document and does not carry the force of law. It should be regularly referenced and updated as conditions change. The Future Land Use Plan and accompanying maps provide general direction for future land use and should not be used to establish property boundaries, tax assessments, or precise environmental boundaries.

Parts of the Plan

Existing Conditions outline the township's current resources, challenges, and opportunities to provide a foundation for future strategic planning.

Community Vision and Values define the shared priorities of Comins Township and guide the community's future growth.

Goals and Objectives help everyone involved make day-to-day decisions that align with and support the Master Plan.

Growth Framework guides where growth occurs, allowable development, and how the township may expand its boundaries.

The Appendix includes a community profile, a description of the township's services, and survey findings that helped shape the Master Plan.

Plan Updates

Over time, updates to the Master Plan may be needed to keep it relevant and effective as a planning and decision-making tool. Any amendment to the Plan will include a public process to respect the significant effort invested in its development, uphold the overall vision, and allow the Plan to evolve as community needs change.

Township staff should conduct a full evaluation of the Master Plan every five years and update it as needed. Major updates may be initiated by the need to:

- Update key data points and reevaluate trends related to demographics, housing, economic development, growth and development activity, and other important factors;
- Affirm the Master Plan's vision, values, goals, and objectives in total or regarding a particular topic or issue; and/or
- Re-evaluate the prioritization of implementation actions contained in the Action Plan.

Any update to the Master Plan should include community input from the public, township staff, township leaders, and other affected stakeholders. The community profile or key data in the community profile should also be made current as part of the update.

ABOUT THE MASTER PLAN UPDATE PROCESS

Planning Commission

The Comins Township Planning Commission, made up of five members, served as the project team throughout the process. The Planning Commission met regularly to review interim work products and provide perspective on drafts, helped guide the public input process, engaged in thoughtful and thorough discussion of issues and opportunities facing Comins Township, and served as “ambassadors” of the Master Plan.



Public Input & Community Engagement

Comins Township values input from its residents, visitors, and stakeholders, and citizen opinion on priorities is vital to the development of a Master Plan. The Master Plan update process included a public input survey conducted from May 2025 to December 2025. The Planning Commission approved the survey, and it was publicized on the township website and Facebook page, being made available for both township and surrounding area residents. The township received 96 survey responses, which is equal to approximately 5.4% of the township's population.

The Planning Commission felt the community was well represented throughout the process. After the public input was gathered and recorded, the Planning Commission met to prioritize the goals and objectives and develop an executable action plan.

Results from the online survey can be found in the Appendix.



COMINS TOWNSHIP

WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK!

Help shape the future of our community by taking our brief survey. Share your thoughts and priorities today. Let's build a better Comins Township together!

SCAN THE QR CODE OR VISIT THE WEBSITE BELOW TO ACCESS THE SURVEY!

www.surveymonkey.com/r/CominsTownship

PAPER COPIES ARE AVAILABLE AT THE TOWNSHIP HALL
1615 N Abbe Rd
Fairview, MI 48621

COMINS TOWNSHIP
Public Input Survey

The Comins Township Planning Commission requests your input on future planning for recreational, housing and economic development as they update the Master Plan for 2026. This survey will take a few minutes of your time, but it will help the formation of the Township for years to come! If you have the ability, please do this survey electronically by using the QR code or by going to the website listed below. In you have no internet access, please fill out the following survey and return to the Township...

www.surveymonkey.com/r/CominsTownship

1) Enter the age of the members of your household, including yourself.

	Self	Person 2	Person 3	Person 4	Person 5	Person 6
Under 5						
5 - 18 years old						
19 - 25 years old						
26 - 45 years old						
46 - 65 years old						
66 - 75 years old						
76 years and over						

2) What is your property interest? (check all that apply)

☐ I own a home and reside in it	☐ I am a landlord	☐ I own a home but do not live there year-round
☐ I rent a home	☐ I own land	☐ I rent out my home to someone
☐ Seasonal/recreational visitor	☐ I own a business	☐ I work in the Township
Other: _____		

3) How long have you lived, owned a business, or owned property in Comins Township?

☐ 0-5 years	☐ 6-10 years	☐ 11-20 years	☐ Over 20 years
☐ I do not live, own a business or own property in Comins Township.			

4) If you are not originally from here, what made you move or buy property in Comins Township?

☐ Employment opportunity	☐ Closer to family
☐ Beauty of area	☐ Recreational opportunities
☐ Small town	☐ Returned after living elsewhere
☐ Great retirement destination	☐ Purchased or started a business
☐ Prefer rural living	☐ Within commuting distance to work
☐ Affordable housing	☐ Abundant natural resources
☐ Clean and safe	☐ Where the house or property we liked happened to be located
Other: _____	

5) What recreational facilities do you enjoy using, or wish were available to you?

☐ Bike paths	☐ Hiking trails	☐ Pickleball courts	☐ Baseball/softball fields
☐ Disc golf	☐ ORV trails	☐ Playgrounds	☐ Water access sites
Other: _____			

6) Do you support the development of renewable energy facilities on agricultural land (such as battery, solar, and wind energy)?

☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Unsure/No Opinion
------------------------------	-----------------------------	--

7) Over the last 5 years, do you think that the overall condition of our parks has improved?

☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Unsure/No Opinion
------------------------------	-----------------------------	--

8) How would you rate the condition of the Township owned facilities?

☐ Excellent	☐ Good	☐ Poor	☐ Unsure/No Opinion
------------------------------------	-------------------------------	-------------------------------	--





Existing Conditions

The Existing Conditions section provides a snapshot of Comins Township today, highlighting its strengths, challenges, and opportunities.

It examines key areas such as housing, existing land use, and natural resources.

Together, these topics provide a better understanding of how the community is changing and help establish a foundation for informed planning and future decision-making.

HOUSING

Overview

In numerous communities, both young adults and the elderly face significant housing challenges due to low-income levels and rising housing costs. This is affecting both urban and rural areas. In urban areas, the demand for affordable housing often exceeds supply, exacerbating the issue. For young adults, student loan debt and low wages intensify financial pressure, while older adults on fixed incomes struggle with limited flexibility as living costs rise. In rural areas, the situation is compounded by a lack of affordable housing options, fewer job opportunities, and economic instability. Additionally, the shortage of a skilled workforce to build new housing in these areas further limits the availability of affordable homes, making it even harder for both groups to secure stable living conditions.



The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) advises that households spend no more than 30% of their income on housing. Yet in many high-demand areas, families are spending 40%, 50%, or even 60% of their income just to keep a roof over their heads. This financial strain often forces people to make tough trade-offs, such as cutting back on food, healthcare, or transportation. In extreme cases, it can lead to eviction or foreclosure.

The shortage of affordable housing contributes to a declining quality of life. As housing prices continue to rise and wages remain relatively stagnant, the gap between income and housing costs grows wider, fueling long-term housing insecurity and economic instability across generations.

Thriving communities offer a diverse range of housing options to meet the needs of all residents, from young adults starting on their own to older individuals seeking to downsize while remaining in their community. A key component of this diversity is the availability of “attainable” housing, which helps bridge the gap between subsidized affordable housing and high-end market-rate homes. While definitions may vary, the Urban Land Institute recently defined attainable housing as “non-subsidized, for-sale housing that is affordable for households earning between 80% and 120% of the Area Median Income (AMI).” This type of housing plays a critical role in supporting a balanced, inclusive, and economically stable community.

Household Characteristics

Comins Township consists of approximately 668 households, with an average household size of 2.74, which is notably larger than Oscoda County's average of 2.21. Despite this, the township shows a strong trend toward individual living arrangements: 36.4% of households consist of individuals living alone, and 22.7% are individuals aged 65 or older living alone, both significantly above the county average. This indicates a growing need for housing that supports independent living, especially for older adults.

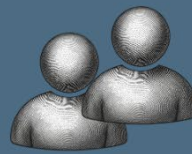
Moreover, 51.0% of households include at least one person over the age of 65, suggesting a rapidly aging population. As the township continues to age, demand will likely increase for accessible, single-level homes, senior-friendly rental units, and supportive services that allow residents to age in place. At the same time, 25.3% of households have at least one person under 18, showing that intergenerational housing and family-friendly options must also be part of future housing strategies.

Together, these trends point to the need for a diverse housing stock that can accommodate single residents, seniors, and families alike. Planning efforts should prioritize a mix of housing types, including smaller units, senior-accessible homes, and affordable options to support long-term residency and community stability.

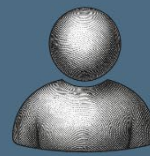
Comins Township



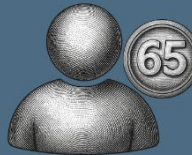
668 total
households



Average
household size
2.74



36.4%
living alone



22.7%
living alone 65+



27.8% with 1+
under 18 years



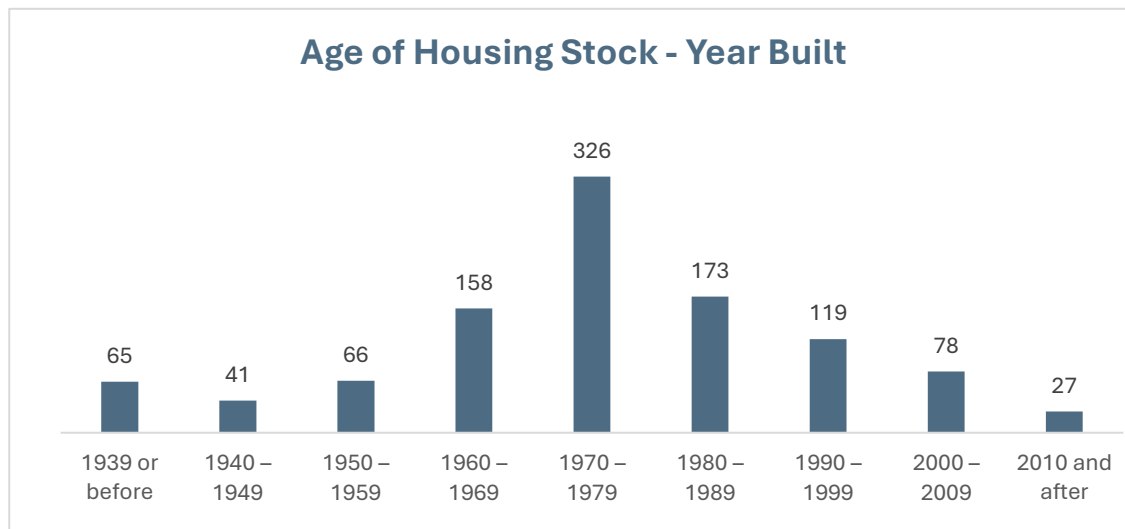
51.0% with 1+
65 years or over

Household Income

Comins Township reports a median family income of \$65,893 and a median household income of \$52,500. These figures are higher than the Oscoda County averages, \$62,762 for families and \$49,515 for households, indicating that township residents generally have stronger earning power relative to the surrounding county. However, incomes in Comins Township remain well below the state median, which is \$93,357 for families and \$72,875 for households. This income gap suggests that while Comins Township performs relatively well within its regional context, it still lags behind broader state economic standards. These income levels have important implications for housing affordability and economic development, particularly when considering local housing costs and the capacity of residents to support homeownership or rental expenses.

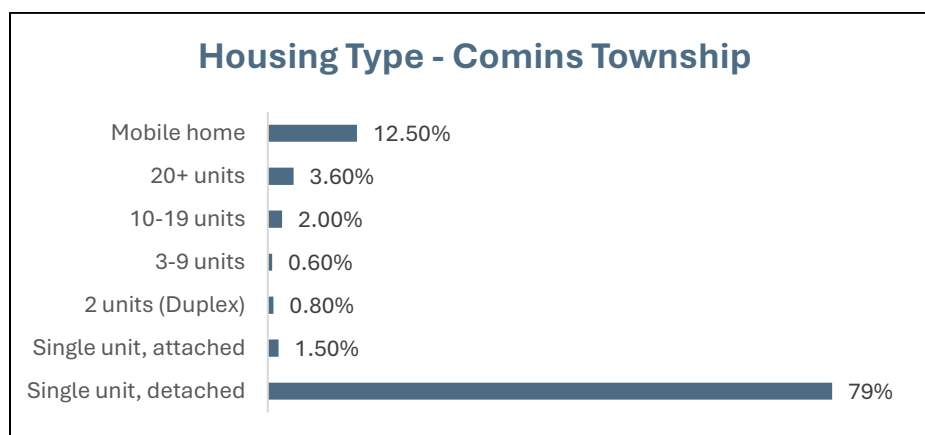
Current Household Inventory

The Comins Township housing stock has not seen any new development since 2019. The progression of housing was consistent from 1939 through 2019, with the highest decades being the 1960s, 1970s, and the 1980s. The decline of modern housing development may point to limited growth in recent years and suggests potential challenges in attracting new residents or meeting current housing needs. These figures highlight the importance of maintenance, preservation, and possible revitalization strategies to ensure the housing stock remains safe, efficient, and appealing.

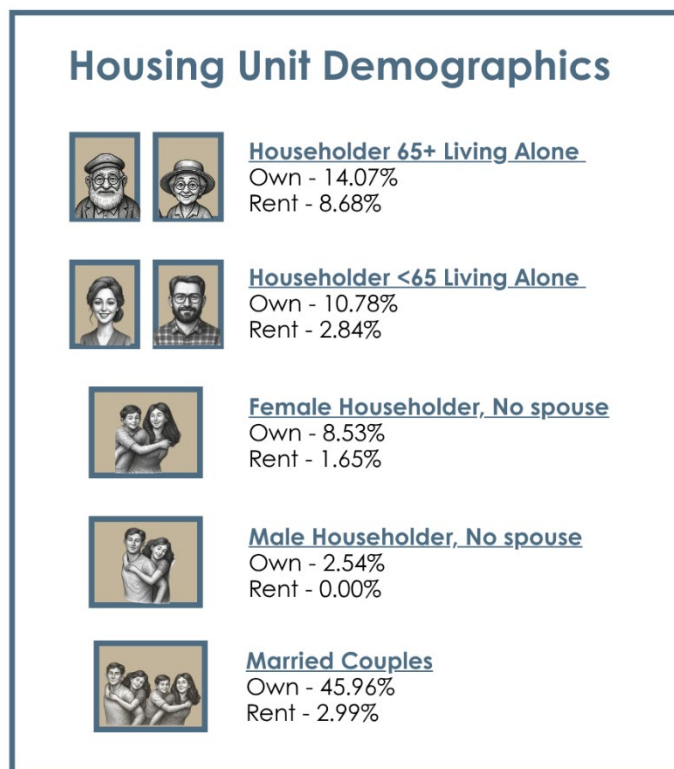


Of the 1,053 total housing units in Comins Township, 668 are occupied. The majority of these (554) are owner-occupied, while 114 are renter-occupied. Apartment-style housing makes up a notable portion of the rental market. This includes 8 units in 2-unit buildings, 5 units in buildings with 3 to 4 apartments, 1 unit in 5 to 9-unit buildings, and 59 units in buildings with 10 or more apartments.

The vast majority of housing units in the township are single-family units, comprising 80.5% of the total housing units. Apartments ranging from 2-unit buildings to 20 or more units per building make up approximately 7% of the total housing, and 12.5% are mobile homes.



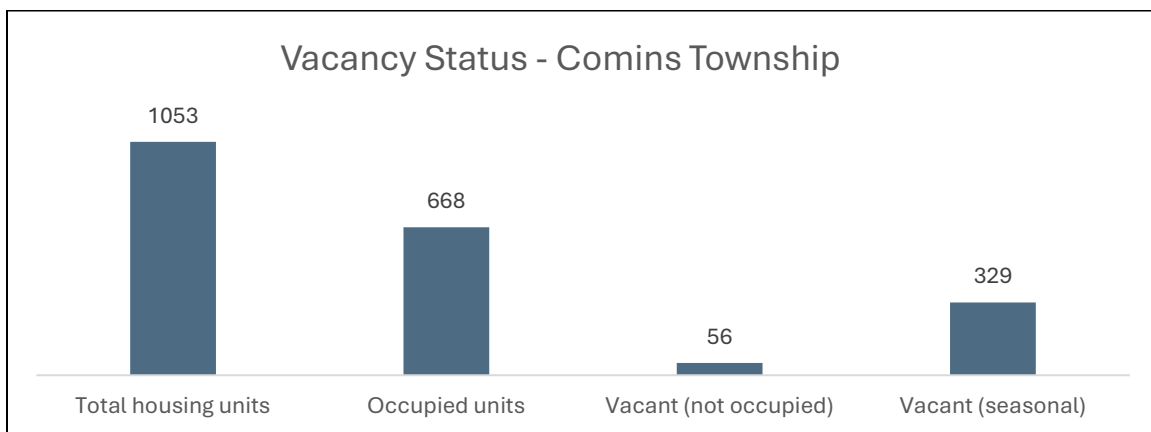
Comins Township exhibits a diverse range of household types across its housing units. Married couples make up 327 households. Households led by a male with no spouse present total 17 units. Female householders with no spouse account for 68 units. A significant portion of the population consists of individuals living alone. There are 91 units where the householder lives alone and is under the age of 65. Additionally, there are 152 units where the householder lives alone and is over the age of 65. Overall, Comins Township's household composition reflects a mix of family and nonfamily households, with a notably large share of older adults living alone, highlighting the importance of housing and services that support an aging population.



Vacant Housing

Comins Township has a total of 385 vacant housing units, resulting in a vacancy rate of 36.6%. Of the vacant units, 329 are seasonal, accounting for 85.5% of all vacant units in the township. This suggests that seasonal housing plays a significant role in the vacant housing stock.

In Oscoda County, the vacancy rate is much higher. Of the 8,925 total housing units, 4,921 are occupied, and 4,004 are vacant, yielding a vacancy rate of 44.9%. A large portion of the vacant units, 3,515, or 87.8%, are seasonal, indicating that seasonal homes make up most vacant properties in the county.



At the state level, Michigan has 4,622,236 housing units, with 4,076,369 occupied and 545,867 vacant, which results in a vacancy rate of 11.8%. Of these vacant units, 253,668 are seasonal, making up 46.5% of all vacant units across the state.

These figures show that while Michigan has a relatively low vacancy rate, areas such as Oscoda County—and to a lesser extent, Comins Township—have higher vacancy rates due to a substantial number of seasonal homes, though the Township's rates are much closer to the state's than the county's. This affects housing availability and could have implications for local planning and infrastructure, particularly in communities with a high percentage of seasonal residents.



Household Expenses

Housing affordability in Comins Township is influenced not just by home prices, but by ongoing costs like transportation, heating, and mortgage obligations. While a majority of homes are owner-occupied, a larger share of township homeowners carry a mortgage (48.6%) compared to the county (45.4%), indicating higher monthly housing payments for many residents. However, there are more township homeowners without a mortgage (51.4% vs. 54.6% countywide), suggesting more financial flexibility.

Monthly owner costs as a percentage of household income further highlight affordability pressures. A notable share of owner households (52.8%) spend less than 20% of their income on housing costs, while 12.6% spend 20–24%, 9.7% spend 25–29%, 1.5% spend 30–34%, and a substantial 23.4% spend 35% or more of their income on ownership costs. This indicates that while many households remain relatively cost-burdened at lower levels, more than one-third are experiencing a high housing cost burden.

Housing costs in Comins Township are generally affordable for many households, but a notable share experience a significant housing cost burden. More than half (52.8%) of homeowners with a mortgage spend less than 20% of their income on housing, while 23.4% spend 35% or more.

Among renters, 34.0% spend less than 20% of

their income on rent, but 20.6% are severely cost-burdened, paying 35% or more of their household income toward housing. These findings indicate that while affordability is strong for many residents, a substantial number of both homeowners and renters face high monthly housing costs.

Mortgage Status



Owner-Occupied with a Mortgage

Comins Township - 48.60%
Oscoda County - 49.10%



Owner-Occupied without a Mortgage

Comins Township - 51.40%
Oscoda County - 50.90%

Monthly Costs as a Percentage of Household Income



Own with Mortgage

23.40%
1.50%
9.70%
12.60%
52.80%

% of Income

35% +
30-35%
25-29%
20-24%
<20%

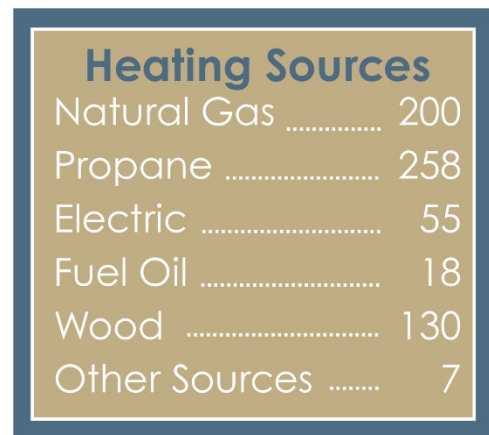
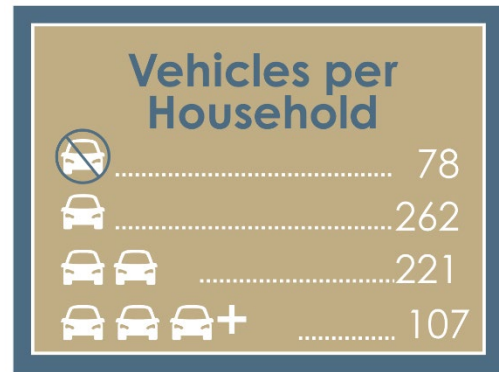


Rent

20.6%
14.4%
20.6%
10.3%
34.0%

Current Housing Cost

Although many households have relatively affordable housing costs, transportation and utility expenses can increase the overall cost of living. The high rate of vehicle ownership reflects the need for personal transportation in this rural community, adding costs for fuel, insurance, maintenance, and vehicle replacement. In addition, the prevalence of propane and wood as primary heating sources may expose households to fluctuating fuel prices and seasonal heating costs, which can be higher and less predictable than natural gas. These additional household expenses can reduce the amount of income available for housing, particularly for lower-income residents and those on fixed incomes.



Construction Cost

The Great Recession initially dampened construction activity, with its economic fallout leading to fewer local job opportunities. Many residents were forced to seek employment elsewhere. (The “Great Recession,” which spanned from late 2007 to around 2009, was triggered by the U.S. housing bubble collapse and snowballed into a global financial crisis, affecting economies worldwide.) More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has influenced housing trends, as the shift to remote work has made seasonal homes more appealing as permanent residences. The rising costs of construction materials, influenced in part by many recent natural disasters, are also a growing barrier to new building projects.

In Michigan, constructing a 1,500-square-foot home with builder-grade finishes (basic materials, excluding high-end touches like granite or hardwood) can be quite costly. On average, the construction of such a home would cost around \$315,000, not including the land. The average cost of land, statewide, is about \$13,000 per acre. This does not account for additional expenses like installing a well or septic system or connecting to municipal water and sewer systems. A typical 4-inch well installation averages \$9,500 statewide, while a septic system can cost around \$11,000 statewide. To connect to municipal sewers (\$1,300–\$5,000) and water lines (\$1,000–\$5,000). To connect to the electric grid (\$1,000–\$30,000) and a natural gas line (\$500–\$2,000). Depending on whether you have to dig a well and install septic, approximately \$37,250, or can hook up to municipal services, an average of \$22,900, either will have a significant impact on the overall cost of building a house.

There is currently only one buildable lot for sale in Comins Township, with a lot size of 0.83 acres and a price of \$29,500. It is unclear if the sewer system in the Township extends to this location, so the price of a septic system should also be considered, and therefore, one can figure out a range of the overall cost of construction with this land price: \$367,400 - \$381,750. This would require a minimum annual income between \$88,500 and \$92,000.

Purchase Price

At the time this plan is being written, the real estate listings show three single-unit detached homes for sale in Comins Township and one manufactured home. All are outdated to varying degrees but are in livable condition. While the median price point for these homes is \$199,450, they could be considered separately and therefore both attainable for different income levels in the township.

An average household in the township would be able to afford a maximum house payment of \$1,025/month, and the lower-priced home would have about a \$994/month payment. An average family in the township could afford a maximum monthly payment of \$1,484, and the second and third houses both have estimated monthly mortgages below this amount.

While these are considered attainable housing options for the average homeowner in the township, they will need significant improvements and updating to keep them in livable conditions. This can be very expensive and unpredictable cost-wise. For some, these homes still may be considered unattainable.

Active Listings



Single-Unit Attached Home, 3BD/2BTH
1,482 square feet on a .89-acre lot
\$1,682/month estimated mortgage



Single-Unit Detached Home, 3BD/1BTH
1,396 square feet on a .75-acre lot
\$1,171/month estimated mortgage



Single-Unit Detached Home, 4BD/2.5BTH
1,662 square feet on a .4-acre lot
\$1,164/month estimated mortgage



Single-Unit Attached Home, 3BD/2BTH
1,248 square feet on a .71-acre lot
\$994/month estimated mortgage

Final Costs

A frequently overlooked aspect of housing affordability is the cost of monthly utilities. While earlier estimates focused on core expenses, such as mortgage payments, property taxes, and homeowners' insurance, they did not

account for basic utility services like electricity, gas, internet, and phone. Even when using a modest estimate of \$100 per month per service, these utilities add approximately \$400 to a household's monthly expenses. Once this ongoing cost is included, the picture of what's truly affordable changes significantly. For a family, the maximum affordable home price decreases from \$198,000 to roughly \$140,000. For the average household in Comins Township, it drops even further, from \$132,000 to about \$69,000. When it comes to new home construction, these additional costs push the required household income from an estimated range of \$88,500 to \$92,000 up to a range of \$105,000 to \$108,000 per year. This underscores the need to evaluate housing affordability through a comprehensive lens that includes not only purchase prices but also the full cost of living. Without factoring in these recurring expenses, estimates can paint an overly optimistic view of what residents can realistically afford.

Conclusion

The housing landscape in Comins Township reflects a significant affordability challenge for both potential homebuyers and those considering new construction. While two existing homes are currently listed at prices that technically align with local income levels, the extent of needed updates could quickly push them beyond the financial reach of many residents. On the construction side, even the lowest-cost build scenario, factoring in land, infrastructure, and basic materials, results in a total investment of \$367,400 to \$381,750. This would demand a household income of at least \$88,500 to \$92,000, which is already well above the current median income levels. When the cost of monthly utilities is added, that threshold rises even further to between \$105,000 and \$108,000 annually. These figures highlight a growing disconnect between housing costs and local wages, emphasizing the urgent need for policies and investment strategies aimed at creating more attainable, move-in-ready housing. Without these interventions, many township residents will continue to face limited options for safe, affordable, and sustainable homeownership.

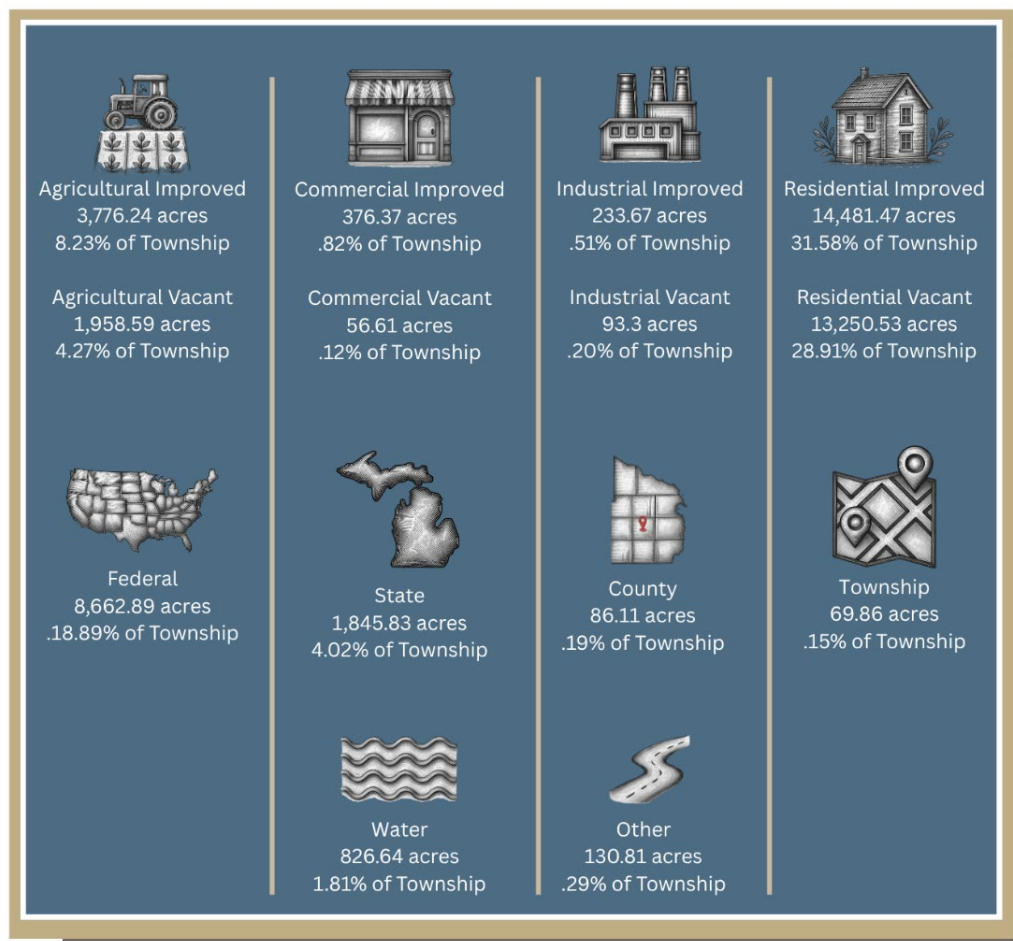


EXISTING LAND USE

Overview

Comins Township covers a total land area of approximately 71.8 square miles, with water making up 1.2 square miles. The township is primarily made up of agricultural, residential, and state and federal forest lands. Agricultural land is actively used for farming and has developed the backbone of the township's economy. Residential areas are throughout the township on large lots, with the smallest lots located in Fairview and along M 72. This mix of farmland, homes, and recreational spaces contributes to the rural character of the township.

Existing Land Use was delineated by categorizing parcels into agricultural, commercial, industrial, residential, federal, state, county, and township land. The map utilized Comins Township's tax roll data as its foundation. By leveraging parcel identification numbers, NEMCOG accurately pinpointed locations and tax classifications to map the township and establish the Existing Land Use Map. This approach ensures the highest level of accuracy in depicting current community land usage.





Agricultural Land Use

Agricultural land comprises approximately 12.5% of the total area within the township, or 5,735.1 acres of land. Of this agricultural land, more than 65% is designated as improved farmland, meaning it is actively cultivated or otherwise enhanced for agricultural production.



Commercial Land Use

Commercial land use in the township is primarily concentrated around the communities of Mio and Fairview, as well as along the M-72 and M-33 highway corridors. Additional commercial development is located along East Kittle Road. In total, commercial land accounts for just under 1% of the township's area, or approximately 432.98 acres. Of this, nearly 87% is classified as active commercial property.



Industrial Land Use

Industrial land use within the township is minimal, covering approximately 326.97 acres, which represents about 0.71% of the township's total land area. Of this, roughly 71.5% is actively being used for industrial purposes. While limited in overall footprint, this level of utilization suggests that the existing industrial areas are serving their intended function and contribute modestly to the township's economic base.



Residential Land Use

Residential land is the predominant land use in the township, encompassing approximately 27,732 acres, or 60.5% of the total land area. Of this, just over 52% is currently developed, indicating a significant portion of the land remains available for future residential growth. Whether improved or vacant, residential parcels in the township tend to be large in size, reflecting the rural character of the area and a pattern of low-density development.

Federal Land Use



This category of land use is comprised entirely of the Huron National Forest, which spans approximately 8,662.89 acres within the township, accounting for nearly 19% of the total land area. As federally managed public land, the Huron National Forest plays a significant role in shaping the township's natural landscape, recreational opportunities, and conservation efforts.

State Land Use



The Rifle River State Recreation Area occupies approximately 1,845.83 acres within Comins Township, representing about 4% of the township's total land area. As a state-managed recreational resource, it contributes to the township's outdoor amenities, supporting tourism, public recreation, and natural resource conservation.

County Land Use



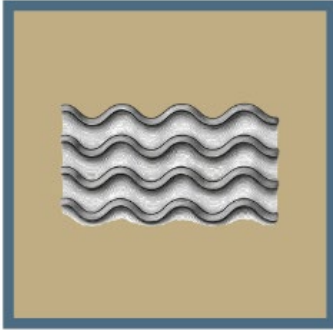
The Oscoda County Fairgrounds occupy just over 86 acres within Comins Township, accounting for less than 0.2% of the township's total land area. While small in size, the fairgrounds serve as an important community gathering space and host various events that contribute to the cultural and social fabric of the Township.

Township Land Use



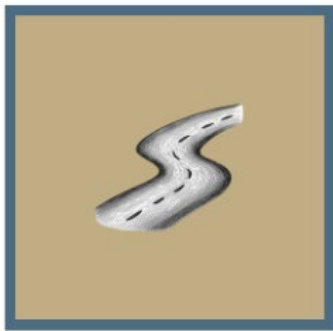
This land use category encompasses nearly 70 acres, representing approximately 0.15% of the township's total land area. Most of this land is dedicated to community recreation through Perry Lakes Township Park and Boney Park. The rest is used for smaller parks and municipal purposes, including the township offices and Township Hall, supporting local governance and public services.

Water



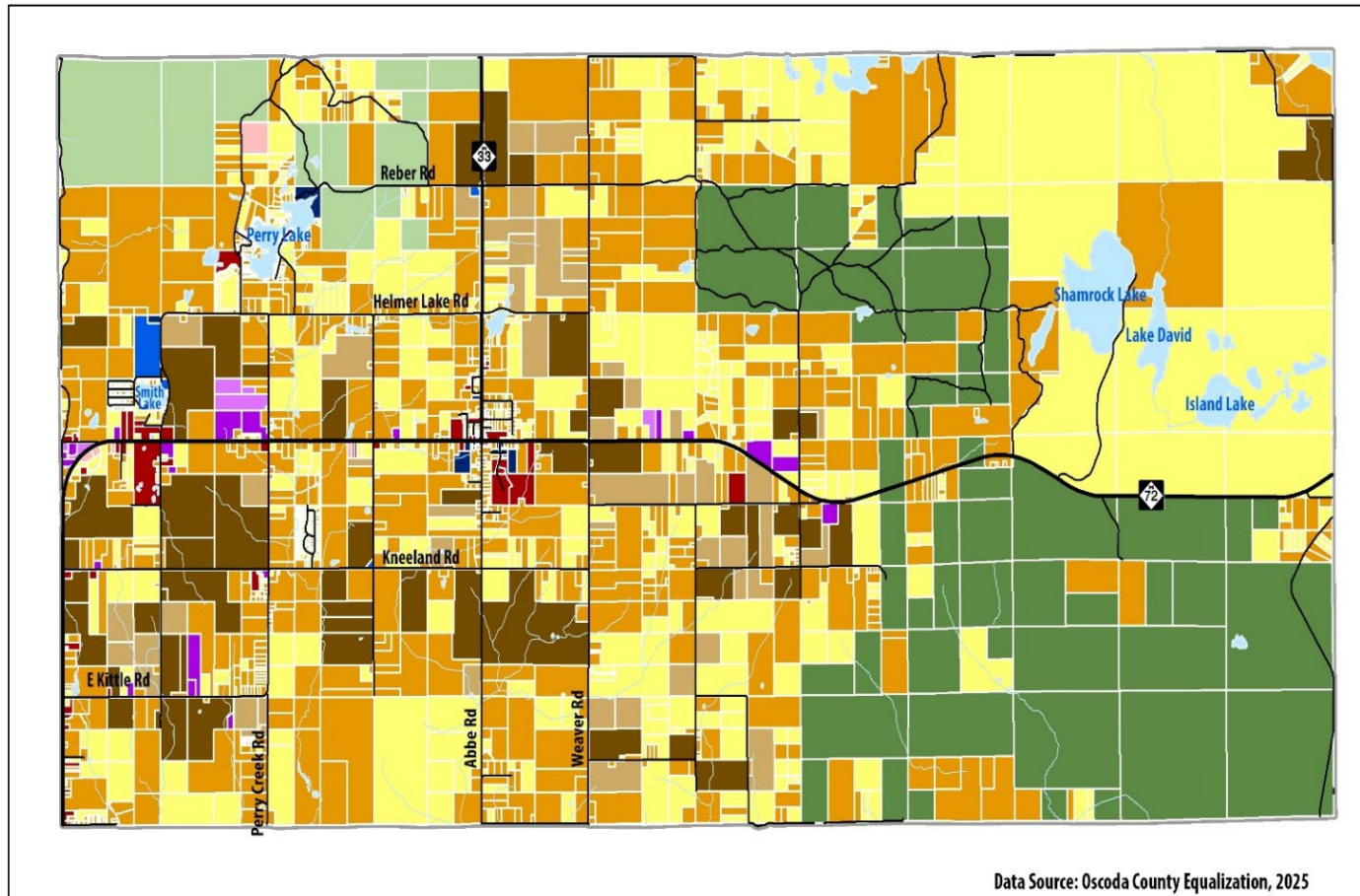
This land use category includes the township's lakes, rivers, and other surface water features, totaling approximately 828.64 acres, or 1.81% of the total land area. Prominent lakes within this category include Perry Lake, Shamrock Lake, David Lake, Island Lake, and Smith Lake. The township is also home to numerous ponds, small lakes, small rivers, and creeks.

Other



This land use category consists of road rights-of-way, which collectively account for just over 130 acres of land within the township. These areas are dedicated to public transportation infrastructure, including local roads, highways, and associated easements, and play a vital role in supporting access, connectivity, and mobility throughout the township.



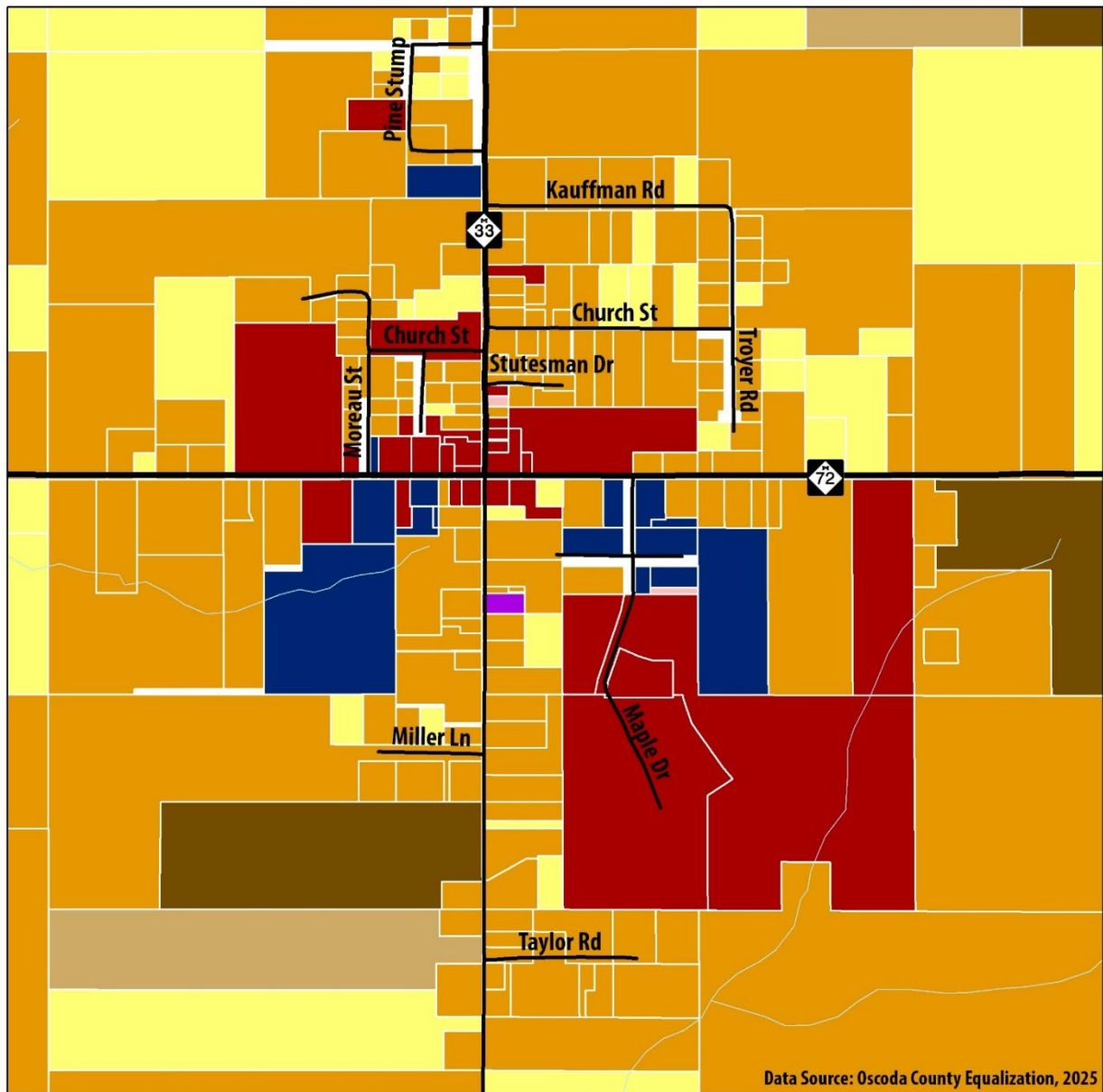


Existing Land Use

Comins Township MASTER PLAN

	Agricultural - Improved		Industrial - Improved
	Agricultural - Vacant		Industrial - Vacant
	Commercial - Improved		Residential - Improved
	Commercial - Vacant		Residential - Vacant
	County		State
	Federal		Township





NATURAL RESOURCES

Climate

Comins Township has a climate marked by nearly 30 inches of annual precipitation, including snow, with an average snowfall of about 63 inches per year. The average yearly temperature is around 44 degrees Fahrenheit. Because of the Great Lakes' influence, the area experiences greater temperature extremes in summer and winter compared to nearby counties along Lakes Michigan and Huron, which benefit from the lakes' moderating effects. The frost-free season typically lasts about 101 days, from the average last killing frost on June 5 to the first on September 14, although killing frosts have been recorded in every month.

Oscoda County, where Comins Township is located, holds Michigan's highest recorded temperature of 112 degrees, set on July 13, 1936, though such heat is uncommon. Snowfall is usually heaviest between November and March, but light snow has occasionally fallen as early as September and as late as May, highlighting the region's variable weather conditions.

Topography

Comins Township is situated within a glacially formed highland plain, with diverse topography and soils that influence land use, natural resource management, and future development. The landscape consists of smooth sand and gravel plains, gently rolling sandy hills, and level to undulating clay plains, creating a variety of drainage patterns and environmental conditions.

Much of the township is characterized by elevated, dry, sandy, and gravelly plains that are generally well suited for agriculture, forestry, and residential development. These areas are interrupted by natural depressions, dry valleys, and swales that affect drainage and provide opportunities for stormwater management, conservation, and recreation. Higher-elevation plateaus feature ridges, knobs, and glacial potholes that form lakes, wetlands, and valleys supporting important ecological functions such as flood control, water filtration, and wildlife habitat.

The township's clay plains contain shallow sandy pockets, small streams, and scattered wetlands. While these areas often have poor drainage, they provide valuable opportunities for wetland conservation, groundwater recharge, and habitat protection. Several tributaries flow south and west into the Au Sable River watershed, making protection of riparian corridors and water quality an important planning consideration. Elevations range from approximately 800 to 1,171 feet above sea level, influencing drainage, vegetation, agricultural suitability, and infrastructure planning.

Overall, Comins Township's glacial landscape presents both opportunities and constraints for future growth. Understanding the relationship between topography, soils, hydrology, and natural resources is essential for guiding sustainable development while protecting sensitive environmental features.

The Land Cover Map shows that forestland dominates the township, with extensive deciduous, mixed, and evergreen forests. Numerous woody and emergent wetlands occur throughout low-lying areas, while Kittle Lake and the Upper South Branch Thunder Bay River contribute to the township's natural resources.

Agricultural land is concentrated primarily in the southeast near Perry Creek Road and Kittle Road. Grasslands and herbaceous areas are scattered throughout the township, likely serving as pasture or open space. Development is limited and generally concentrated near the M-33 and M-72 corridors, where low-intensity residential development and small areas of more intensive development occur.

The township's transportation network, including M-33, M-72, Abbe Road, Rogers Road, Schmidt Road, and Kneeland Road, provides access through an otherwise predominantly natural landscape. Future planning efforts should continue to protect forests, wetlands, and water resources, support agricultural land uses, and direct new development toward existing infrastructure to minimize environmental impacts. Expanding recreational access to natural areas and water resources may also enhance quality of life while supporting sustainable community growth.

Forestry

Forestry plays a central role in the identity and economy of Comins Township. With 84% of the township's land covered in forest, this natural resource is not only a defining feature of the landscape but also a cornerstone of local industry, recreation, and conservation. The township is proud to be part of a region recognized for its thriving forestry sector, which *The Great Lake Reporter* has called the "biggest growth industry in the states of the upper Great Lakes."

Forests in Comins Township are primarily categorized as commercial forestland, reflecting their significance in supporting timber production and economic development. Ownership is divided between federal and state governments (54%), private landowners (42%), and county or municipal entities (4%). While only 9.2% of the township's total land qualifies as prime forestland, much of this valuable resource remains in private hands.

The township's forests are diverse and dominated by key species such as pine, which covers over 106,000 acres, followed by aspen and paper birch (88,800 acres), oak and hickory (67,100 acres), and maple, beech, and birch (27,100 acres). These woodlands

provide a renewable supply of timber while also offering essential wildlife habitat, opportunities for recreation, and natural watershed protection.

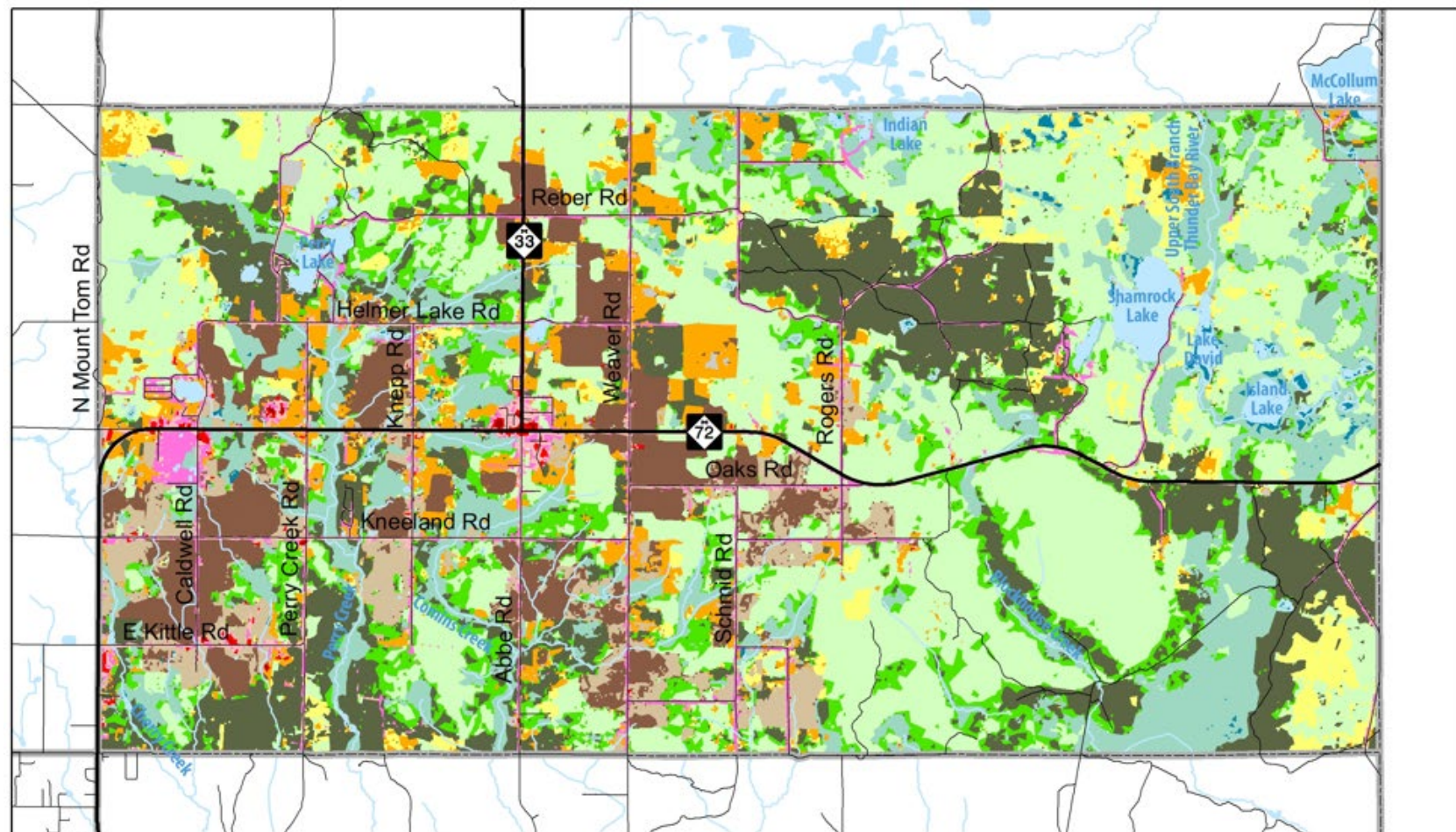
As demand for timber and outdoor recreation is projected to grow significantly, U.S. Forest Service forecasts anticipate a 60% increase in timber demand by 2030. Comins Township is taking a proactive approach to balancing these needs with long-term land stewardship. Through sustainable forestry practices, careful land use planning, and consideration of changing forest conditions, the township can support continued timber production while protecting the ecological and recreational values of its forests.

The township also recognizes that forest conditions and management challenges can change over time. Invasive species, disease, pests, climate-related impacts, and changes in forest composition can affect forest health and productivity. Comins Township intends to approach these challenges thoughtfully, emphasizing early awareness, prevention, and responsible management rather than waiting for significant impacts to occur. Proactive forest preservation efforts can help maintain healthy, resilient woodlands while allowing the township to adapt its land use and forestry policies as conditions change.

Soil assessments have identified Emmet sandy loam, Emmet loamy sand, and Roselawn sandy loam as the most suitable for forestry. These soils help guide land management strategies and support long-term forest productivity. By considering soil capability, forest health, invasive species risks, development pressures, and the community's need for timber and outdoor recreation together, Comins Township can make informed land use decisions that balance current needs with the preservation of its forest resources for future generations.

While commercial forestry is strongly supported, some forested areas are also designated for agricultural use or low-density residential development, based on compatibility and long-term sustainability goals. In prime forestland areas, the township encourages minimal residential density to protect working forests and prevent fragmentation.



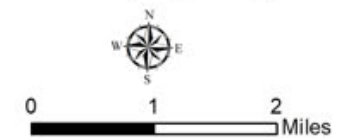


Land Cover

Comins Township MASTER PLAN



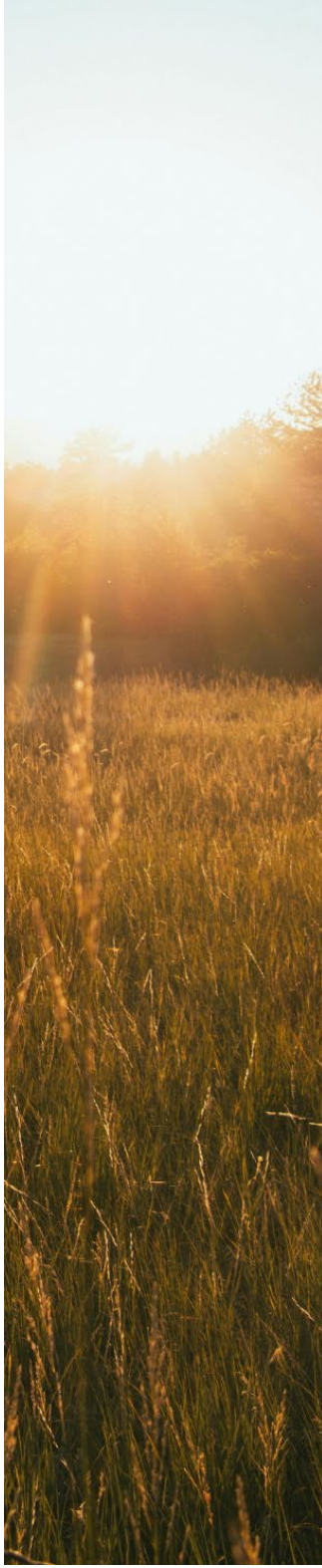
Data Source: USGS National Land Cover Database



EAST OF EXPECTED
Northeast Michigan
 COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
 Map Created by Northeast Michigan
 Council of Governments
www.discovernortheastmichigan.org
 2025

Geology

Comins Township is located on the distinctive Grayling outwash plain, a unique landscape shaped by the retreat of ancient glaciers. This geological history has created a diverse ecosystem characterized by sandy ice-disintegration ridges, extensive jack pine barrens, mixed white pine-red pine forests, and northern hardwood stands. These natural features originated from glacial movements and melting that once formed large glacial lakes across the region.



The surface geology of Comins Township is defined by four primary features: moraines, till plains, outwash plains, and lacustrine plains. Moraines are linear, hilly ridges formed from glacial debris deposited at the edges of retreating glaciers, scattered throughout the township and marking historic glacier boundaries. The till plains, primarily located in the southern part of the township, are relatively flat areas composed of unsorted glacial deposits similar to those found in the moraines.

Outwash plains and lacustrine plains, resulting from meltwater deposition, are also common. Outwash plains consist of stratified layers of sand, silt, clay, and other sediments transported and deposited by glacial meltwater streams. Lacustrine plains are former lake beds with fine-grained sediment deposits left behind as glacial lakes drained. These plains are interspersed throughout the township, contributing to the variability in soil and terrain.

Glacial drift thickness in Comins Township ranges from 200 to 400 feet, highlighting the significant role glaciers played in sculpting the landscape. Beneath this drift lies bedrock formed hundreds of millions of years ago when ancient seas covered the area, adding further complexity to the geological foundation.

The interplay of these glacial and bedrock features has created the township's diverse habitats and varied terrain, which present both opportunities and constraints for land use planning. Understanding these geologic characteristics is essential for managing natural resources, guiding sustainable development, protecting sensitive ecological areas, and planning infrastructure. Comins Township's unique geology not only shapes its natural beauty but also informs responsible stewardship and long-term community resilience.

Soils

Soils in Comins Township generally have a low organic matter content in their upper layers. Fortunately, most areas benefit from well-drained soils due to favorable water table levels and sufficient slopes that promote effective runoff. However, a significant portion of the township's soils are considered poor in quality, mainly because of low to moderate levels of essential plant nutrients and limited moisture availability, conditions especially common in the pine-plain sandy soils.

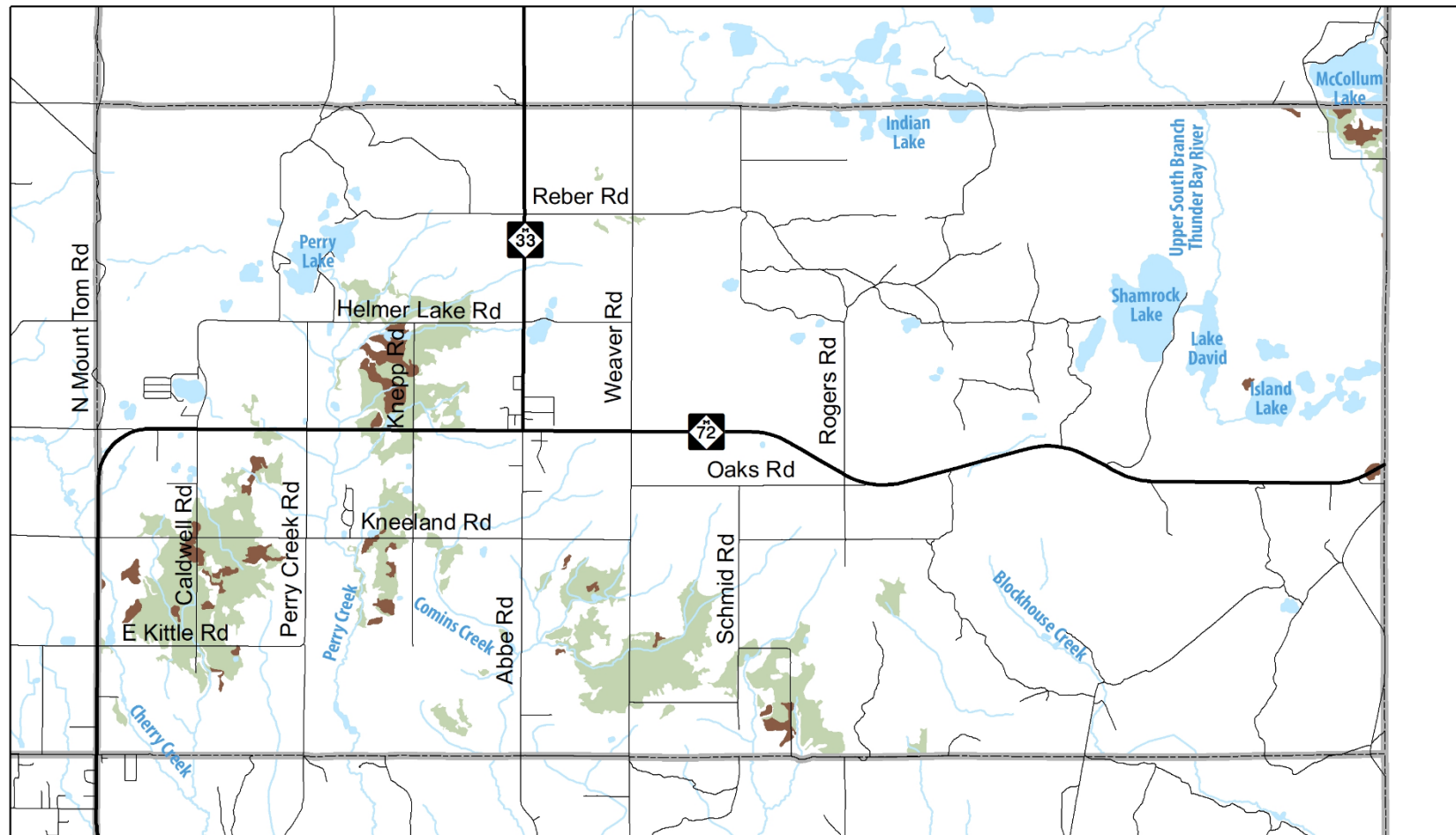
Understanding soil characteristics is essential for guiding land use and development. Steep, poorly drained, or unstable soils can limit construction, while well-drained, nutrient-rich soils are better suited for agriculture, forestry, and other productive uses. Mapping these soil associations helps local officials make informed land use decisions and protect valuable natural resources.

The Agricultural Soils Map identifies two categories of productive farmland: prime farmland and prime farmland if drained. Prime farmland is found in smaller concentrations, primarily in the western and central portions of the township, including areas along Caldwell Road, Kneeland Road, Helmer Lake Road, and near Island Lake and McCollum Lake. These soils are naturally well suited for agriculture.

Larger areas of prime farmland, if drained, occur in the southern and central areas of the township, particularly along Perry Creek Road, Abbe Road, and Schmidt Road. These soils require drainage improvements for optimal crop production, and they represent an important agricultural resource. Protecting both farmland categories through sound planning and preservation strategies will sustain Comins Township's agricultural economy and rural character.



The distribution of agricultural soils in Comins Township indicates that future agricultural development and preservation efforts should focus on Prime Farmland and Prime Farmland if Drained. Planning efforts should protect these soils from incompatible development through tools such as agricultural zoning, conservation easements, and agricultural district designations to support local agriculture and preserve the Township's rural character.



Agricultural Soils

Comins Township MASTER PLAN

- Prime farmland
- Prime farmland if drained

Data Source: Natural Resource Conservation Service, USDA



0 1 2 Miles

EAST OF EXPECTED
Northeast Michigan
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Map Created by Northeast Michigan
Council of Governments
www.discovernortheastmichigan.org

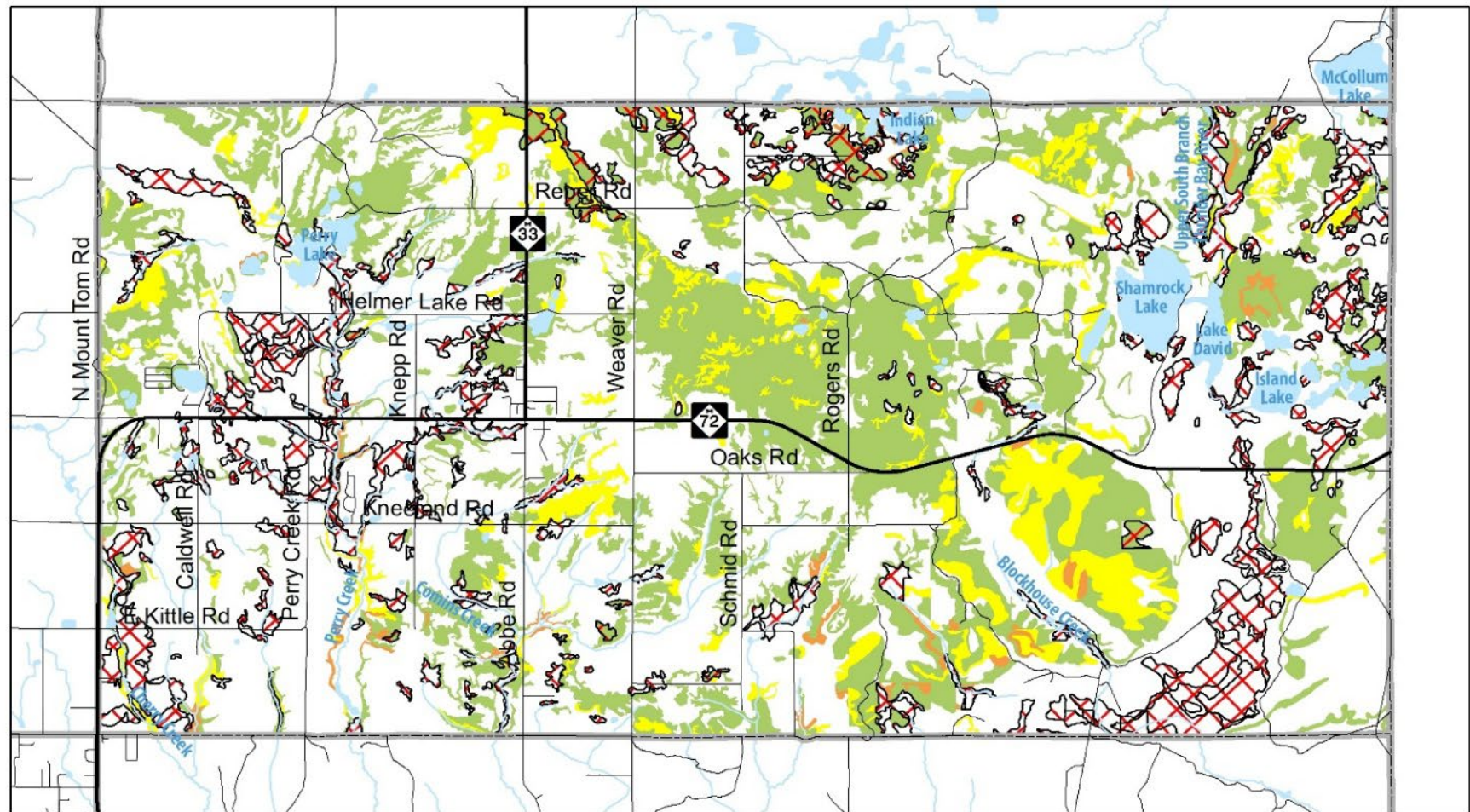
Slope & Hydric Soils

The Slopes and Hydric Soils Map of Comins Township identifies key physical constraints that can influence land development, agriculture, and conservation planning. The map highlights areas with varying degrees of slope and identifies the locations of hydric soils, which are typically associated with wetlands or poorly drained conditions.

Slope classifications are divided into three categories based on severity. The most widespread are moderately sloping areas (9–15%), shown in green, which are common throughout the central and northern parts of the township, especially near Helmer Lake Road, Weaver Road, and the area surrounding Island Lake. These areas are generally suitable for low-intensity development and agriculture, though they may require minor grading or erosion controls.

Strongly sloping land (15–30%), represented in yellow, occurs in larger pockets in the southern and southeastern portions of the township, particularly near Schmidt Road, Abbe Road, and around Blouthouse Creek. These areas present moderate development challenges, as the risk of erosion increases and more substantial engineering solutions may be needed for structures or roadways.



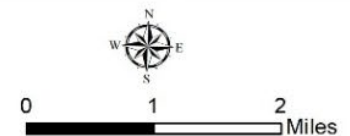


Slopes & Hydric Soils

Comins Township MASTER PLAN

- Steeply Sloping (30 - 45%)
- Strongly Sloping (15 - 30%)
- Moderately Sloping (9 - 15%)
- Hydric Soils

Data Source: Natural Resource Conservation Service, USDA



EAST OF EXPECTED
Northeast Michigan
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Map Created by Northeast Michigan
Council of Governments
www.discovernortheastmichigan.org
2025

Steeply sloping terrain (30–45%), shown in orange, is less common but appears in select ridgelines and escarpments, and along the edges of drainages and lakes. These steep slopes are generally unsuitable for intensive development due to high erosion risks, construction difficulty, and increased costs. Such areas are better suited for conservation or low-impact recreational uses.

The map also outlines areas with hydric soils (indicated with red hatching), which are prevalent throughout the township, particularly near water features like Perry Creek, Comins Creek, the Upper South Branch Thunder Bay River, and the wetlands around Island Lake and McCollum Lake. Hydric soils are typically saturated for long periods, making them poorly suited for most development. These areas are often ecologically significant and may fall under wetland protection regulations.

From a planning standpoint, this map provides essential information for identifying development constraints and environmentally sensitive areas. Areas with steep slopes or hydric soils should be avoided or carefully managed when planning new infrastructure, housing, or agricultural activity. Conservation of these lands helps prevent erosion, protect water quality, and preserve natural habitat. Land use policies that steer development toward flatter, drier areas with fewer physical constraints will support long-term sustainability and lower infrastructure costs for the township.

Sand & Gravel

Comins Township is rich in sandy soils, many of which also contain gravel, providing a valuable natural resource with significant potential for sand and gravel extraction. These deposits support a vital sector that contributes to local construction, road building, and other infrastructure needs. As part of its commitment to responsible economic development, the township recognizes the importance of identifying and managing these resources effectively.

To determine the suitability of land for sand and gravel extraction, soil ratings are used as indicators of likely deposit locations. A site is considered a probable source if it includes a layer of material at least 3 feet thick, with the upper boundary located within 5 feet of the ground surface. Soils with coarse fragments of bedrock, such as shale or siltstone, or those that are overly fine-grained, are generally excluded from consideration for sand and gravel sourcing.

Several soil types within the township have been identified as particularly promising for sand and gravel extraction. These include Rubicon sand (gravelly phase), Grayling sand (gravelly phase), and Granby gravelly sand. Additionally, a range of soils are considered probable sources for sand only, such as Grayling sand, Rubicon sand,

Grayling loamy coarse sand, Kalkaska loamy sand, Emmet loamy sand, Newton sand, Saugatuck sand, and Griffin sandy loam.

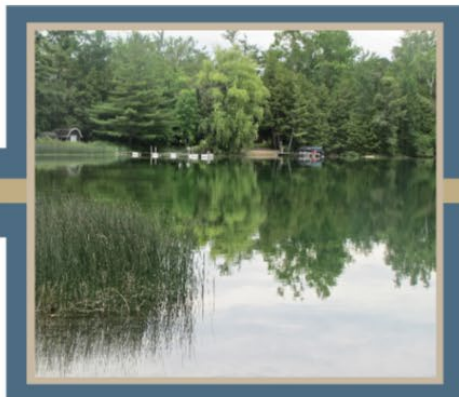
To support careful planning and sustainable use of these resources, the township has developed an Existing Land Use Map, which outlines the locations of active and potential sand and gravel extraction sites. This mapping is a key tool for guiding land use decisions, helping to balance industrial use with environmental considerations and community interests.

Comins Township is committed to using its natural resources wisely. Sand and gravel extraction is managed to ensure long-term economic benefits, support for local industries, and protection of environmental quality. By integrating resource planning with broader land use strategies, the township aims to promote sustainable growth that strengthens the local economy while preserving the rural character and ecological health of the region.

Water Resources

Water plays a vital role in the recreational opportunities available in Comins Township. The area's groundwater aquifers are replenished by precipitation, which is easily absorbed by the township's permeable soils. Because of the high water table near lakes and streams, many individual wells tend to be relatively shallow. Comins Township's surface water drains into two major watersheds: the Au Sable River and the Thunder Bay River.

The township is home to numerous lakes and waterways that contribute to its natural beauty and recreational appeal, including Smith Lake, Perry Lake, North Helmer Lake, Horseshoe Lake, Spring Lake, Island Lake, Sheer Lake, Durkee Lake, Dutch Lake, McCollum Lake, Shamrock Lake, and Penoger Lake. In addition, Perry Creek and Comins Creek flow through the area, further supporting outdoor activities such as fishing, boating, and wildlife observation. These water resources are essential to the community's quality of life and play a key role in attracting visitors and supporting local recreation.



Wetlands

Comins Township is home to extensive wetlands that play a vital role in supporting a rich diversity of plant and animal species. These wetlands are essential not only as habitats but also for their critical function in recharging groundwater aquifers, which help sustain the township's water resources and overall environmental health.

Recognizing the importance of these ecosystems, the Michigan Legislature enacted the Goemere-Anderson Wetlands Protection Act (PA 203 of 1979) to safeguard wetlands across the state. Comins Township strongly supports this legislation and is committed to upholding its provisions to protect both public and private wetlands within its boundaries. This commitment reflects the township's broader dedication to balancing development needs with environmental conservation.

Any proposed alteration, filling, or disturbance of regulated wetlands for development or other purposes requires a thorough review and issuance of a permit from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). The permitting process ensures that any impact to wetlands is minimized by requiring applicants to demonstrate that no feasible and prudent alternatives exist outside the wetland, and that the activity will not cause significant harm to aquatic ecosystems. Moreover, the activity must have a legitimate need to be located within the wetland area to qualify for approval.

Comins Township recognizes that wetlands provide irreplaceable ecological benefits, including flood control, water filtration, wildlife habitat, and climate regulation. Therefore, the township encourages careful planning and responsible management of land uses that may affect these sensitive areas. The township also understands that certain activities are exempt from the Wetlands Protection Act, including traditional farming and grazing practices, construction and maintenance of farm ponds, timber harvesting, maintenance of existing nonconforming structures, upkeep of existing roads within established rights-of-way, small-diameter pipelines, and electric power line maintenance.

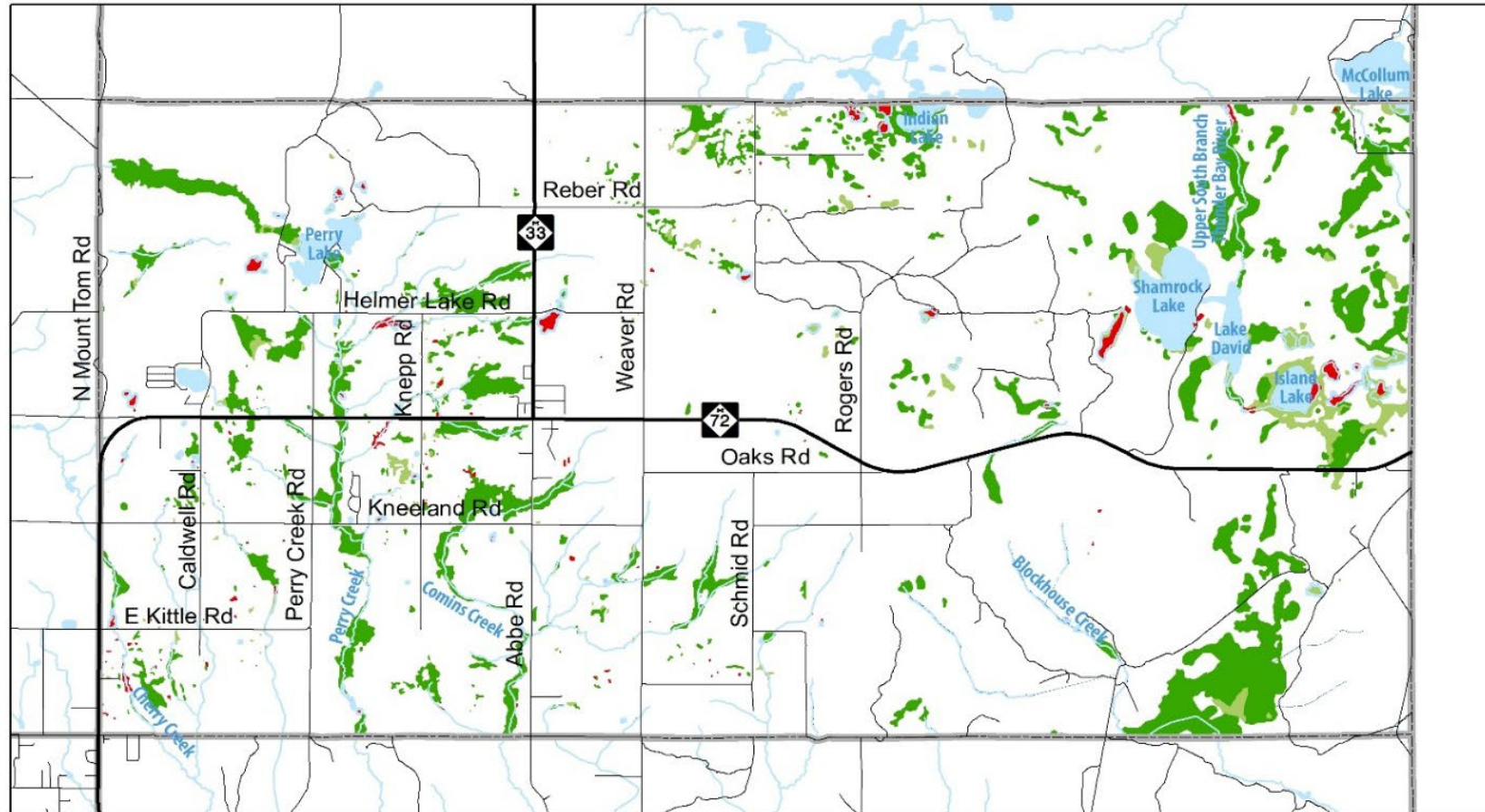
By fostering cooperation with state agencies such as the Department of Natural Resources and the DEQ, Comins Township actively participates in efforts to protect and conserve its wetland resources. This partnership approach helps ensure that any permitted alterations are carried out with the utmost care to preserve the ecological functions of wetlands.

Through ongoing commitment to environmental stewardship, education, and regulation, Comins Township aims to maintain the health and integrity of its wetlands. Protecting these areas is essential to sustaining the township's natural heritage, supporting biodiversity, and enhancing the quality of life for current and future generations. The township remains dedicated to responsible land use practices that respect and preserve its valuable wetland ecosystems for years to come.

The Comins Township Wetlands map highlights the township's extensive wetland resources and serves as a valuable tool for planning and environmental management. It categorizes wetlands using color codes to differentiate between freshwater emergent wetlands (light green), freshwater forested/shrub wetlands (dark green), freshwater ponds (red), riverine systems (blue lines), and lakes (solid blue). Wetlands are scattered throughout the township, with particularly dense areas in the western and northeastern sections, and significant forested wetlands in the southeast.

Prominent water features such as Perry Lake, Lake David, Shamrock Lake, Island Lake, and creeks like Comins Creek and Blockhouse Creek are also shown. The map includes a network of labeled roads—such as M-33, M-72, Helmer Lake Road, and E. Kittle Road—for reference. This map, based on data from the National Wetland Inventory maintained by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, supports informed decision-making for land use, conservation, zoning, and water quality protection. It ensures that growth and development in Comins Township considers the ecological importance and regulatory implications of its wetland areas.

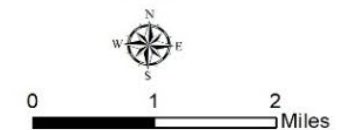




Wetlands

Comins Township MASTER PLAN

- Freshwater Emergent Wetland
 - Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland
 - Freshwater Pond
 - Riverine
 - Lake
- Data Source: National Wetland Inventory, U.S.
Fish and Wildlife Service



EAST OF EXPECTED
Northeast Michigan
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Map Created by Northeast Michigan
Council of Governments
www.discovernortheastmichigan.org
2025

Fish & Wildlife

Comins Township, Michigan, is home to an abundance of fish and wildlife, making it one of the region's most treasured natural destinations. The township is especially proud to be recognized as the Wild Turkey Capital of Michigan, a title earned through its large, healthy population of wild turkeys, which have become a symbol of local identity and pride. These impressive birds, often weighing over 20 pounds in the wild, are frequently seen throughout the area and play a central role in the township's recreational character, attracting wildlife enthusiasts and hunters alike. Their presence presents a unique branding opportunity for the township and reinforces its reputation as a hub for outdoor and nature-based experiences.

Beyond wild turkeys, Comins Township hosts a diverse and thriving wildlife community supported by its forests, wetlands, waterways, and open landscapes. Whitetail deer are particularly abundant and have long been a cornerstone of the local hunting season, drawing sportsmen and women from around the state. The township is also a favored destination for upland game hunting, with species such as ruffed grouse, American woodcock, and snowshoe hares found in the region's wooded areas. This combination of habitat and game species supports a strong culture of outdoor recreation, contributing to both the local economy and quality of life.

The township also plays an important role in the conservation of rare and threatened species. Among the most notable is the Kirtland's Warbler, a federally endangered songbird that relies on young jack pine stands for breeding, habitats that are prominent in parts of Oscoda County and adjacent areas. Bald eagles, once imperiled, now soar over the township's rivers and lakes, while a small but significant population of spruce grouse continues to inhabit the Mack Lake area. The preservation of these sensitive species reflects the success of state and local conservation efforts, often coordinated through partnerships with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and other environmental agencies.

The township's rivers, streams, and lakes further enrich its wildlife diversity. The Au Sable River and Thunder Bay River watersheds, which span much of the area, provide high-quality aquatic and riparian habitats that support mammals such as beavers, otters, mink, and muskrats. The upland and forested areas offer habitat for larger mammals, including red foxes, coyotes, bobcats, and black bears, all of which contribute to the region's ecological balance and add to its appeal for nature observation and outdoor education.

Fishing is another core component of the township's recreational identity. Although the native Michigan grayling no longer inhabits local streams due to historical habitat loss, the area supports healthy populations of brook, brown, and rainbow trout, particularly in the cold, clear waters of Au Sable River tributaries. The township's inland lakes also offer excellent warm-water fishing for largemouth bass, northern pike, bluegill, perch,

and crappies. These fisheries not only provide recreation but also support local tourism and community events centered around outdoor traditions.

Comins Township is deeply committed to responsible wildlife management and conservation, recognizing that the health of its natural systems is directly tied to long-term sustainability, economic opportunity, and cultural identity. By promoting the best land management practices, protecting critical habitats, and encouraging cooperation with agencies like the DNR and conservation organizations, the township ensures that future generations can enjoy the same access to hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing that current residents cherish.

In addition to its ecological and recreational benefits, the township sees its natural resources as a powerful driver of economic growth through wildlife-based tourism, outdoor recreation industries, and conservation-related jobs and programs. Through thoughtful planning and stewardship, Comins Township is actively working to protect and enhance its natural assets, supporting both its rural character and its vision for a vibrant, sustainable future.

Water Sources

Comins Township relies entirely on groundwater for its drinking water supply, accessed through a combination of private and public well systems. Private wells serve individual households, while public wells provide for multiple users beyond a single family. These wells draw from deep sand and gravel aquifers, which, due to the high permeability of the soil, are both productive and susceptible to contamination from surface and subsurface pollutants.

The sandy soil composition that characterizes much of the township allows precipitation to recharge the aquifer efficiently, but it also limits natural filtration, leaving groundwater vulnerable. According to the Local Health Department, some wells in the area have shown contamination from bacteria, fecal matter, and nitrates. Contributing sources include aging or failing septic systems, runoff from residential areas, road salt (chlorides), volatile organic compounds, and other environmental pollutants.

A significant concern is the widespread use of septic systems, particularly in waterfront areas, where many lots are small, and systems are outdated, often more than 30 years old. As many former seasonal cottages have transitioned into year-round homes, these older septic systems are being used beyond their intended capacity, increasing the risk of groundwater and surface water pollution.

To protect water quality and ensure a safe, sustainable supply, Comins Township must prioritize low-density development, especially near lakes and streams. Future land use planning should encourage adequate lot sizes and require soil suitability evaluations for

septic system placement. Ongoing monitoring, maintenance, and potential system upgrades will be necessary to address contamination risks and maintain the integrity of the township's vital groundwater resources.

Oil & Gas

Comins Township has experienced significant changes in its mineral resource landscape, largely driven by the development of natural gas reserves within the Antrim Shale formation. Since 1992, natural gas exploration and extraction have expanded steadily across Oscoda County. By 1995, approximately 390 Antrim gas wells had been permitted, with around 80 actively developed, many of them located in Greenwood, Elmer, Clinton, and Comins Townships. This progress was made possible through expanded pipeline infrastructure and gas processing capacity, much of which was initially developed in neighboring Montmorency County.

The potential of the region's natural gas resources has drawn considerable interest. A notable example is the Michigan State Mineral Lease Auction of December 6, 1993, in which Oscoda County received the highest per-acre bid in the state. This event reflected strong investor confidence in the area's long-term viability for energy development and signaled a continued period of growth in mineral leasing and gas production activity.

As natural gas development expands, Comins Township recognizes the importance of proactive planning and policy development to address the associated impacts. One key concern is infrastructure maintenance, particularly regarding local roads, which face increased wear from truck traffic and heavy equipment used in drilling and pipeline construction. Maintaining safe and functional roadways is a township priority as activity continues.

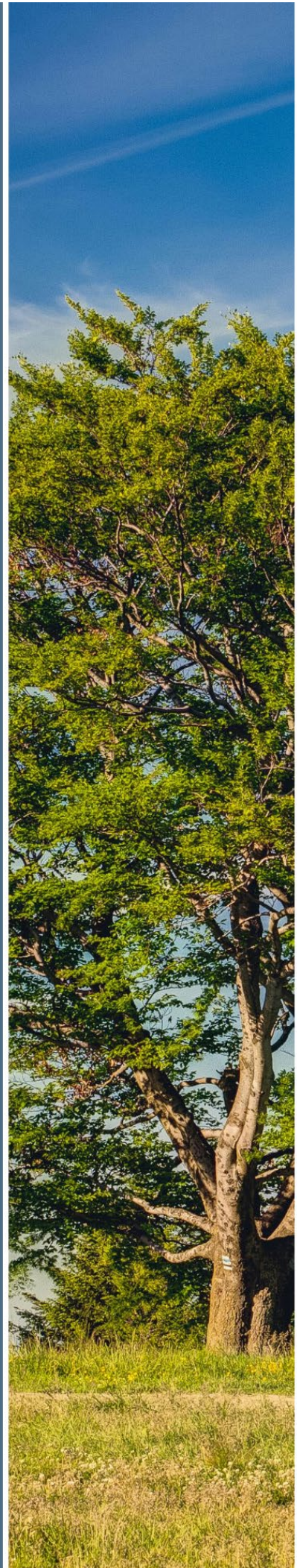
Another area of focus is environmental stewardship, especially the protection of wildlife habitats from fragmentation and disruption. As pipelines and access roads are built, careful land-use planning is essential to minimize impacts on sensitive ecosystems. Similarly, stream sedimentation, a common byproduct of construction near water bodies, is closely monitored to preserve water quality and aquatic life.

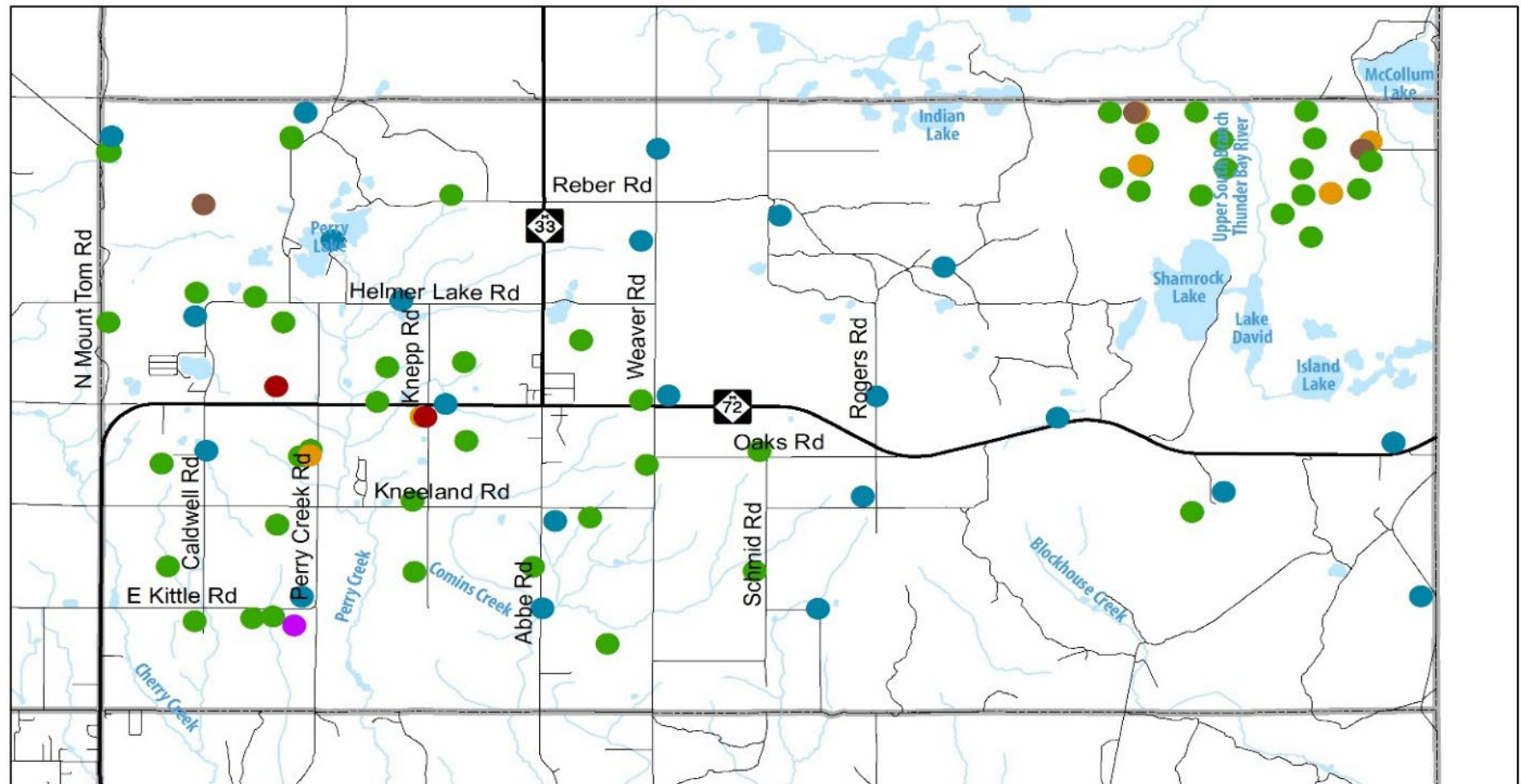
The township is also committed to community safety, which includes maintaining effective emergency response plans to manage potential risks such as equipment malfunctions, spills, or the release of hazardous materials. These plans ensure that local agencies are prepared and equipped to respond quickly to protect residents and the environment.

Finally, Comins Township is mindful of the visual and noise impacts that come with energy development. While economic progress is welcome, preserving the aesthetic

character of the landscape remains an important value. The township seeks to balance the economic benefits of natural gas with efforts to protect the scenic, rural quality that defines the community.

The Oil and Gas Wells map for Comins Township, included in the 2025 Master Plan, illustrates the distribution and types of energy extraction and disposal sites across the township. It identifies various well types using distinct color-coded symbols, including natural gas wells (green), dry holes (red), brine disposal wells (brown), and Part 625 wells, which are typically associated with mineral exploration (light blue for test wells and pink for disposal wells). Additionally, blue dots indicate general locations, and an orange dot represents a specific disposal well. These sites are spread throughout the township, with notable concentrations in the central and northeast areas, particularly near Helmer Lake Road, Perry Creek Road, and in the region north of Lake David and Shamrock Lake. Major roads such as M-33, M-72, Oaks Road, and E. Kittle Road are labeled for orientation. The presence of these wells reflects both historical and ongoing resource extraction activity in the area. This map, based on data from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), serves as an important planning resource for managing land use, environmental safety, and future development in proximity to energy infrastructure.



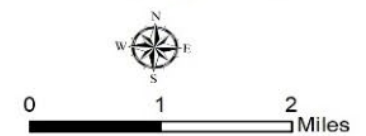


Oil & Gas Wells

Comins Township MASTER PLAN

- Brine Disposal Well
- Dry Hole
- Location
- Natural Gas Well
- Part 625 Disposal Well
- Part 625 Test Well

Data Source: Michigan Department of Environment,
Great Lakes, & Energy



EAST OF EXPECTED
Northeast Michigan
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Map Created by Northeast Michigan
Council of Governments
www.discovernortheastmichigan.org
2025

Community Vision, Values, & Goals

The community vision and values set forth in this Master Plan are based on the vision and values adopted by the Comins Township Board of Trustees on **[insert date adopted]**.

The vision and values were reviewed by the community through the Master Plan update process and refined to better fit the vision for Comins Township shared by the community today.

The values reflect the priorities of the community and serve as the organizing structure for the goals and objectives of the Master Plan.





COMMUNITY VISION



Comins Township envisions a strong and sustainable future that builds on its agricultural heritage, natural resources, and rural character. The Township strives to support responsible growth, strengthen community connections, and maintain a high quality of life for current and future residents.

COMMUNITY VALUES

Achieving Comins Township's vision requires maintaining the qualities residents value today while recognizing the need to adapt to growth and change in the years ahead. Successfully managing that change will require ongoing attention to, and balance among, three core community values.

Community Values

1. Community Character
2. Quality of Life
3. A Healthy and Vibrant Economy

Community Character

Comins Township values its rural heritage, historic resources, scenic landscapes, agricultural traditions, and the unique character of Fairview. The township is committed to preserving its identity, protecting natural resources, and fostering an engaged and welcoming community where residents actively participate in shaping the township's future.

Goals and objectives related to this community value address:

- Strengthen community identity
- Preserve rural character
- Support local agriculture
- Protect historic resources

Quality of Life

Comins Township values a safe, healthy, and connected community where residents of all ages and backgrounds have access to quality public services, recreational opportunities, diverse housing, and well-maintained infrastructure. The township is committed to protecting its forests, wetlands, lakes, streams, farmland, wildlife habitat, and other natural resources to ensure a high quality of life for current and future generations.

Goals and objectives related to this community value address:

- Enhance parks and recreation
- Improve public services
- Maintain quality infrastructure
- Expand housing opportunities

Healthy & Vibrant Economy

Comins Township values a resilient and diverse economy that supports agriculture, tourism, small and home-based businesses, and appropriate commercial and industrial development. Economic growth should be guided by sound planning, coordinated infrastructure investment, and effective zoning to create employment opportunities while protecting natural resources, existing neighborhoods, and the township's rural character.

Goals and objectives related to this community value address:

- Support business growth
- Promote sustainable development
- Strengthen local workforce
- Expand economic opportunities
- Guide responsible investment

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

Overview

The primary goal of this plan is to maintain and foster the growth and advancement of Comins Township as a quality place to live, work, and visit. The Board of Trustees and Planning Commission have sought to make this plan a reflection of community belief, support, and action to implement it.

Plan implementation is often ascribed as a governmental responsibility and not part of the activity that can be embraced by the broader community. That is not the intent of this plan. In the following plan implementation tables, the responsible parties are identified, the type of required activity is identified, and timelines are determined. Responsibility for implementing this plan will include governmental, private enterprise, community groups, and individuals. It is important to note that while responsible parties are listed, the township will make every effort to collaborate with partner organizations, other governments, and members of the public to ensure the correct mix of stakeholders is involved during each implementation strategy. It is hoped this plan will stimulate enthusiasm and interest in community development that can become self-sustaining.

Resources Required

Implementation of the actions identified in this chapter will require a combination of township staff time, financial resources, public participation, and regional collaboration. While the level of effort will vary, all actions will require staff involvement for implementation or ongoing administration, and many build upon existing township initiatives. Some actions will be carried out in partnership with regional organizations and local stakeholders, including Oscoda County, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Fairview School District. Others will require funding through the township's General Fund, Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), grants, or other external funding sources to supplement local resources and expertise. Successful implementation will depend on continued collaboration with the community and elected and appointed officials to ensure community support and informed decision-making.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIONS



Goal 1 - Protect and advance the overall quality of life and strengthen community identity.

Objectives

- Balance tourism, seasonal residents, and full-time community values to build a sense of place through local programs and initiatives.
- Maintain the scenic quality of the rural portions of the township and enhance the appearance of Fairview.
- Promote active citizen involvement in shaping the township's future.
- Use the Master Plan as a guide to maintaining and enhancing the quality of life for residents.
- Establish and maintain property maintenance standards in the Village Overlay District that promote safe, attractive, orderly, and well-maintained properties, minimize conditions that detract from community character, and ensure exterior areas are maintained in a manner that is compatible with surrounding properties and community expectations.

Actions

- Use beautification efforts to enhance the appearance of public facilities and gateways into the community.
- Support local programs and initiatives that enhance a sense of place in Comins Township.
- Encourage public engagement through regular meetings and outreach.
- Improve public communication and transparency by maintaining and regularly updating the township website, utilizing social media, and determining other methods of public outreach.
- Actively engage in strategic planning and effectively manage the Master Plan by establishing annual goals and conducting periodic reviews to track progress throughout the year.
- Ensure township decisions align with this Plan and reflect community values.
- Enhance the streetscape of Fairview with street trees, decorative lighting, benches, pathways, sidewalks, and other pedestrian elements.



Goal 2 - Preserve and enhance the rural, natural, and cultural identity of Comins Township while guiding thoughtful and compatible development.

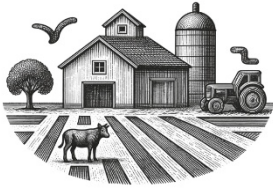
Objectives

- Preserve rural character by protecting natural resources and guiding development to respect the community's scale, identity, and historic and environmental features.
- Protect the integrity of existing neighborhoods from the intrusion of incompatible uses.

Actions

- Update zoning ordinances to protect natural resources and rural character.
- Establish and maintain natural waterfront greenbelts along lakefront properties to protect shoreline vegetation, preserve scenic views, reduce erosion, and safeguard water quality while allowing for reasonable access to and enjoyment of the waterfront.
- Establish design standards for commercial and industrial areas that reflect community character.
- Promote conservation-based open space or cluster development options including Planned Unit Developments.





Goal 3 - Preserve and promote agriculture as an economic base, and the heritage and way of life in Comins Township.

Objectives

- Support the viability and growth of agriculture, and discourage the conversion of farmland into other, more intensive uses.

Actions

- Explore opportunities to promote agricultural tourism activities.
- Include standards in the Zoning Ordinance to protect topsoil, farmland, and groundwater.
- Provide educational materials to the public on the Right to Farm Act and agroforestry.
- Promote development that improves agricultural and economic opportunities.
- Protect and support cottage industries that strengthen local farms and sustain the community's rural character.



Goal 4 – Preserve the historic resources in the township.

Objectives

- Ensure that the protection of historic resources is factored into decision-making.

Actions

- Support programs that engage in historic preservation.
- Add flexibility into the Zoning Ordinance that allows preservation of historic structures.



Goal 5 – Ensure a high quality of life for all residents by supporting healthy environments and recreational opportunities.

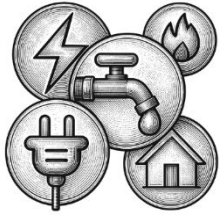
Objectives

- Provide safe, clean, and sustainable natural and built environments.
- Ensure access to recreational facilities and natural spaces.
- Maintain and strengthen Comins Township's quality of life to attract and retain families and individuals.
- Protect water quality and public access.

Actions

- Identify and pursue funding opportunities to enhance the township's overall quality of life.
- Expand and maintain parks, trails, and recreational facilities.
- Promote neighborhood enhancement programs (e.g., street tree plantings, clean-up days, etc.)
- Promote education for residents, developers, and property owners on land use and environmental stewardship.





Goal 6 – Provide safe, accessible, well-maintained services, infrastructure, facilities, and amenities for all residents.

Objectives

- Secure state and federal funding for infrastructure improvements.
- Provide responsive municipal services and communication with the public.
- Maintain safe and efficient transportation systems.
- Manage waste responsibly.
- Promote equitable representation and community well-being.

Actions

- Review and update public documents to enhance ADA accessibility.
- Identify and prioritize services in need of improvement by supporting the capital improvements plan.
- Maintain a strong working relationship with Oscoda County Road Commission and MDOT.
- Consider the impact on the community when evaluating road improvements.
- Incorporate Complete Streets design concepts into planning efforts to ensure all forms of transportation (pedestrian, bicyclist, driver, buggy, etc.) are adequately provided.
- Provide efficient and accessible solid waste disposal through support of the Oscoda County Materials Management Plan.





Goal 7 – Provide diverse, high-quality housing while preserving community character.

Objectives

- Maintain attractive neighborhoods and commercial districts.
- Expand housing options for all income levels and age groups.
- Balance new residential growth with the existing community character.
- Maintain the existing housing stock to keep residential areas in good repair, appearance, usefulness, and safety.
- Ensure planning and zoning initiatives are appropriate for the rural areas of the township and in Fairview.

Actions

- Support housing initiatives for infill development, mixed-use development, and affordable housing programs.
- Identify methods to maintain and improve the existing housing stock.
- Support zoning that protects residential areas from intrusion by incompatible uses.
- Identify areas for development of a range of housing for all demographics.
- Support the establishment of Accessory Dwelling Units.
- Develop an overlay district in Fairview to ensure residential zoning regulations are appropriate.
- Investigate resources, tools, and funding sources to further reduce blight in the community.





Goal 8 – Promote and support a resilient and sustainable local economy that supports jobs, local businesses, and long-term prosperity while protecting natural resources and preserving community character.

Objectives

- Support business retention, attraction, and entrepreneurship.
- Encourage commercial and industrial development that aligns with the character of the community.
- Revitalize underutilized and brownfield sites.
- Promote year-round economic activity for residents and visitors.
- Attract environmentally responsible ("clean") industries.
- Strengthen downtown and support local business development.
- Guide development through effective planning and zoning.
- Strengthen coordination with regional and local economic development partners and industries.
- Provide opportunities for development across commercial and industrial sectors.

Actions

- Develop a strategy to guide commercial growth in Comins Township.
- Ensure economic development is appropriately scaled to the township's infrastructure and character and preserves natural and rural features.
- Coordinate with economic development organizations to attract and support diverse industries.
- Encourage mixed-use and compact development to support local businesses.
- Study and plan for different commercial and industrial development types.
- Promote tourism, recreation, and agriculture as economic drivers.
- Ensure infrastructure (roads, utilities) supports economic activity without degrading community character.
- Ensure zoning regulations are clear and aligned with plan goals.
- Promote workforce development, job training, and educational partnerships.
- Determine suitable locations for industrial development.
- Implement a commercial overlay district along major transportation corridors to encourage a mix of commercial, industrial, and residential uses.
- Ensure the Zoning Ordinance provides for the establishment of Home-Based Businesses.



Growth Framework

The Growth Framework guides future growth and development in Comins Township, with a focus on stability, resilience, and quality of life. It builds existing plans and policies to support informed decisions about development, infrastructure, and community investment.



OVERVIEW

The Growth Framework prioritizes stability, resilience, and quality of life in Comins Township. It guides decisions that strengthen the community, make efficient use of resources, and support long-term sustainability. Additional information on population and growth trends is provided in the Community Profile Appendix. Building on the township's existing plans, policies, and regulations, this chapter serves as a tool for guiding the location, timing, and type of future development, as well as future infrastructure investments.

As required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended, this Master Plan includes a zoning plan that describes the relationship between the future land use recommendations of the Master Plan and the Township's Zoning Ordinance. Rather than being presented as a separate, stand-alone section, the zoning plan is woven throughout the Future Land Use Chapter. The descriptions, objectives, and recommendations for each future land use category identify the intended character, development pattern, and types of uses envisioned for those areas and provide guidance for corresponding zoning districts and future zoning decisions. Collectively, these future land use policies constitute the Township's zoning plan and provide the framework for evaluating and updating zoning regulations to implement the long-term vision established by this Master Plan.



Factors Influencing Growth

The timing and rate of growth in Comins Township will continue to be influenced by market demand and supply, existing development patterns and entitlements, land supply, natural hazards and environmental constraints, regional pressures, and a variety of other factors such as established plans and policies, and the availability of infrastructure and services.

Key Objectives

This chapter should be used in conjunction with the goals and objectives contained in Part III of this Master Plan to evaluate all growth-related decisions. Key objectives for this chapter are to:

- Encourage infill and redevelopment within the township's existing limits and where infrastructure and services already exist
- Grow logically and sequentially outward from the existing township core
- Accommodate diverse housing options
- Support sustainable development practices
- Support a balanced mix of uses so more residents can live and work in the township
- Protect the natural resources and visual qualities that make Comins Township unique

FUTURE LAND USE

Overview

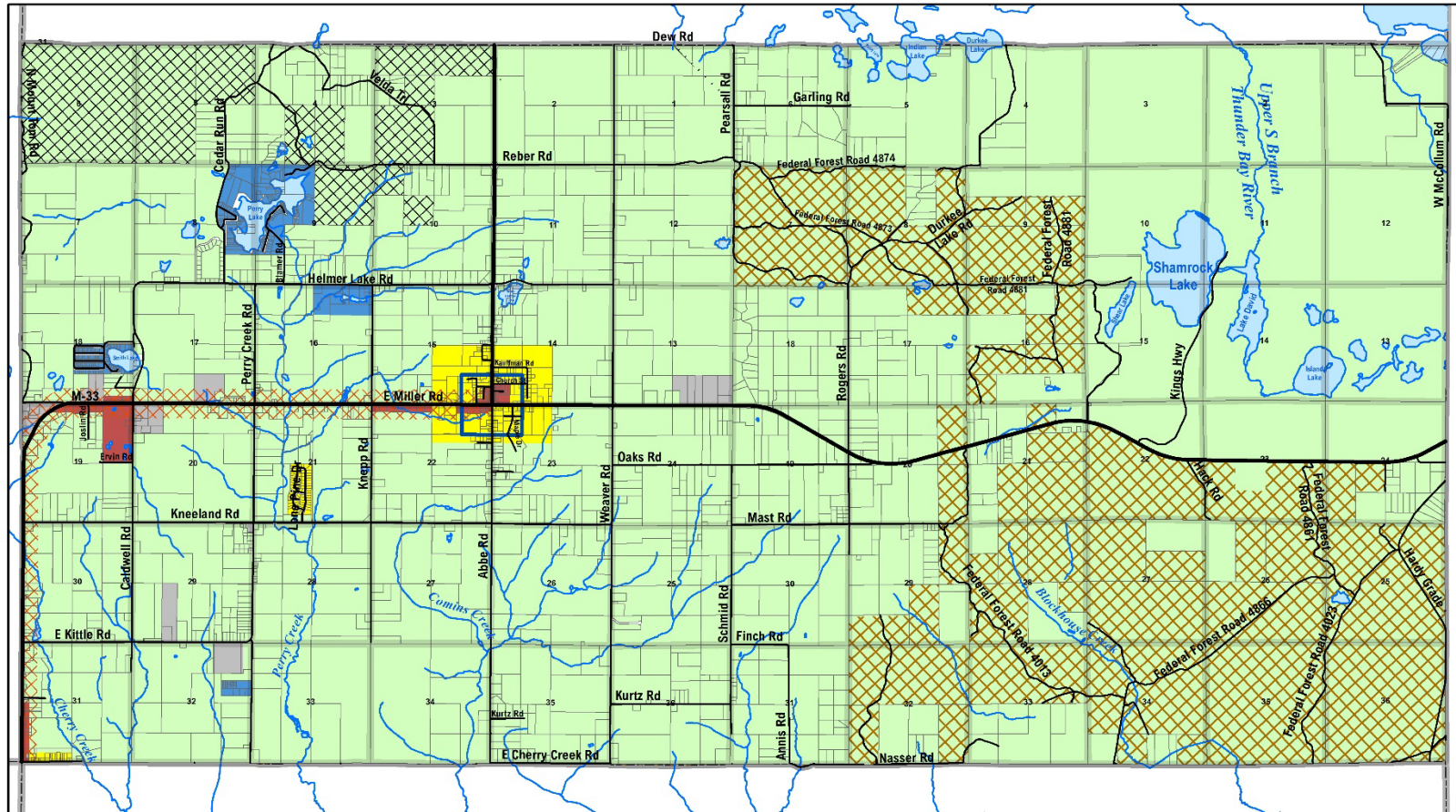
The Future Land Use Plan provides a long-range guide for the physical development and preservation of Comins Township. The plan reflects existing development patterns, natural resources, infrastructure, public input, and the community's vision for the future. The Future Land Use Map and accompanying descriptions identify the general location, character, and intensity of anticipated land uses over the planning period.

The Future Land Use Plan is intended to guide land use decisions, zoning amendments, public investments, and development proposals while protecting the township's natural resources, rural character, and quality of life. The Future Land Use Plan also serves as the foundation for the township's zoning regulations by guiding future zoning decisions and amendments that support the community's long-term vision. The land use designations are not intended to regulate property directly; rather, they provide a framework for future growth and development consistent with the goals and objectives of this Master Plan.

Future Land Use Designation

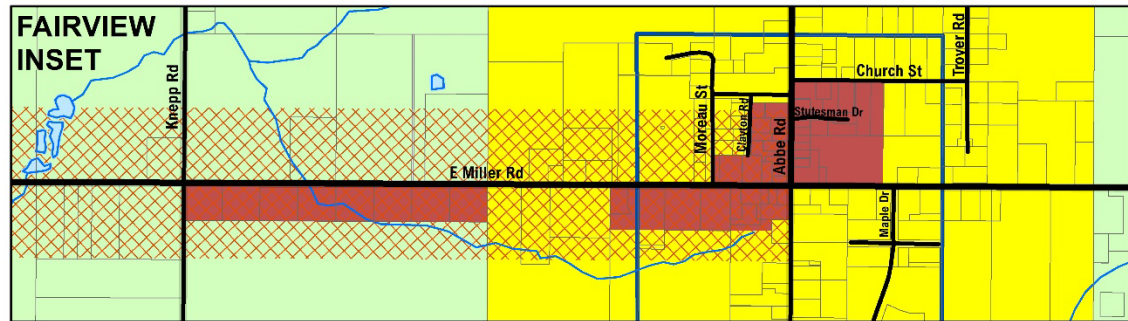
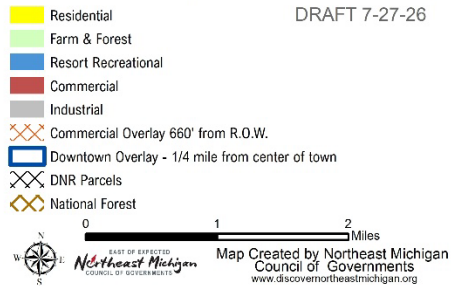
Zoning Districts

Residential	Single-Family Residential (R-1)
Farm and Forest	Farm and Forest District (FF)
Resort - Residential	Resort - Residential District (RR)
Commercial	Commercial District (C)
Commercial Overlay	Commercial Overlay
Industrial	Industrial District
Village Overlay	Village Overlay District (VO)



Comins Township Future Land Use Map

DRAFT 7-27-26



Residential

Purpose

The Residential designation is intended to provide areas for low-density to medium-density residential development that preserve neighborhood character, privacy, and compatibility with surrounding land uses. While detached single-family homes are the predominant use, this designation also supports a range of complementary residential opportunities, including duplexes, accessory dwelling units, and residential care facilities. Limited home-based businesses and neighborhood-serving uses may also be appropriate where they are designed to remain compatible with the surrounding residential environment. This designation seeks to provide housing choice while maintaining the township's rural and residential character.



Character

Areas designated Residential are characterized by detached homes situated on moderately sized lots with yards, open space, and a low-density to medium-density development pattern. These neighborhoods may also include accessory dwelling units, duplexes, schools, religious institutions, parks, and other community-serving uses that contribute to the quality of life of residents. Development should be designed to maintain an attractive, safe, and cohesive residential setting while minimizing impacts on neighboring properties.

District Standards

This designation is generally implemented through the Single-Family Residential (R-1) Zoning District. The district is intended to accommodate low-density to medium-density residential development consisting primarily of detached single-family homes, along with compatible residential and community-serving uses. Accessory dwelling units, duplexes, home occupations, planned residential developments, and residential care facilities may be appropriate where consistent with township regulations. Development should provide adequate infrastructure, access, landscaping, and open space while protecting public health, safety, and welfare.

Farm and Forest

Purpose

The Farm and Forest designation is intended to preserve and promote the long-term use, enjoyment, and conservation of the township's agricultural lands, forests, natural resources, and open spaces. This designation recognizes the importance of farming, forestry, recreation, and resource-based industries to the local economy and community character. It provides opportunities for agricultural production, timber management, outdoor recreation, resource-based businesses, and compatible residential development while maintaining the rural landscape and protecting environmentally sensitive areas. The designation also supports tourism, agricultural diversification, and other activities that contribute to the township's economic vitality.



Character

The Farm and Forest designation is characterized by agricultural fields, managed forests, natural features, open spaces, and dispersed residential development. Agricultural operations, forestry activities, recreation facilities, campgrounds, resorts, farm-based businesses, and other resource-related uses are common within these areas. Commercial and industrial activities that support agriculture, forestry, recreation, or natural resource industries may also be appropriate when designed to be compatible with the surrounding landscape.

District Standards

This designation is generally implemented through the Farm and Forest (FF) Zoning District. The district accommodates a mix of agricultural, forestry, recreational, residential, commercial, and resource-based uses. Development should support the continued use of farmland and forestland, protect natural resources, and provide opportunities for recreation, tourism, and rural economic development.



Resort-Recreation

Purpose

The Resort-Recreation designation is intended to provide areas for residential homes, cottages, seasonal residences, and recreation-oriented development that complements the township's lakes, rivers, forests, and other natural amenities. This designation supports a mix of residential, recreational, tourism, and limited commercial uses that contribute to the local economy while promoting the conservation of water resources, natural features, and scenic landscapes.

Particular emphasis is placed on

maintaining opportunities for waterfront recreation, boating, tourism, and outdoor activities while protecting the environmental quality of shoreline areas and surrounding natural resources.

Character

The Resort-Recreation designation is characterized by a mix of permanent and seasonal residences, cottages, waterfront homes, resorts, and recreational facilities located near lakes, rivers, and other natural amenities. Common uses may include marinas, campgrounds, parks, lodging establishments, restaurants, and recreational outfitters that serve both residents and visitors.

District Standards

This designation is generally implemented through the Resort-Recreation (RR) Zoning District. The district accommodates a mix of residential, recreational, tourism, and community-serving uses. Development should occur at a relatively low-density to medium-density while protecting natural features, shorelines, water quality, scenic resources, and recreational opportunities.

Commercial

Purpose

The Commercial designation is intended to provide locations for businesses, services, employment opportunities, and commercial activities that serve township residents, visitors, and the surrounding region. These areas are intended to accommodate a broad range of retail, service, office, hospitality, entertainment, and commercial uses in a manner that promotes economic development and provides convenient access to goods and services. The designation also seeks to encourage the concentration of commercial activities in appropriate locations, reducing conflicts with residential and resource-based land uses while supporting a vibrant local economy.



Character

The Commercial designation is characterized by a mixture of retail businesses, restaurants, lodging establishments, professional offices, personal service businesses, entertainment venues, community facilities, and other commercial activities. Commercial areas often function as activity centers serving residents and visitors and may include shopping, dining, lodging, recreation, service businesses, and limited light industrial or research-related uses. These areas provide convenient access to a wide range of goods and services and are generally more intensive than surrounding residential areas.

District Standards

This designation is generally implemented through the Commercial (C) Zoning District. The district accommodates a variety of commercial, service, office, hospitality, institutional, and limited manufacturing uses that support the township's economy. Uses are generally more intensive than residential areas and should provide safe access, adequate infrastructure, and appropriate transitions to surrounding land uses.



Commercial Overlay

Purpose

The Commercial Overlay designation is intended to guide commercial growth and redevelopment along the M-33/M-72 corridor between Cherry Creek Road and the community of Fairview. The overlay is designed to encourage a cohesive commercial corridor that provides goods, services, employment opportunities, and visitor-serving businesses while maintaining safe traffic operations and an attractive gateway into the community. The designation recognizes the importance of

M-33/M-72 as a regional transportation corridor and seeks to balance economic development with preservation of the area's rural character and natural resources.

Character

The Commercial Overlay is characterized by a mix of residential, commercial, lodging, and service-related uses located along the M-33/M-72 corridor. Homes, businesses, and community-serving uses contribute to the area's mixed-use character and reflect its role as a major transportation corridor through the Township.

District Standards

This designation applies to properties located within approximately 660 feet of both sides of the M-33/M-72 corridor between Cherry Creek Road and the center of Fairview. The overlay is intended to direct commercial growth to the township's primary transportation corridor. Parcels within the overlay have a dual zoning designation comprising the underlying district and the commercial overlay. Commercial uses should generally follow the Commercial (C) Zoning District, while uses allowed in the underlying district should follow standards applicable in those districts. If a use is allowed in each of the districts, then the least restrictive district regulations shall apply.

Industrial

Purpose

The Industrial designation is intended to provide areas for manufacturing, processing, warehousing, distribution, research, utility infrastructure, and other industrial activities that contribute to the township's economic base and employment opportunities. This designation supports businesses that require larger sites, specialized facilities, outdoor storage, transportation access, or operational characteristics that may not be compatible with residential or commercial areas. Industrial areas are intended to accommodate a variety of industrial and employment-generating uses while minimizing impacts on surrounding properties through appropriate site design, buffering, and development standards.



Character

The Industrial designation is characterized by manufacturing facilities, warehouses, distribution centers, contractor yards, equipment sales and service businesses, research facilities, utility infrastructure, processing operations, and other industrial activities. These areas are generally larger in scale than commercial areas and may include outdoor storage, loading areas, transportation facilities, and specialized industrial operations. Industrial areas are typically located along major transportation corridors or in locations where adequate separation can be maintained from residential neighborhoods. These areas support employment opportunities, industrial investment, and business operations that require larger sites and specialized facilities.

District Standards

This designation is generally implemented through the Industrial (I) Zoning District. The district accommodates industrial, manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, transportation, utility, and research-related uses that support the Township's economy. Industrial uses should be located and designed to provide adequate space for operations while minimizing impacts on adjacent properties through appropriate buffering, screening, and site design.



Village Overlay

Purpose & Character

The Village Overlay District is intended to establish additional standards for building appearance, site design, and property maintenance that promote an orderly, well-maintained community, protect adjacent properties, and strengthen the identity of the village without unnecessarily restricting reasonable use of property.

Character

The Village Overlay designation is characterized by a mix of residential and commercial businesses.

District Standards

Development within the Village Overlay District is intended to maintain a clean, orderly, and well-maintained appearance that protects community character and property values. Standards require accessory buildings to be located in side or rear yards, limit outdoor storage, prohibit the accumulation of junk and inoperable vehicles, and require regular maintenance of lawns and exterior areas. Temporary outdoor storage associated with permitted activities is allowed when promptly removed.





Appendix

The Appendix provides supporting information and background data used to inform the Plan's recommendations. It includes the Community Profile, community services and utilities, public input survey results, and other documentation that supports the planning process.

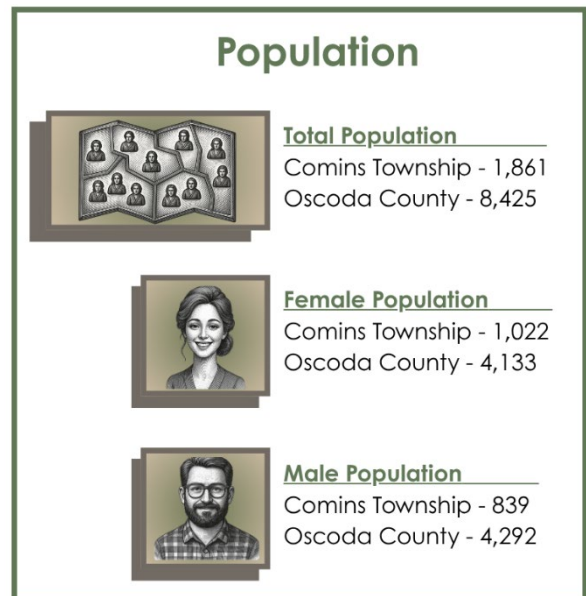
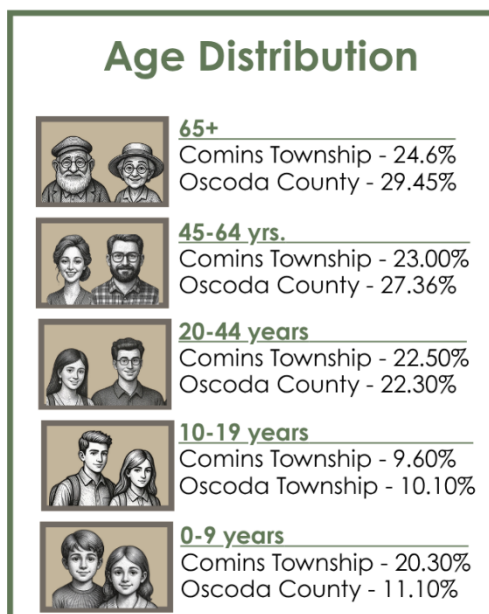
COMMUNITY PROFILE

Overview

Socio-economic data describes a community's population, income, housing, education, and employment characteristics. The data contained in this plan was sourced from the 2024 American Community Survey 5-year estimates published by the US Census Bureau, and State Equalized Tax values obtained from the Michigan Department of Treasury. This data, which describes the demographic makeup of the population and driving trends in the community, helps determine the demand and scope for development and policy changes in the future.

Population & Age Distribution

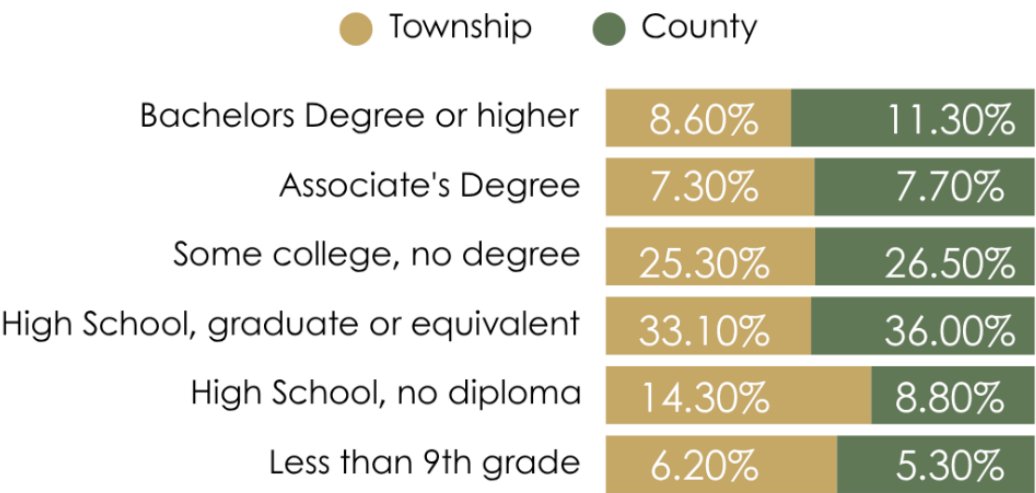
The county has a population of 8,425 people, which is significantly larger than Comins Township's population of 1,861. In the county, there are 4,292 males compared to 4,133 females, while in Comins Township there are 839 males and 1,022 females, showing a female majority in the township compared to a slight male majority in the county.



The median age in the county is 52.5 years, which is considerably higher than Comins Township's median age of 41.6 years, indicating that the county population is generally older than the township population. This is largely due to a higher percentage of school-age residents (47.6%) and adults ages 20-44 years (22.5%) in the township.

Educational Attainment

The county has slightly higher educational attainment overall, with more residents holding bachelor's degrees (11.3% vs. 8.6%) and fewer with very low education levels (5.3% "less than 9th grade" vs. 6.2% in the township, and 8.8% with no high school diploma vs. 14.3% in the township). The township has a very similar share of associate's degrees, 0.4% lower than the county, and "some college, no degree", 1.2% lower than the county. High school completion is also similar, with the county slightly higher (36.0% vs. 33.1%).



Income

Median family income levels in Comins Township are 4.9% higher than in Oscoda County; however, median income levels for individual workers and non-family households are very similar between the township and county.

Township residents rely less on employment income and more on public assistance than county averages. A higher percentage of households rely on Social Security and retirement income, and poverty levels are 3% lower in Comins Township than in the county.

Median Income



Worker

Comins Township - **\$32,705**
Oscoda County - \$32,634



Non-Family Income

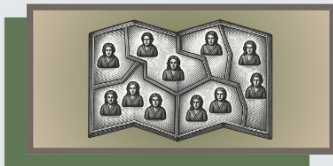
Comins Township - **\$31,061**
Oscoda County - \$31,033



Family Income

Comins Township - **\$65,893**
Oscoda County - \$62,762

Poverty Level



All People

Comins Township - 14.20%
Oscoda County - 17.20%



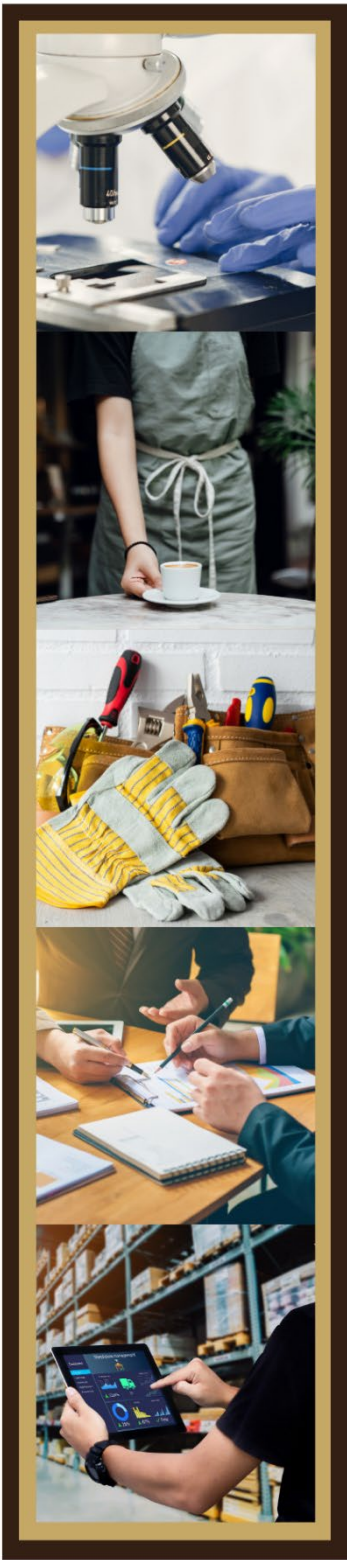
All Families

Comins Township - 9.70%
Oscoda County - 11.40%

Supplemental Assistance

	● Township	● County
Food Stamp/SNAP assistance	18.30%	16.30%
Cash public assistance	5.10%	2.80%
Retirement Income	39.50%	36.80%
Social Security	58.40%	53.20%

Employment



About 49.3% of residents aged 16 and over are employed. Hospitality/Recreation is the largest employment sector in the township (29%), followed by Manufacturing and Education/Health Services industries. Unemployment in Comins Township is 2.8% lower than in Oscoda County.

Employment Status		
	Township	County
Employed	48.50%	40.60%
Unemployed	.80%	3.60%
Not in labor force	50.70%	55.80%

Disability Status		
	Township	County
Under 18 years	11.30%	6.70%
18-64 years	22.30%	20.70%
65+ years	31.20%	37.20%

Occupations	Township	County
Management, business, science, and arts	20.1%	23.2%
Service	35.3%	24.0%
Sales and office	16.7%	19.5%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance	4.9%	12.1%
Production, transportation, and material moving	23.10%	21.1%

Employment Industries in Comins Township

Construction	4.60%
Other Services	3.80%
Agriculture & Forestry	3.60%
Transportation & Logistics	3.50%
Public Administration	2.40%
Professional & Administration	1.50%
Finance	1.40%
Wholesale Trade	.90%

12.90% Retail Trade

15.50% Education & Health

20.80% Manufacturing

29.00% Hospitality & Trade

COMMUNITY SERVICES AND UTILITIES

Township Government

Comins Township is governed by a Board of Trustees consisting of the Township Supervisor, Clerk, Treasurer, and two Trustees. The Board establishes policy, oversees municipal operations, and appoints committees as needed.

The five-member Planning Commission advises the township on land use and development matters, including site plan review, zoning ordinance amendments, special land uses, and preparation of the Master Plan.

Materials Management

Solid Waste

Proper solid waste management is crucial for the cleanliness and environmental integrity of the township. Currently, solid waste management within Comins Township is efficiently carried out at the transfer site located on Caldwell Road, right after the fairgrounds. The township is dedicated to responsibly managing solid waste to ensure a clean and healthy environment for all.

Recycling

Recycling is available on a limited basis at the Comins Township transfer site, where the recycling of plastic and cardboard is available. The township, through participation at the county level, is currently partnering with neighboring counties of Alcona, Alpena, Iosco, and Montmorency as part of a regional Materials Management planning initiative to improve how materials are managed, including recycling, composting, and waste disposal.

Public Safety

Law enforcement services are provided by the Oscoda County Sheriff's Office with assistance from the Michigan State Police.

Comins Township is served by the volunteer-run Fairview Fire Department located on East Miller Road. This department handles structure fires, wildfires, vehicle fires, and assists with medical emergencies. They work closely with county EMS, law enforcement, and utility

providers during major incidents. While focused on emergency responses, the department may also engage in fire safety outreach and community education.

Emergency services are provided by Oscoda County EMS, a professional, county-run ambulance service based in Mio, with a station in Fairview. Staffed by trained personnel and equipped with modern ambulances, the service provides emergency medical care and transport throughout the township. EMS works closely with local fire departments and law enforcement, responding to medical emergencies, accidents, and major incidents. For emergencies, residents dial 911, and the nearest available EMS unit is dispatched through the county's public safety system.

Medical Services

Comins Township residents have access to a range of medical services through nearby facilities and local providers. While there is no hospital in the township itself, emergency and inpatient care are available at nearby hospitals such as MyMichigan Medical Centers in Alpena and West Branch, McLaren Medical Center in West Branch, and Munson Healthcare located in Grayling and Gaylord (Otsego Memorial).



Locally, residents can receive primary care from providers and nurse practitioners at Thunder Bay Community Health on East Miller Road in Fairview. Additional low-cost or sliding-scale services, including general medicine, dental, and mental health, are offered by Thunder Bay Community Health Services in nearby Atlanta and Hillman.

Home health, hospice, and rehabilitation services are available through Munson Healthcare and regional hospice organizations. Mental health and substance use support are accessible through state-supported agencies and regional behavioral health providers.

Wellspring Lutheran Services in Fairview, MI, provides comprehensive senior care on a 90-acre campus. Services include independent and assisted living, skilled nursing, long-term care, and short-term rehabilitation. The facility is staffed 24/7 with medical oversight and is highly rated for quality and care. As part of a statewide Christian nonprofit, Wellspring also supports individuals and families through a broader range of health and social services. The Fairview campus emphasizes community, faith-based support, and personalized care for older adults.

Educational Facilities

Schools

The primary school system serving Comins Township is the Fairview Area School District. This rural public school district offers education from Pre-K through 12th grade. The district operates a single school building located at 1879 East Miller Road in Fairview.

The Fairview Area School District serves students from northeastern Oscoda County and western Alcona County, including Comins Township, Clinton Township, and Mitchell Township. As of the 2024-25 school year, 311 students were enrolled with 19 teachers, giving a student-to-teacher ratio of 16:1.

Higher Education

Comins Township does not have any colleges or universities within its immediate boundaries, but several higher education options are available within 100 miles. Kirtland Community College has campuses in Roscommon (37 miles west) and Grayling (44 miles west), providing accessible community college programs. Alpena Community College offers classes in Oscoda (50 miles east), at its main Alpena campus (51 miles northeast), and also partners with local high schools for dual enrollment opportunities. The nearest university is Saginaw Valley State University, located about 95 miles south. Students at Fairview High School can take advantage of dual enrollment through Kirtland Community College, allowing them to earn college credits at no cost while still in high school.

Library

The Fairview branch of the Oscoda County Library, located at 1968 East Miller Road, is an important resource for Comins Township residents. It offers convenient access to a wide selection of books, digital media, and educational programs tailored to the community's needs. Residents of Comins Township frequently use the library to borrow materials, access computers and free internet, and participate in events such as children's story times, adult workshops, and book clubs. The library also serves as a community hub, providing meeting spaces and resources that support learning, entertainment, and social connections for people of all ages throughout Comins Township.

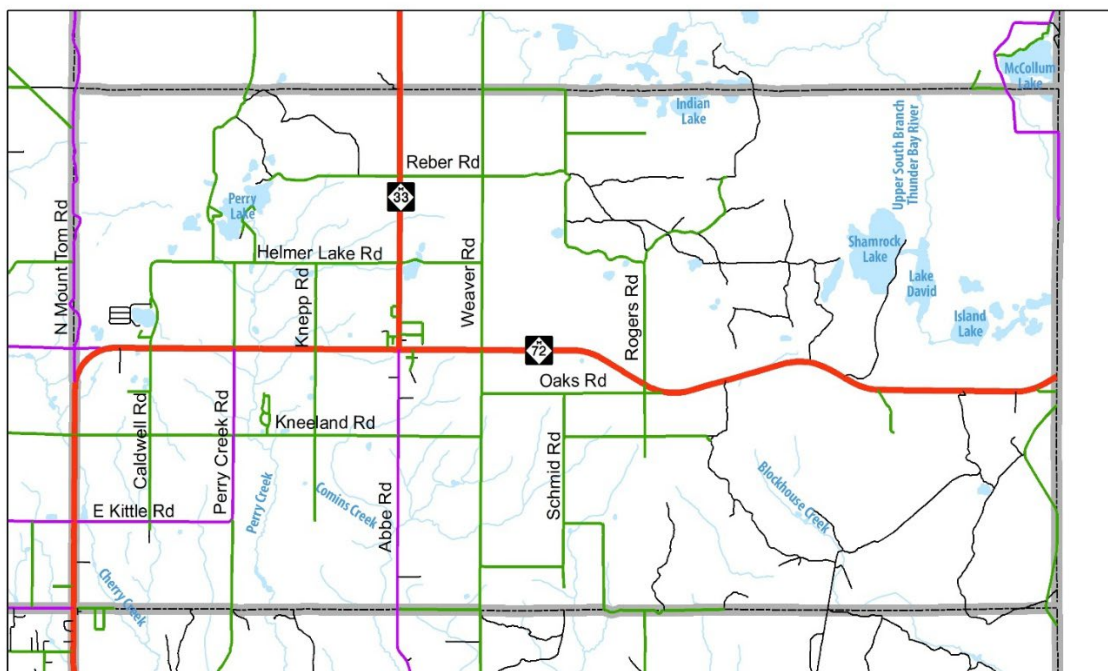
Cemetery

The Township operates a single cemetery, the Fairview Cemetery, which covers approximately 9.4 acres and is located at 1750 N. Abbe Road in Fairview.



Transportation

Comins Township is served by two major state highways: M-33, which runs north–south through the western portion of the township, and M-72, which runs east–west across the center of the township and provides a direct connection to Interstate 75, the main north–south highway in northern Michigan. These state trunklines play a vital role in regional transportation. In addition to these highways, county primary roads such as E. Kittle Road, N. Mount Tom Road, Perry Creek Road, and Abbe Road link rural areas to the state highway network. A broader system of county local roads, including Helmer Lake Road, Weaver Road, and Caldwell Road, supports local travel throughout the township. Scattered unclassified roads represent private drives, seasonal access, or minor routes with limited use. Many of the unclassified roads in the eastern half of the township are federal forest roads that provide recreational access to the Huron National Forest. The road classifications shown on the map, derived from State of Michigan data, help inform transportation planning, road maintenance decisions, and infrastructure investments, making the map an essential tool for supporting connectivity and mobility across Comins Township. Many secondary roads, including all county roads, are open to ORV traffic.



Roads

Comins Township MASTER PLAN

- State Trunkline
- County Primary
- County Local
- Unclassified

Data Source: State of Michigan

0 1 2 Miles

Northeast Michigan
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Map Created by Northeast Michigan
Council of Governments
www.discovernortheastmichigan.org
2025

Bus Service

Although Comins Township itself does not provide bus transportation services, MDOT is currently developing a three-year public transportation pilot program. Specific program details were not available at the time this plan was prepared.

Air Service

Comins Township is served by several nearby airports offering both regional and general aviation access. The closest commercial service is available at Alpena County Regional Airport, located about 45 miles northeast, which provides daily flights to Detroit through Delta Connection. For international and broader domestic travel, the nearest major facility is MBS International Airport near Saginaw, approximately 96 miles to the south.

In addition, several smaller airports support general aviation and charter flights, including Oscoda County Dennis Kauffman Memorial Airport in Mio (about 10 miles west), Gaylord Regional Airport (roughly 45 miles northwest), and Oscoda-Wurtsmith Airport in Oscoda (about 50 miles east). These facilities are commonly used by private pilots, medical transport, and small cargo carriers, offering added flexibility for residents and businesses in the region. There are two private airfields in Oscoda County. Lost Creek Airfield, located off Mapes Road, has two grass runways and is currently owned by the US Department of Agriculture. The Eagle II Airport in Garland has a 5,000-foot paved runway. Both require permission to land.

Utilities

Electric

Electric service in Comins Township is provided by Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op (PIE&G) and Consumers Energy, a member-owned utility serving much of northeastern Michigan. PIE&G manages both the infrastructure and power distribution, meaning residents do not have the option to choose an alternative electric provider. While Michigan does offer an Electric Customer Choice program in some areas, it is not active within PIE&G's service territory. In addition to electricity, PIE&G also offers high-speed fiber internet through its PIE&G Connect initiative, expanding utility services for rural customers in the region.

Gas

Comins Township's natural gas service is provided primarily by Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op (PIE&G), which handles gas delivery and infrastructure. While residents can choose alternative gas suppliers through Michigan's Customer Choice program, PIE&G remains the default provider for pipeline service. Switching suppliers can sometimes lead to higher costs, and consumers are advised to be cautious of door-to-door sales pitches. Most

residents find it safest and most reliable to stay with PIE&G unless they carefully compare rates and options using the state's official gas comparison tools.

Many residents of Comins Township use propane as their primary heating fuel, especially in areas not served by natural gas infrastructure. A variety of propane providers operate in the region, giving residents several options for delivery and service. Among the commonly used companies are Fick & Sons, AmeriGas, Blue Flame, Crystal Flash, and others, each offering tank installation, refills, and maintenance services tailored to rural households.

Telephone

In Comins Township, the landline telephone service is primarily provided by Verizon and Frontier Communications. Both offer traditional wired phone service with features like caller ID, voicemail, call waiting, and unlimited nationwide calling. In addition to these traditional providers, many residents also use VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) options such as Ooma, Spectrum Voice, or HughesNet Voice, which are typically more affordable but require a reliable internet connection. VoIP services often offer competitive features, though they may be less reliable during power outages compared to traditional landlines. For those prioritizing emergency readiness and consistent connectivity, AT&T and Frontier remain the most dependable options.

Internet

Spectrum, Allband Communications, Verizon, Frontier, and Point Broadband (formerly M33 Access) all provide fiber optic internet service in Comins Township. Starlink provides satellite internet service, and Verizon also continues to offer DSL.

Water & Sewer

There are no municipal water or sewer systems in Comins Township.

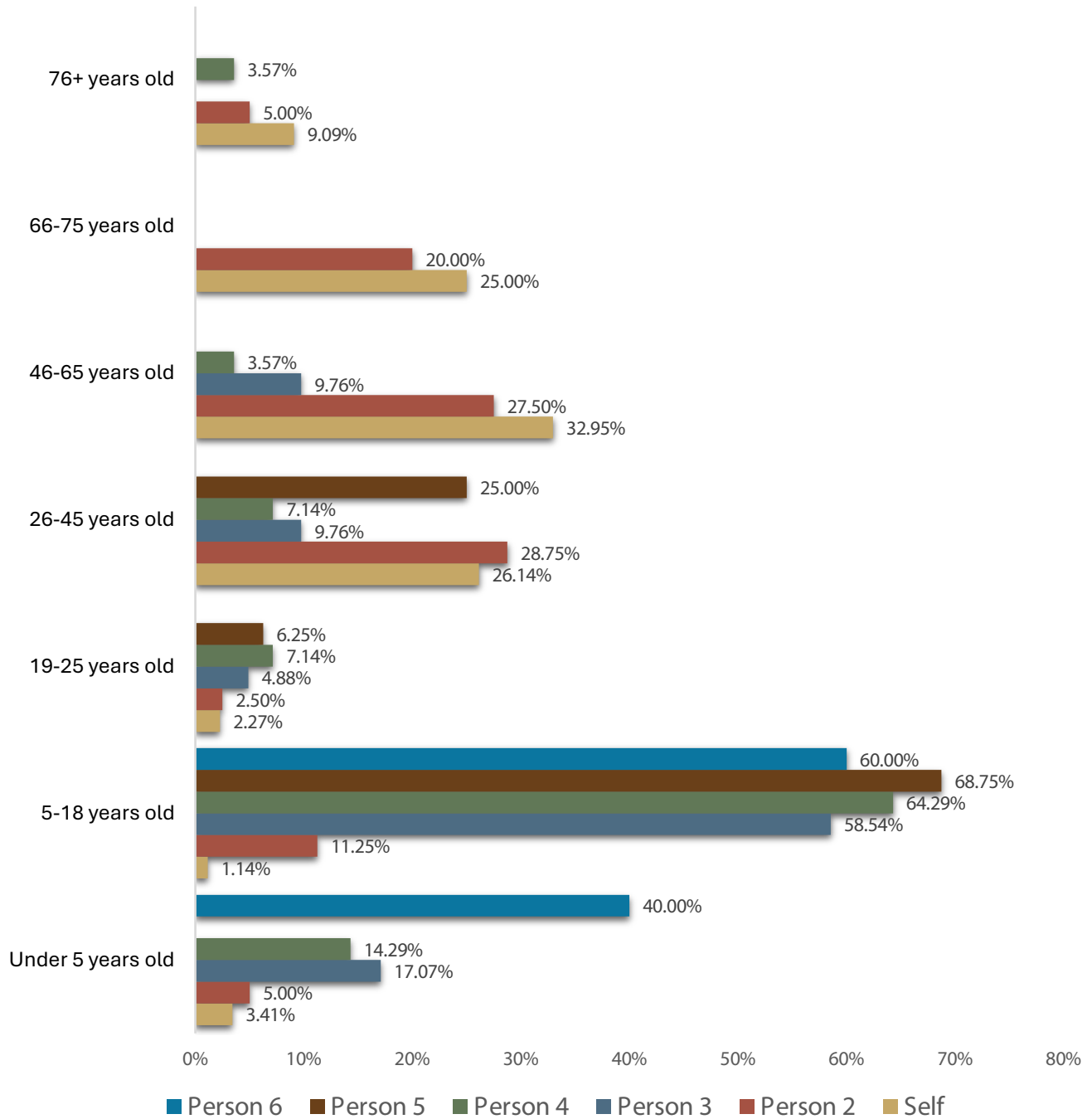
Parks & Recreation

Boney Park, located on Maple Drive in Fairview, provides a wide range of recreational amenities for residents and visitors. The park includes a Turkey Shoot Putt-Putt golf course, tennis courts, baseball and softball fields, junior soccer fields, basketball and volleyball courts, horseshoe pits, two playgrounds, and a picnic pavilion. In the winter, weather permitting, the park also offers an open skating rink and a separate hockey rink. All facilities are available free of charge to the public. Smith Lake Park on Caldwell Road features a playground, pavilion, large open area, and a beach for swimming.

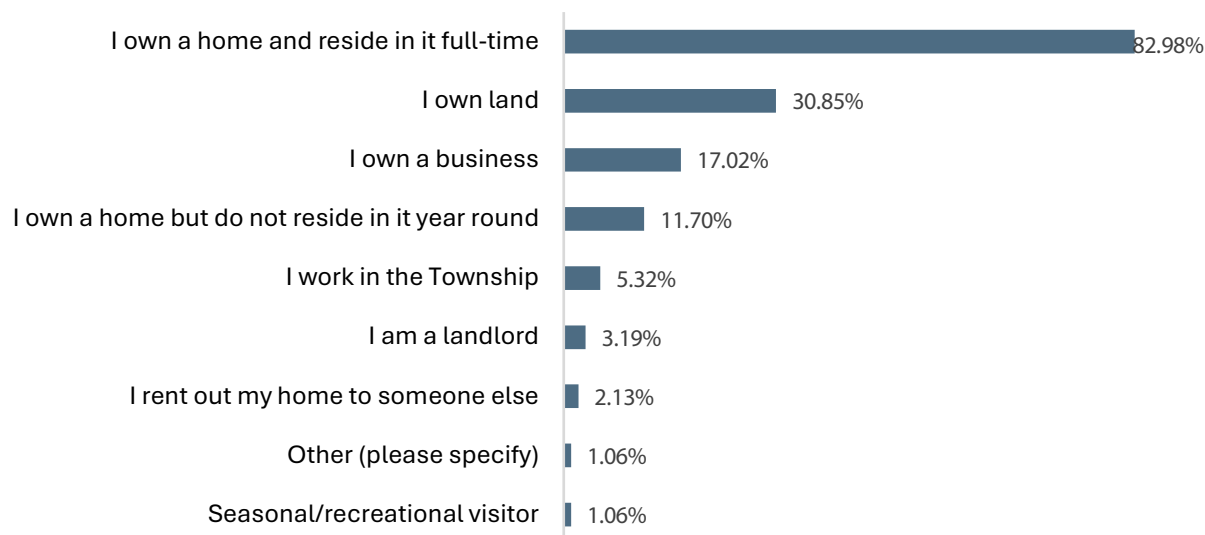


COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

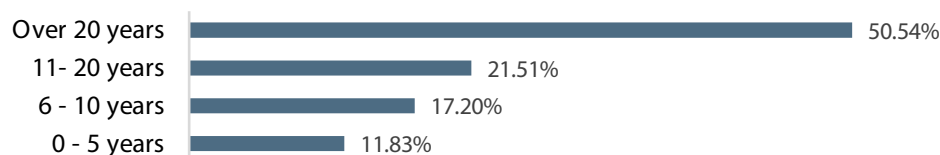
1. Enter the age of the members of your household, including yourself.



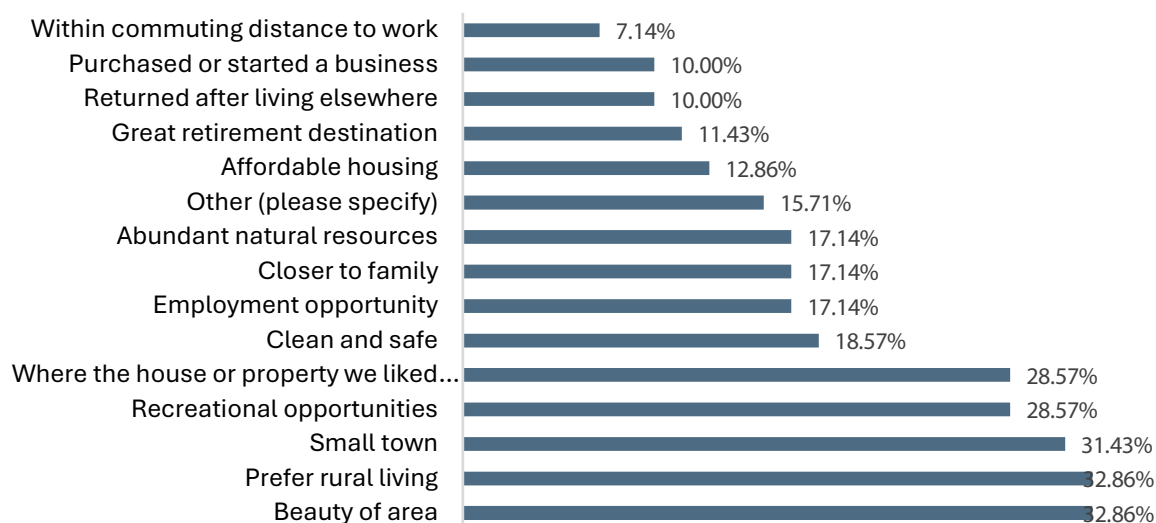
2. What is your property interest? Mark all that apply.



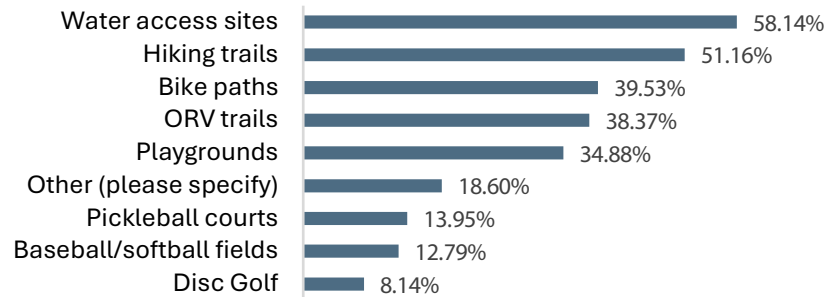
3. How long have you lived, owned a business, or owned property in Comins Township?



4. If you are not originally from here, what made you move or buy property in Comins Township?



5. What recreational facilities do you enjoy using, or wish were available to you?



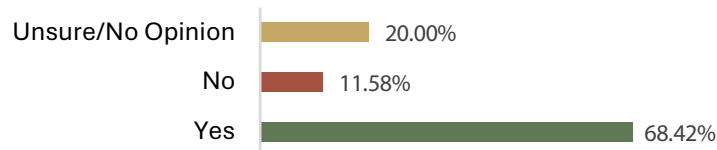
Additional Responses:

- Basketball (3)
- Dog park (2)
- Ice rinks (2)
- Horseback camps and trails (2)
- Gymnastics, dance studio
- More hangout spots or stores for younger individuals for jobs.
- Public land access
- Sidewalks
- Indoor play area for kids
- Splash park for the children
- Would love a designated area for trail walking

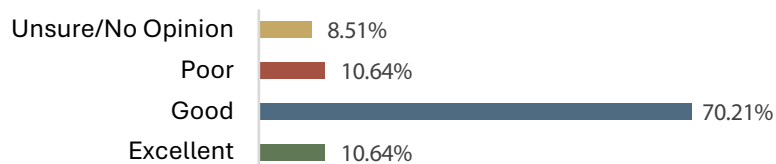
6. Do you support the development of renewable energy facilities on agricultural land (such as wind, solar or battery)?



7. Over the last 5 years, do you think that the overall condition of our parks has improved?



8. How would you rate the condition of the Township-owned facilities?



9. What improvements need to be made to the parks?

- Update equipment (5)
- Splashpad (5)
- Install fencing at park/ice rink (4)
- More youth and teen activities (3)
- More play equipment (3)
- Additional lighting (3)
- Parking (3)
- Permanent restrooms (3)
- Picnic tables (2)
- Additional benches (2)
- Basketball court improvements (2)
- General upkeep (2)
- Perry Lake boat launch improvements (2)
- Better walking way to beach at Perry Lake
- Dog-friendly area
- Expand uses for town square
- Place to walk and exercise in winter months
- Ice rink warming hut/soccer shelter
- Repair and upgrade buildings at the fairgrounds
- Water at the pavilion
- Boney Park baseball field improvements
- Improved Signage
- ADA accessible swings
- Grills
- Volleyball court
- Perry Lake access road
- Smith Lake “beach” safety improvements
- Additional shade trees
- Plant spruce trees for Christmas tree lighting

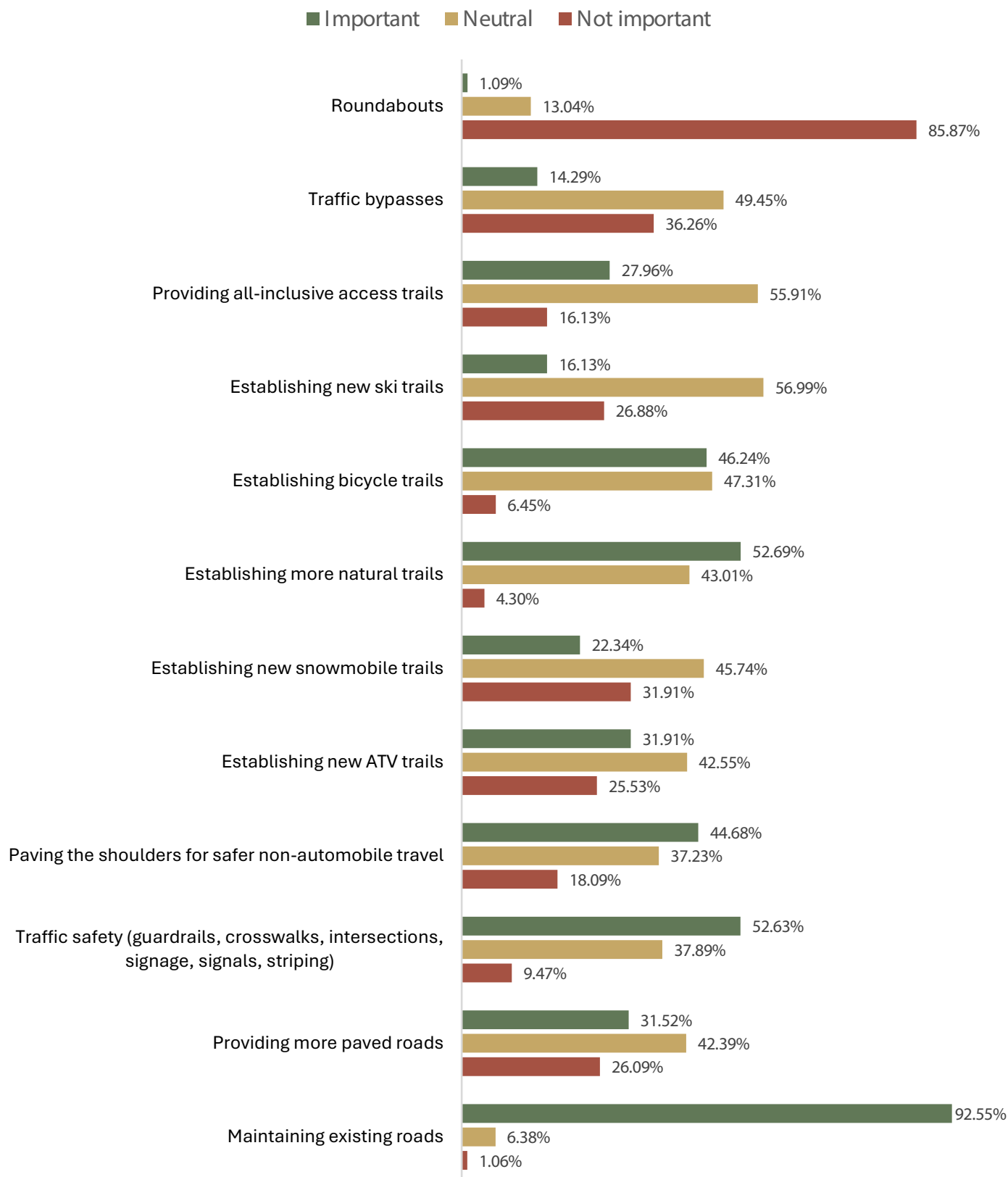
10. Are there any areas that need to have small parks added?

Responses:

- Perry Lake (2)
- Any vacant land that is currently unused and cannot be adequately developed that is close to where residents are likely to access.
- Town square
- Trails at town square
- I don't think so

Other comments:

- Bathroom
- Comins Township Hall needs an improved playground
- I'd like to see a fenced-in dog park by Bony Park with a few benches. Also with a poop bag dispenser by it as well as a trash can for disposal. I would love to have a place for my dog to interact safely with other dogs and get some exercise since I cannot take him for regular walks due to my health.
- Smith Lake needs sand again and more policing of off-the-chain dogs, glass, and cigarette garbage.
- Splash pad or obstacle course
- Town Hall
- Walking bike trails
- Would love to see a family-friendly (pavilion, playground, etc.) along the AuSable.

11. Please rate the following transportation goals:

12. Are there any roads or intersections that you consider unsafe?

Respondents identified several main intersections and roadways throughout the Fairview area as concerns, citing heavy traffic, unsafe intersections, speeding, poor road conditions, and insufficient traffic controls.

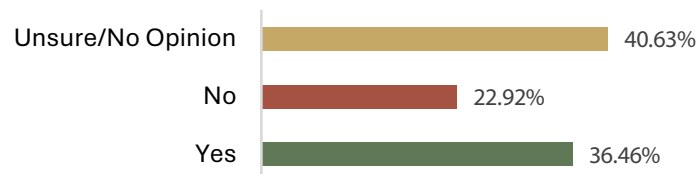
13. What types of new businesses would you like to see within the Township?

Responses:

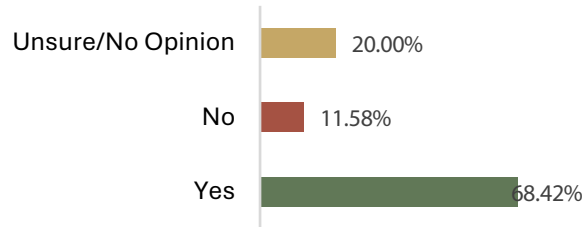
- Restaurant (15)
- Family entertainment (5)
- Car wash (4)
- Alternative grocery markets (3)
- Coffee shops (3)
- Pharmacy (2)
- Veterinarian (2)
- Youth-based activities (dance, gymnastics, hockey, etc.) (3)
- Bar-type establishment
- Medical care
- Automotive repair
- Childcare
- Clothing/shoes
- Clothing recycling center
- Credit union
- Fast Food
- Flower shop
- Green energy manufacturing. Major recycling site/plant.
- Greenhouse
- Healthcare/medical related.
- Hobby shop or sports collectible shop
- Home goods, any type of food service
- Ice cream
- Industrial
- Lodging
- Lumber yard
- Manufacturing
- Private school and education options
- Putt-putt course
- Shooting range
- Wedding venue
- Weekend farmers market

14. What physical improvements need to be made to the Downtown to enhance its appearance to residents and tourists?

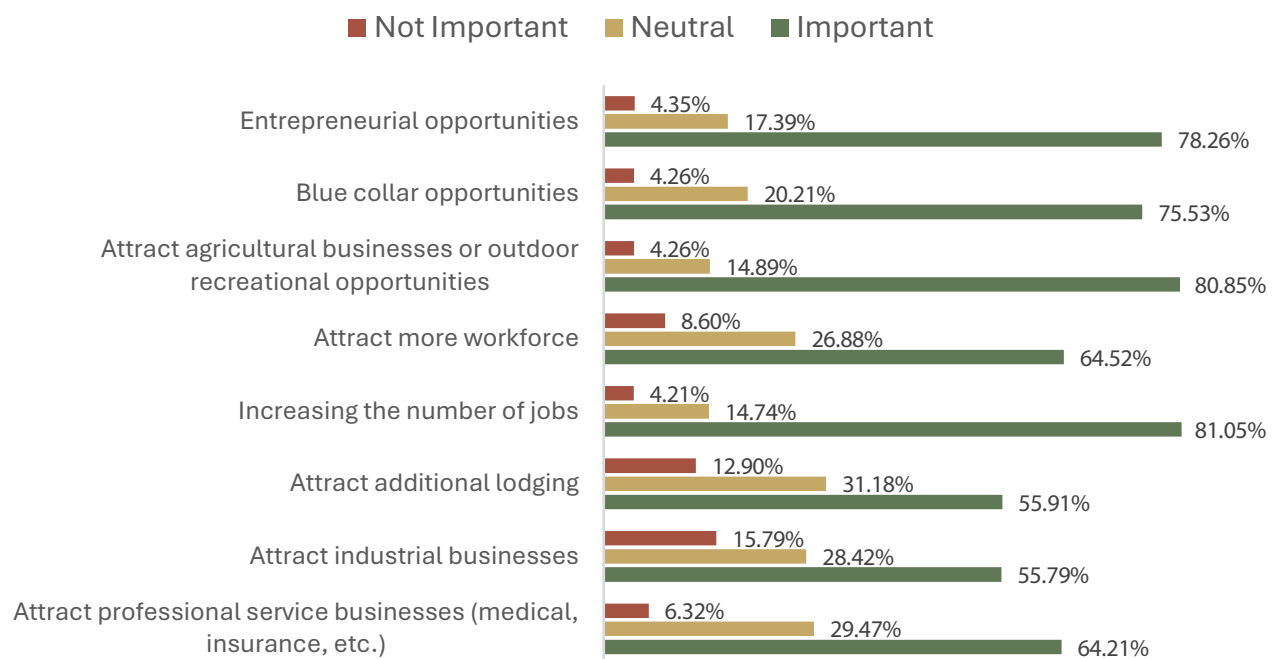
Residents would like to see continued improvements to Fairview's appearance and public spaces, including cleaner and better-maintained properties, removal or redevelopment of vacant and blighted buildings, more landscaping, lighting, seating, and decorative features, improved roads, sidewalks, and parking, and more active businesses and filled storefronts.

15. Should the Township expand commercially?

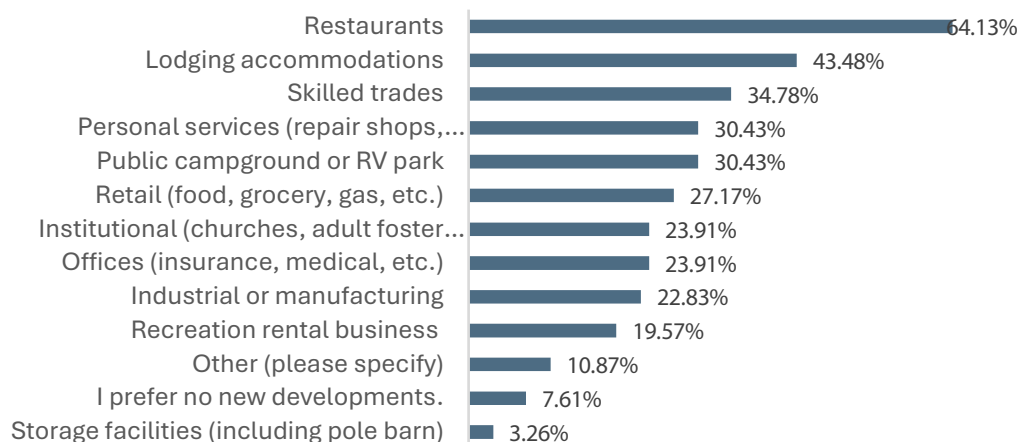
16. Should mobile or temporary business be allowed on public property? (Food trucks, transient sales, pop-up markets, etc.)

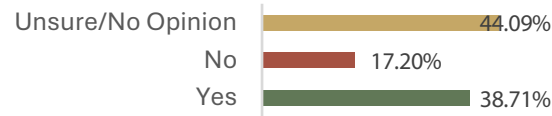
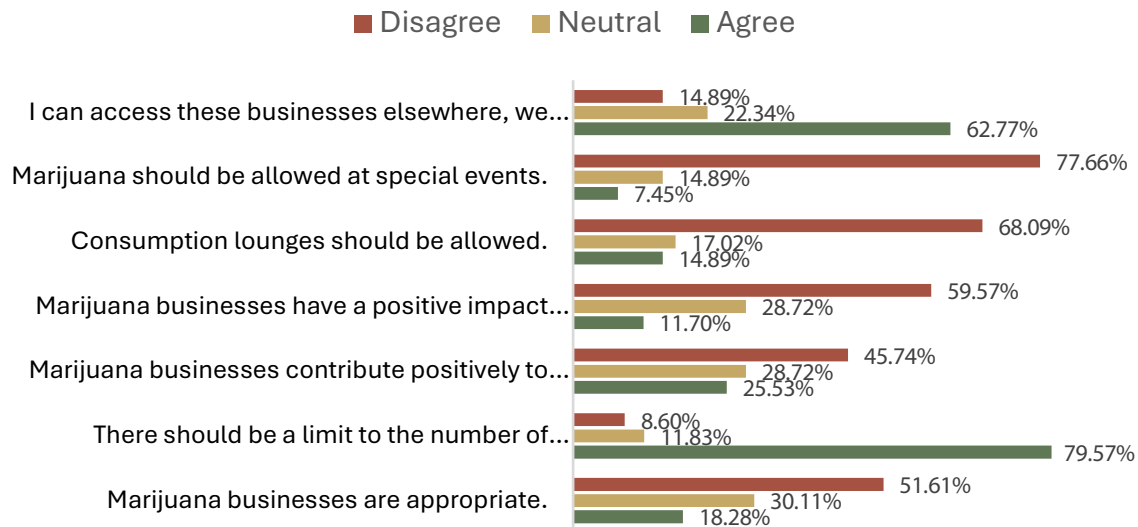
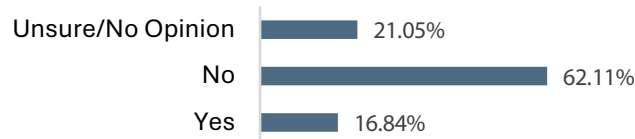
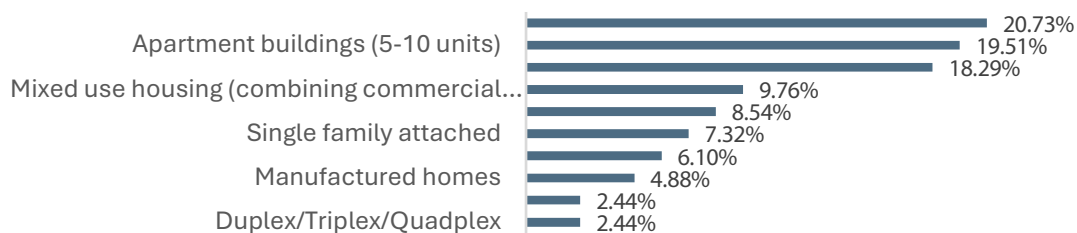


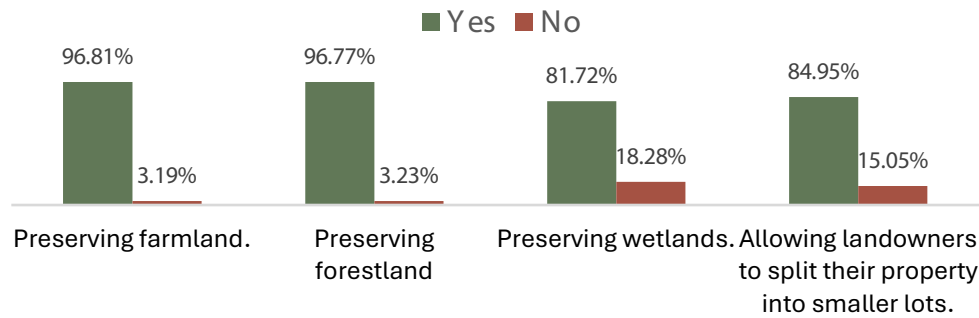
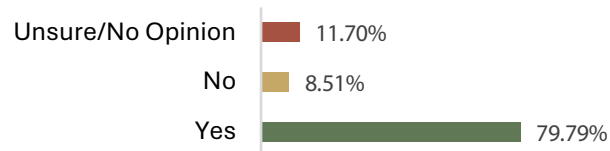
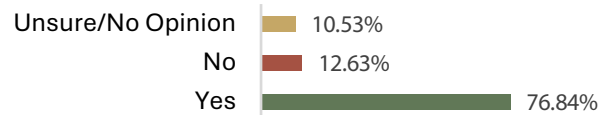
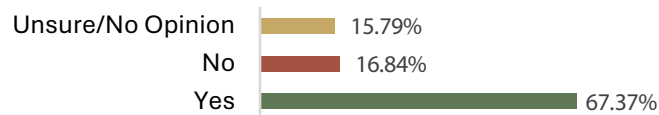
17. Are the following economic development concepts important?

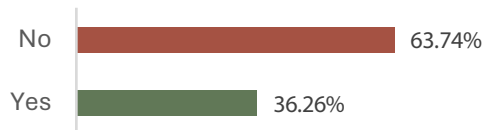
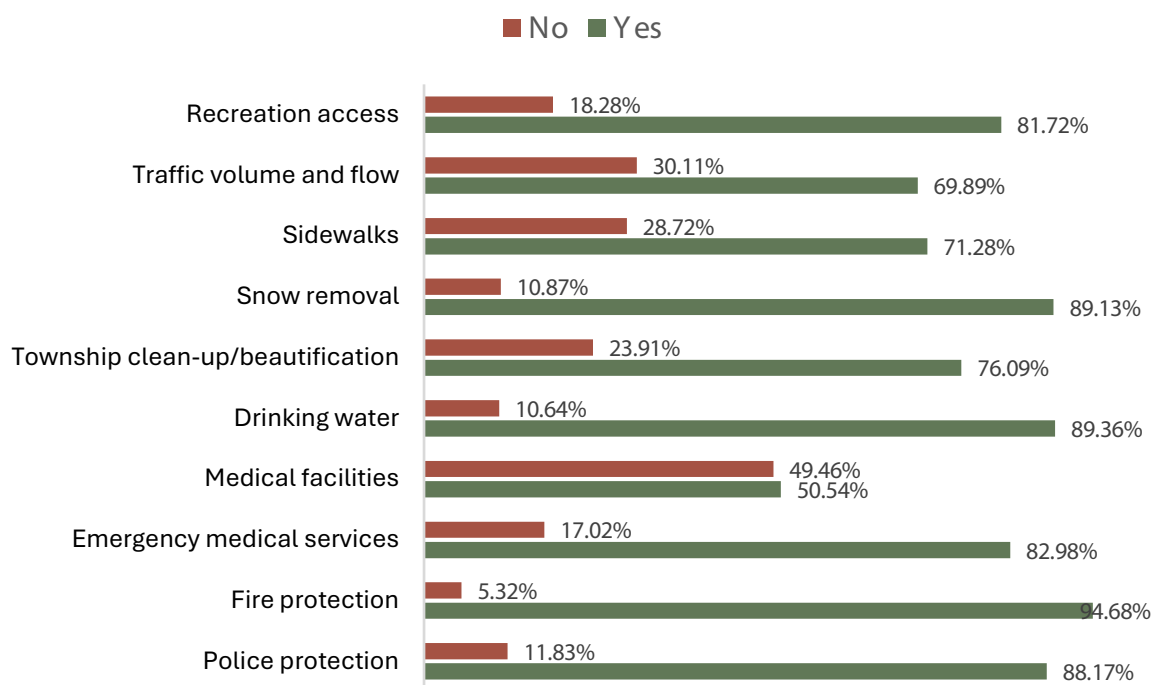
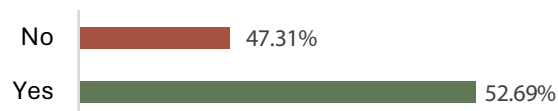


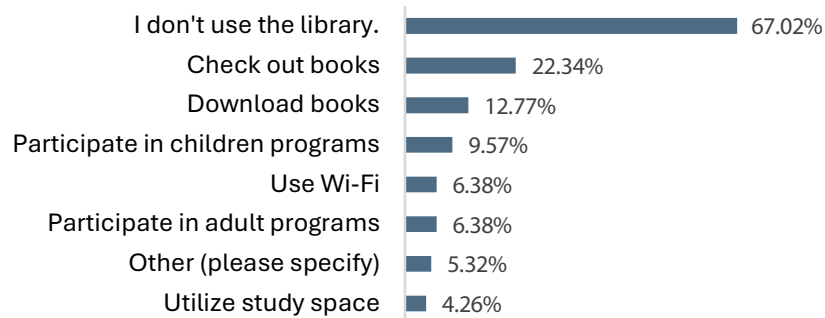
18. What services do you feel are missing?



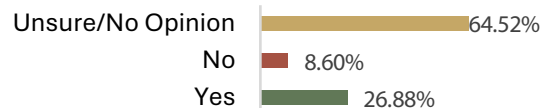
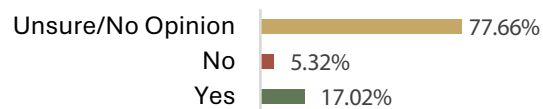
19. If you were going to open a business today, would you do so in Comins Township?**20. Please tell us how you feel about the following statements:****21. Are vacation rentals a problem in the community?****22. Do you feel any of the following should be pursued when developing housing in the area?**

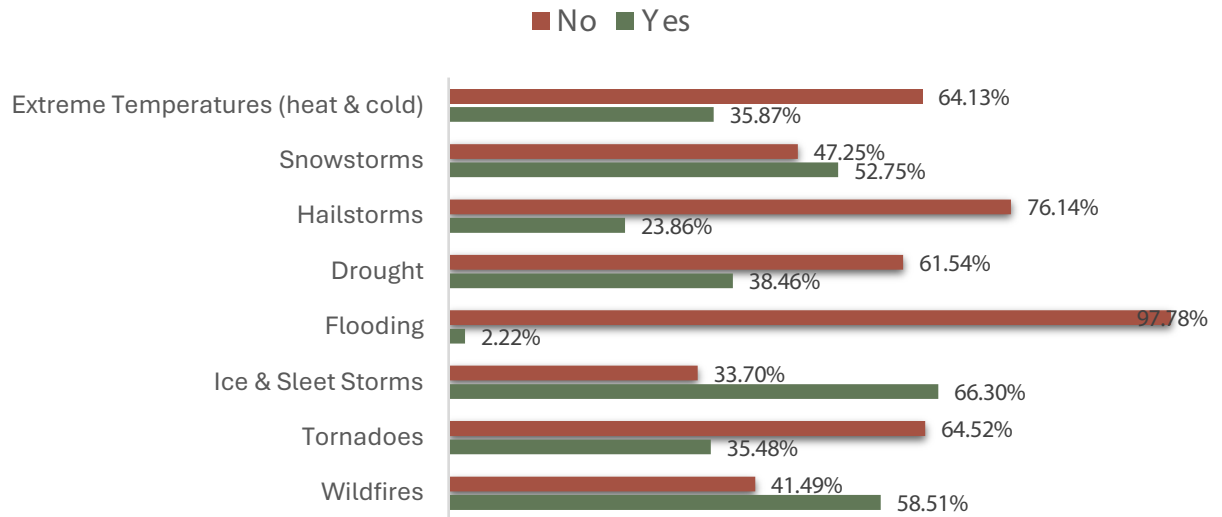
23. Are the following important to you when developing the area?**24. Should the Township find and promote opportunities to encourage an increase in affordable housing?****25. Do you support accessory dwellings (separate small living space on the same property)?****26. Do you support garage apartments?****27. In general, are you satisfied here as a place to live, own property, own a business, or visit?**

28. Are you satisfied with the current recycling program?**29. Do you feel that the health care services here are adequate?****30. Are you satisfied with the following:****31. Have you used the Township website for information?**

32. What do you use the library for? (Check all that apply)**Other Responses:**

- The Library in Fairview is very often shut down
- Use computers
- I do not use the local library. We use the Rose City library
- Our library has made the choice to serve a small class of people over the majority. I will use other libraries in the surrounding area.

33. Do you feel that the Township needs to enforce the Zoning Ordinance better?**34. Is the Township responsive to questions on Zoning and Planning?****35. Are Planning and Zoning applications processed in a timely manner?****36. The zoning in Comins Township should be:**

37. Do you feel safe in the community?**38. Are any of these weather-related emergencies a concern to you in this community?****39. What improvements could be made to address fire safety in the community?****Forest Management**

- Removing old growth and deadfall. (3)
- More clear cuts; plant hardwoods

Burning Regulations, Enforcement, and Prevention

- Educate careless people about burning in dry conditions (3)
- Harsher punishment for those burning in an unsafe way (2)
- Awareness posted in town & adherence to red-flag warnings
- Brush control, educate residents regarding wildfire prevention with helpful tips
- County Facebook page that is updated every day about whether burning is allowed
- I think the burn bans are a big help

Fire Department Resources, Staffing, and Equipment

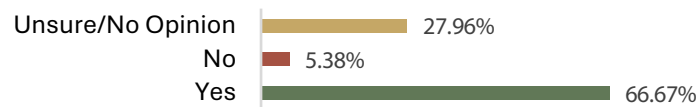
- Hire paramedics and firefighters (3)
- An ATV for the fire department to reach areas with limited access

- Increase spending to purchase newer firefighting equipment, such as trucks, protective wear, and tools, etc. Improve/increase training opportunities.

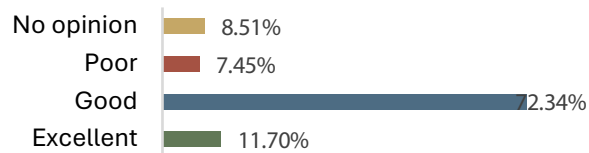
Fire Safety Around Structures

- Electrical updates and better building inspection
- For owners of buildings to keep structures clear for the firefighters
- People creating brush-free zones near their buildings

40. Do you believe the public service agencies in your community should provide public safety education programs in the local schools?



41. How would you rate the overall quality of services provided by the Township?



ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Master Plan Adoption

Plan Coordination & Review

Notification of the intent to develop the Comins Township Master Plan was sent to all adjacent communities and other relevant entities to request their cooperation and comments.

The proposed plan was transmitted to the Comins Township Board of Trustees for approval to distribute the plan for review and comment on [insert date]. The proposed plan was distributed on [insert date] to the required entities and was available for review on the township's website and the NEMCOG website.

Public Hearing

A notice for the public hearing of the proposed plan was published in the *Oscoda County Herald* on [insert date] and [insert date], per the requirements in Public Act 33 of 2008, The Michigan Planning Enabling Act, as amended. The public hearing was held on [insert date], at 6:00 PM, and comments were received regarding the proposed plan.

Adoption

The Planning Commission adopted the Master Plan on [insert date], and the Board of Trustees formally adopted the Master Plan on [insert date]. A notice of final plan adoption was transmitted to all required entities.

Notice of Intent to Update the Master Plan



Northeast Michigan Council of Governments

80 Livingston Blvd Suite U-108 | PO Box 457 | Gaylord, MI 49734 | Voice: 989.705.3730 | Fax: 989.705.3729 | nemcog.org

Notice of Intent to Update Master Plan: Comins Township

March 4, 2025

Comins Township has begun working with the Northeast Michigan Council of Governments (NEMCOG) to update their Master Plan. The Township is coordinating with NEMCOG to update changes throughout the plan, including socio-economic data, goals and objectives and future land use.

As required by Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, notification is being sent to all geographically adjacent governmental entities, utilities, and transportation agencies to request cooperation and comments.

ADJACENT GOVERNMENTAL UNITS: Prior to and after adoption of the Master Plan, draft and final copies of the plan will be sent to all adjacent governmental units, as defined in the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, for review and comment. The plan will be transmitted via email unless the governmental unit requests a printed copy (please fill out and return the enclosed sheet to notify us of the preferred email address or to request a printed copy).

UTILITIES, RAILROADS & PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AGENCIES: Utilities, railroads, and public transportation agencies must request copies and may be charged for copies, and postage (please fill out and return the enclosed sheet to request a copy of the Master Plan update). Note: there will be no charge to utilities and public transportation agencies that choose to receive the plan via email.

Thank you for your cooperation and we look forward to your participation in this important project!

Sincerely,

Heather Runyan, Regional Planner
Northeast Michigan Council of Governments (NEMCOG)

Regional
Cooperation
Since
1968

Please complete and return to NEMCOG.

Alcona * Alpena * Cheboygan * Crawford * Emmet * Montmorency * Oscoda * Otsego * Presque Isle

An
Equal Opportunity
Employer

Affidavit of Mailing – Notice of Intent**AFFIDAVIT OF MAILING NOTICE OF INTENT TO UPDATE MASTER PLAN –
COMINS TOWNSHIP**

I, Theresa Huff, certify that the communities and agencies on the attached list were notified of Comins Township's intent to update the Master Plan. The notification was sent on March 4, 2025, by first class mail and in accordance with Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended.

Clinton Township

PO Box 168
Comins, MI 48619

Mentor Township

PO Box 730
Mio, MI 48647

Big Creek Township

1175 Ryno Rd
Luzerne, MI 48636

Elmer Township

1263 West Kittle Rd.
Mio, MI 48647

Mitchell Township

6849 W. Tower Rd
Curran, MI 48728

Oscoda County Board of Commissioners

PO Box 399
Mio, MI 48647

Oscoda Co Road Commission

300 West 8th St.
Mio, 48647

Alcona County Board of Commissioners

PO Box 308
Harrisville, MI 48740

Consumers Energy

One Energy Plaza
Jackson, MI 49201

Presque Isle Electric and Gas Co-Op

PO Box 308
Onaway, MI 49765

DTE Energy

One Energy Plaza
Detroit, MI 48226

MDOT-North Region Planner: Heidi Phaneuf

1088 M-32 East
Gaylord, MI 49735

Transmittal Letter Draft Plan

To be added after adoption

Public Hearing Notice

To be added after adoption

Resolutions of Adoption

To be added after adoption

Affidavit of Mailing – Notice of Adoption

To be added after adoption

Plan Implementation

Continued collaboration between the Board of Trustees, Planning Commission, administrative staff, private citizens, and public and private agencies and organizations is required to implement the goals and objectives of this Master Plan to effectively guide and manage change within Comins Township. Implementation of the plan occurs through the Zoning Ordinance, subdivision regulations, funding programs, administrative procedures, physical development of land, and the rezoning of land.

Zoning Ordinance

According to the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, comprehensive planning is the legal basis for the development of a zoning ordinance. Section 203 of the Act states: *The zoning ordinance shall be based on a plan designed to promote the public health, safety and general welfare, to encourage the use of lands in accordance with their character and adaptability, to limit the improper use of land, to conserve natural resources and energy, to meet the needs of the state's residents for food, fiber, and other natural resources, places of residence, recreation, industry, trade, service, and other uses of land, to insure that uses of the plan shall be situated in appropriate locations and relationships, to avoid the overcrowding of population; to provide adequate light and air; to lessen congestion of the public roads and streets, to reduce hazards to life and property; to facilitate adequate provision for a system of transportation, sewage disposal, safe and adequate water supply, education, recreation, and other public requirements, and to conserve the expenditure of funds for public improvements and services to conform with the most advantageous use of land resources, and properties.*

The Zoning Ordinance is the primary tool for implementing the Master Plan. Comins Township has developed its zoning ordinances to regulate land use activities within the Township. This plan requires each zoning ordinance to be reviewed to ensure its consistency with the Master Plan's goals and Future Land Use Plan, as well as ensuring it conforms to current State regulations.

Grants & Capital Improvement Plan

The Master Plan can be used as a guide for future public investment and service decisions, such as the local budget, grant applications, and administration of utilities and services. Many communities find it beneficial to prioritize and budget for capital improvement projects, such as infrastructure improvements, park improvements, etc. A Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is developed to establish a prioritized schedule for all anticipated capital improvement projects in the community. A CIP includes cost estimates and sources for financing for each project and can serve as a budgetary and policy document to aid in the implementation of the Master Plan.

Recreation Plan

Comins Township actively updates their DNR approved Recreation Plan every five years. The plan's goals and objectives guide the implementation of recreation-related capital improvement projects and facilitate grant applications to fund identified projects.