

# FIFE LAKE AREA MASTER PLAN

Village of Fife Lake & Fife Lake Township

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# CREDITS

The Fife Lake community benefited from significant collaboration with Village and Township staff and leadership, the Fife Lake Area Planning Commission, and citizens of the community. Without this support and input, completion of this plan would not have been possible.

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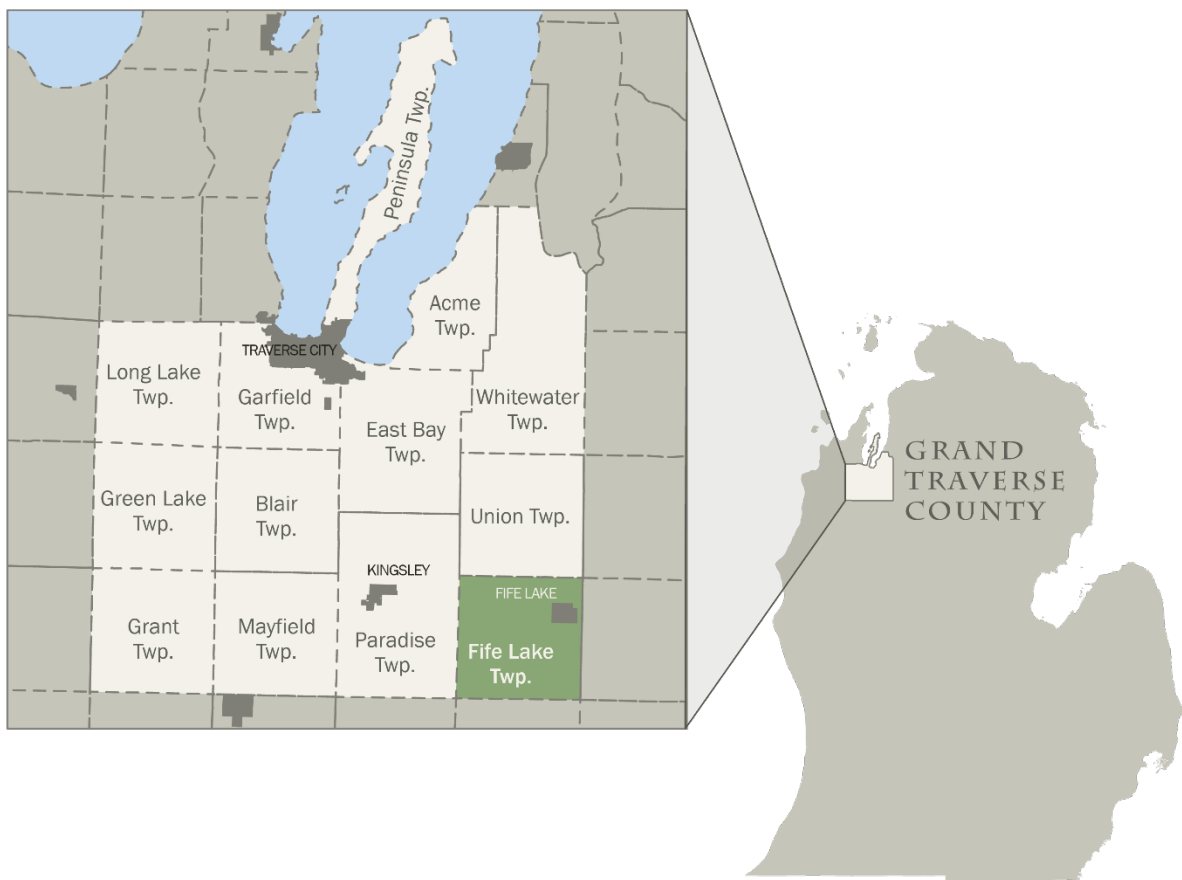
Appendix A. Community Input Survey

# Chapter 1 – Introduction

## Welcome to Fife Lake

The Fife Lake Community is located in the southeast corner of Grand Traverse County, in the northwest corner of Michigan’s Lower Peninsula. This region is a prime recreation/tourism area within the State. It is also a prime location for seasonal residency, especially during the summer months. This small, close-knit community is known for its historic winding Village, freshwater lakes and rivers, and signature community events like the July 4<sup>th</sup> celebration, known as the “Best Fourth in the North.”

U.S. 131 is located in the Township and adjacent to the Village, providing a major north/south transportation route on the western side of the Lower Peninsula. Fife Lake is located a comparable distance between Cadillac to the south and Traverse City to the northwest. Kalkaska is located about fifteen miles to the northeast. These larger communities provide employment, shopping, financial, and health services, and the full range of urban services including major tourist and cultural attractions.



Fife Lake Township was founded in 1872 and the Village of Fife Lake was incorporated in 1889. Fife Lake has a rich history beginning with the lumbering era, railroads, and seasonal tourism. As a group of surveyors was scouting the route for a new road from Traverse City to Midland, they discovered the beautiful lake known today as Fife Lake. Shortly thereafter, the construction of a railroad along the west shore of Fife Lake attracted businesses and residents who were interested in lumbering and agriculture. While the sandy soils did not support extensive farming, tourism soon became abundant due to the area's natural resources and activities.

Today, many residents spend their summers in the Village of Fife Lake and Fife Lake Township enjoying the Lake and pleasant summer breezes. It is estimated that the year-round population increases by about 60 to 70% during the summer "tourist season." However, winter sports such as ice fishing on Fife Lake, hunting, snowmobiling, and skiing in the nearby Pere Marquette State Forest have increased year-round tourism in the area.

## **Why a Joint Master Plan?**

In 2019, the Village of Fife Lake and Fife Lake Township formed a joint Planning Commission—the Fife Lake Area Planning Commission—with the intent to collaboratively plan for the community's future. This Master Plan is the result of that collective effort and we are excited to combine and leverage the data, resources, goals, and community ideas contained within this plan for both the Village and Township.

This plan serves as a guide for future development of the Village of Fife Lake and Fife Lake Township and provides a framework to guide zoning ordinance amendments, land use changes, and land use decisions by Village and Township stakeholders, including the Planning Commission, Village Council, Township Board, and Village and Township staff. Therefore, it is critical that this plan reflects the Fife Lake Community's values, ideas, concerns, and priorities.

This Master Plan will replace the existing Fife Lake Township Master Plan, adopted in 2000 and amended most recently in 2019, as well as the Village of Fife Lake Master Plan, adopted in 2006.

## What is a Master Plan?

The purpose of a master plan is to provide guidance to public and private decision-makers with regard to future changes in land use, development, and the allocation of resources. A master plan contains information about physical and social features, community facilities, existing land use, and economic trends. It identifies key planning issues and establishes goals and actions to address those issues. A future land use plan also becomes part of the recommendations section and guides local officials when making future zoning and land development decisions.

This master plan should be considered a “living document,” meaning it is continually reviewed, modified, and expanded as necessary to reflect changing circumstances and opportunities in the Fife Lake Community. The Fife Lake Area Planning Commission may consider amendments to this plan to further serve public interests and desires of private property owners. This Plan was developed and adopted pursuant to the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Act 33 of 2008, as amended). This Act also requires that a community review its master plan at least every five years.

## The Relationship of Planning to Zoning

The relationship between land use planning and zoning is important. Planning involves the preparation of a long-range vision of what the community may become, while zoning is a legislative tool that involves the process of regulating the use and development of those lands. The laws of the State of Michigan require that a community engage in land use planning activities, including the preparation of a comprehensive plan, or Master Plan, prior to the initiation of a zoning ordinance in a community. Therefore, this Master Plan for Fife Lake Village and Township is intended to provide a broad set of policies and land use concepts to guide growth and development and to offer a specific set of standards to guide the application of zoning regulations.

### MASTER PLANS DO:

- Describe existing conditions and future needs
- Guide future land use and community decisions
- Guide the Zoning Ordinance
- Create community-designed goals

### MASTER PLANS DON'T:

- Serve as a basis for property tax assessment
- Have enforcement provisions, like a zoning ordinance
- Remain in perpetuity – plans should be reviewed and updated every 5 years

## Chapter 2 – Natural Features

The air, land, and water resources within Fife Lake define the base upon which all man-made activities occur. The general climate of the area, composition of local soils, predominant vegetation, and quality and expanse of both surface and groundwater all determine the ability of the community to sustain development. These also impact the type and location of development. The following describes these natural elements in more detail.

### Geography and Topography

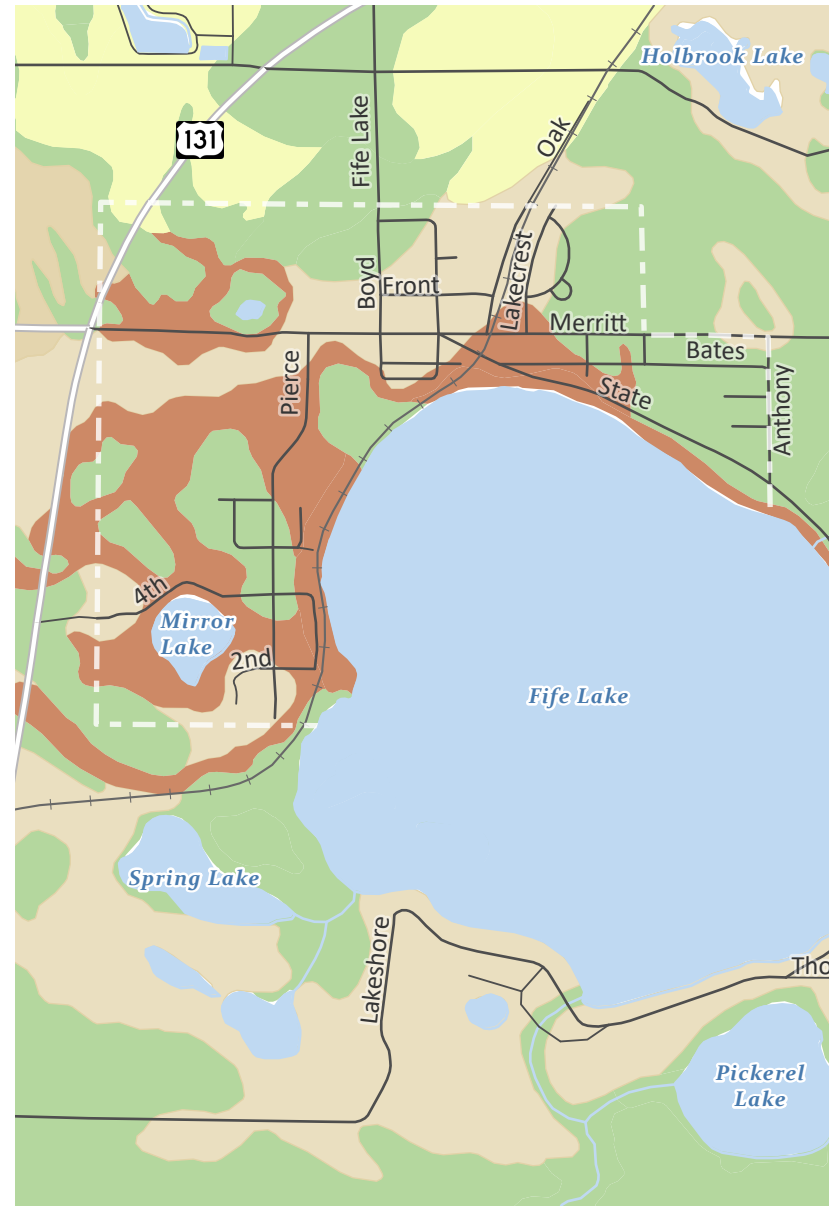
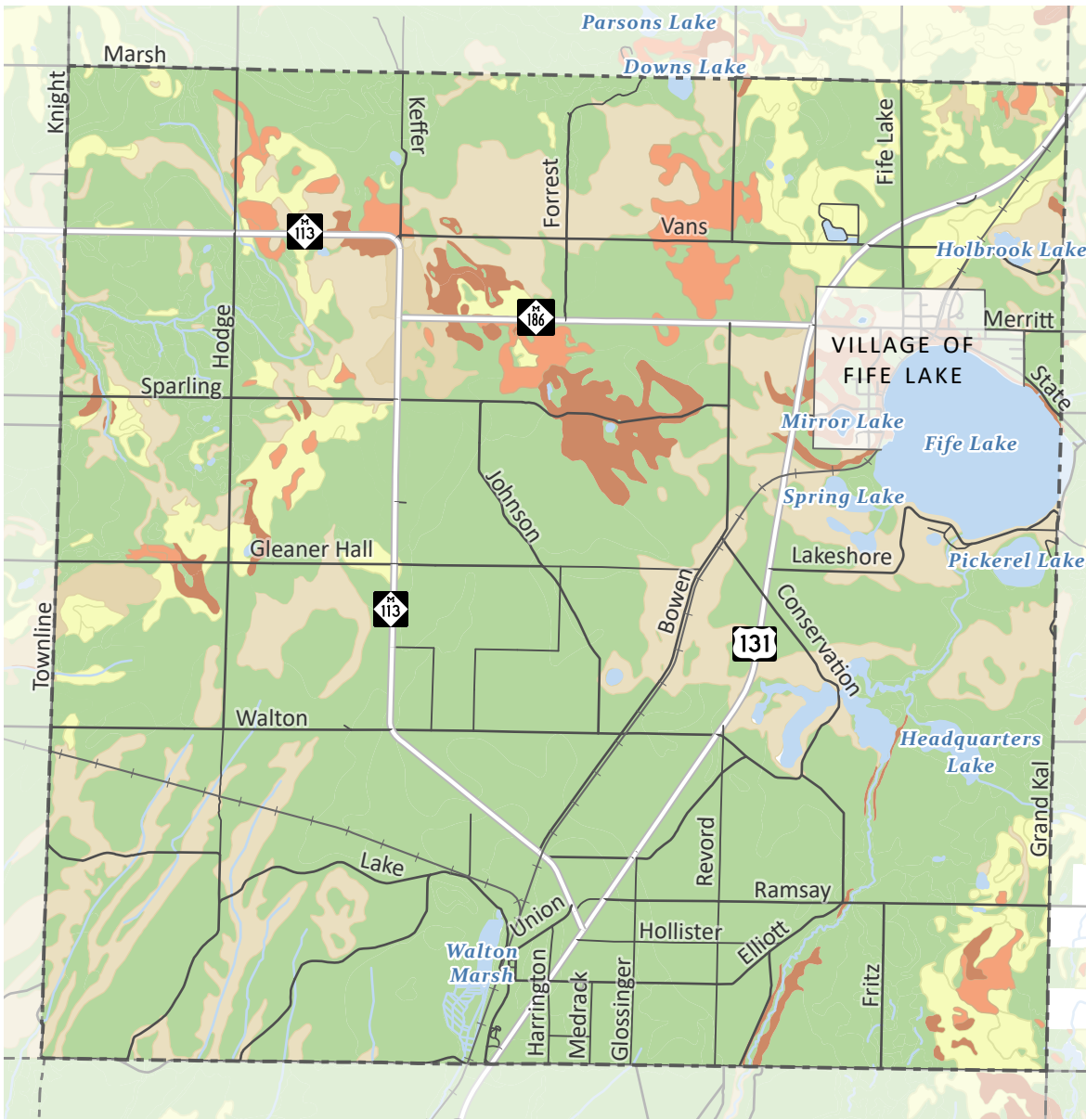
The Fife Lake Community is located in the southeast corner of Grand Traverse County, in the northwest corner of Michigan's Lower Peninsula. The Township borders four surrounding townships: Paradise and Union in Grand Traverse County, Springfield in Kalkaska County, and Liberty in Wexford County. The Township encompasses 36 contiguous land survey sections or 36 square miles. The Village of Fife Lake lies in the northeastern portion of the Township, encompassing approximately 749 acres in sections 11, 12 and 14 of the Township. Fife Lake comprises about one-third of the Village area.

The geological composition of Grand Traverse County is similar to the rest of Michigan's Lower Peninsula in that it was largely shaped by glacial activity. The County is characterized by hill-sized moraines, till, outwash plains, lakes formed by extinct glaciers, and glacial riverbeds. Fife Lake is located on an outwash plain and is bordered by the Port Huron Moraine to the north and west. Land features were produced by glacial deposition and result in rolling hills. The depth of the glacial deposition ranges from 50 to 200 feet thick in the Fife Lake area.

Within Fife Lake, and particularly in the Village, there is substantial topographic relief, with slopes ranging from 2% to 25% (Map 1). The majority of the Village contains slopes of over 18%, which influences the physical layout of the Village's public spaces and the location of individual buildings. Most of the developed portions of the Village, however, are on slopes ranging from 6% to 12%. Land in the western portion of the Village, as well as that along the northern shoreline of the lake, is also relatively steep and not conducive to higher densities of development. In addition, there are relatively steep slopes in the north-central section of the Village between Front and Maple streets, which present challenges to the development of this area.

The highest point in the Township is 1,180 feet above sea level and the highest point in the Village is 1,071 feet above sea level. Fife Lake's average elevation is 1,019 feet above sea level (439 feet higher than Lake Michigan) (Map 2).





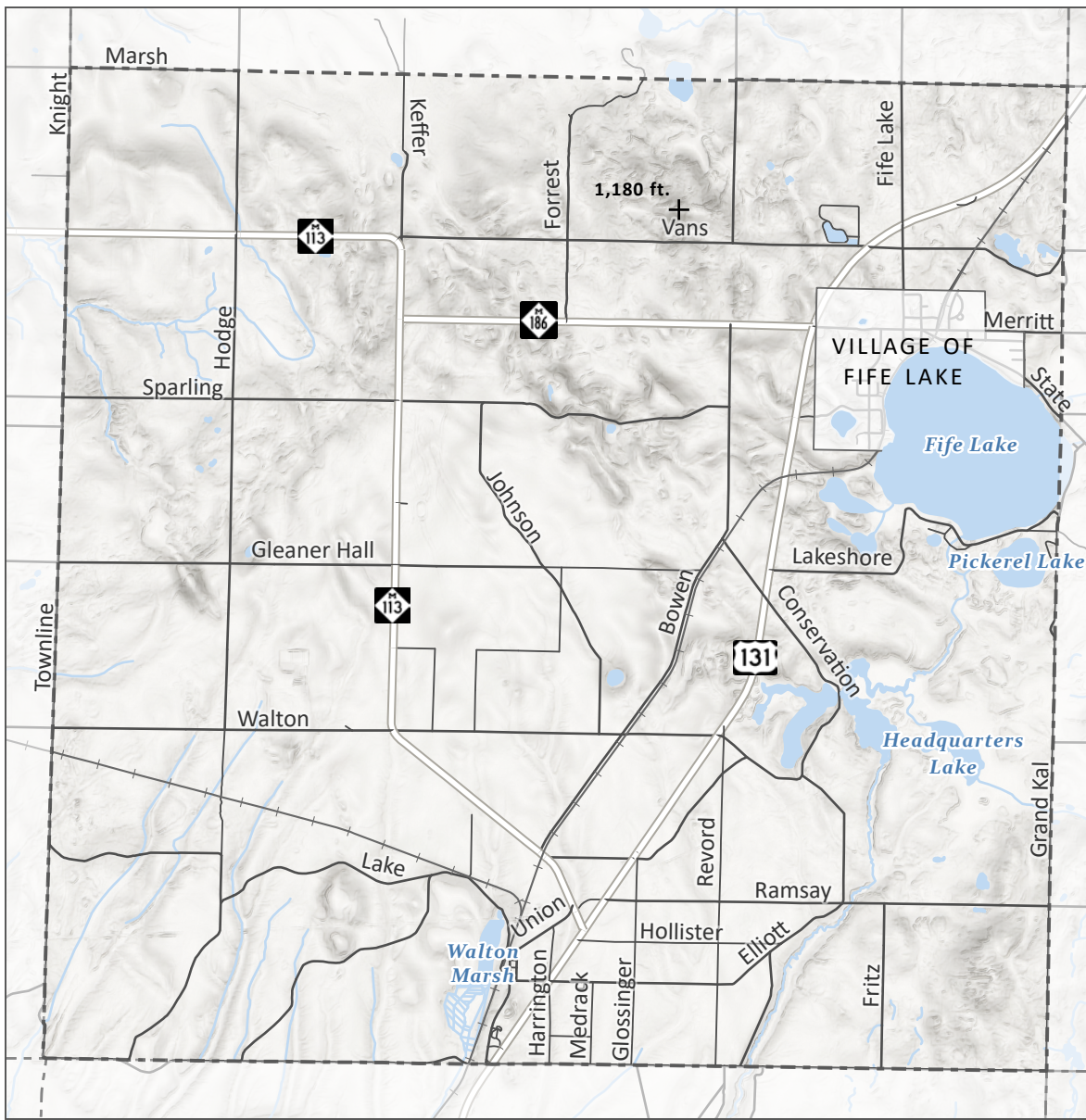
Map 1  
**Slopes**

Fife Lake, Grand Traverse County, MI



**Legend**

- Less than 5 degrees
- 15-19 degrees
- 5-9 degrees
- Over 20 degrees
- 10-14 degrees

Data Sources: NRCS, MI Open Data, MI DNR



Map 2  
**Topography**  
 Fife Lake, Grand Traverse County, MI

- Legend**
-  Steep slope
  -  Gentle slope

Data Sources: USGS, MI Open Data, MI DNR

## Climate

Grand Traverse County's climate is considered Quasi-Marine, since the prevailing westerly winds pass over Lake Michigan before reaching the County. This results in less temperature variation compared to other places where the wind primarily travels across land for a longer period of time. The lake cools the warm air in the spring and summer and warms the cool air in the fall, which delays the first frost and allows for a longer growing season.

The average high and low temperature in the Fife Lake area is around 54 and 35 degrees Fahrenheit, respectively. The record high for the area recorded in 1939 was 105 degrees Fahrenheit and the record low for the area recorded in 1979 was -37 degrees Fahrenheit. The area receives some form of precipitation an average of 128 days per year. Snow falls in Fife Lake as early as September and as late as April (or sometimes May!) with the greatest amount of snowfall on average in January. The area receives on average 88.9 inches of snow and 29 inches of rain annually, with the bulk of the rain events occurring between March and September.

## Soils

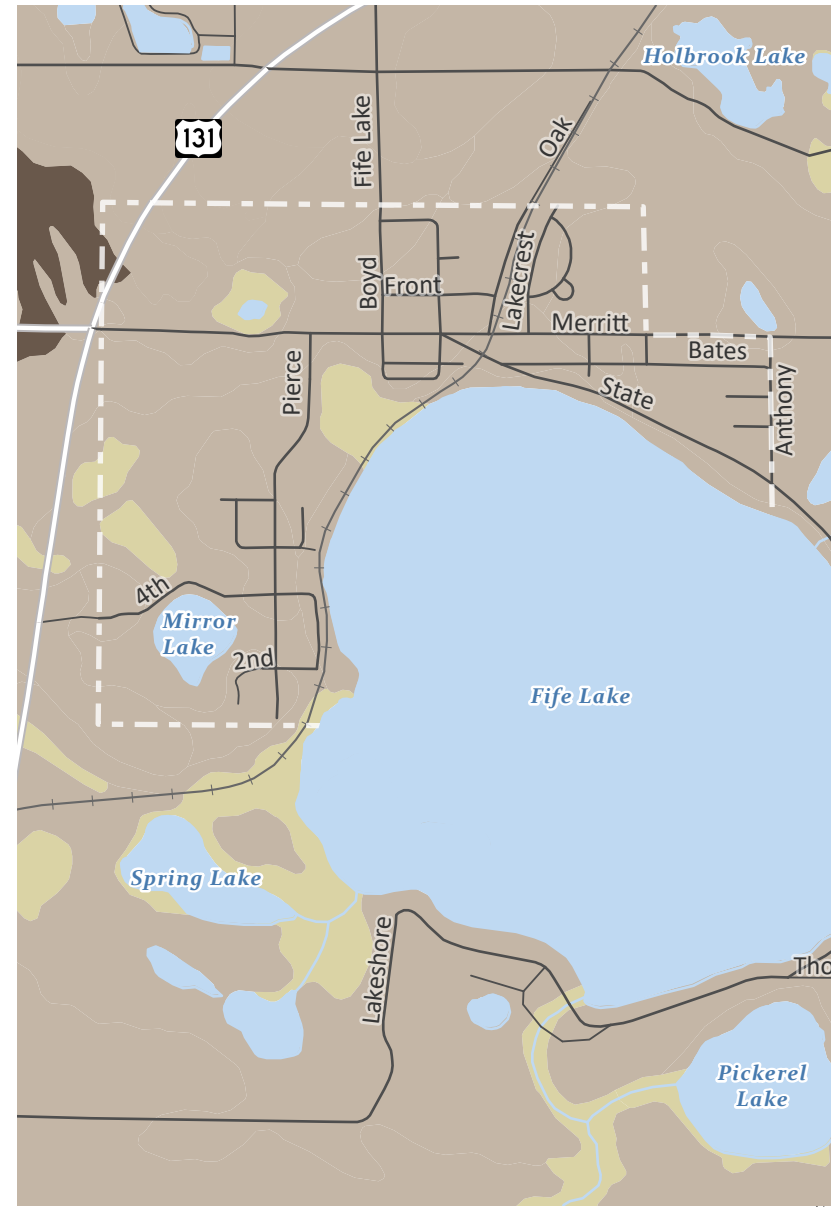
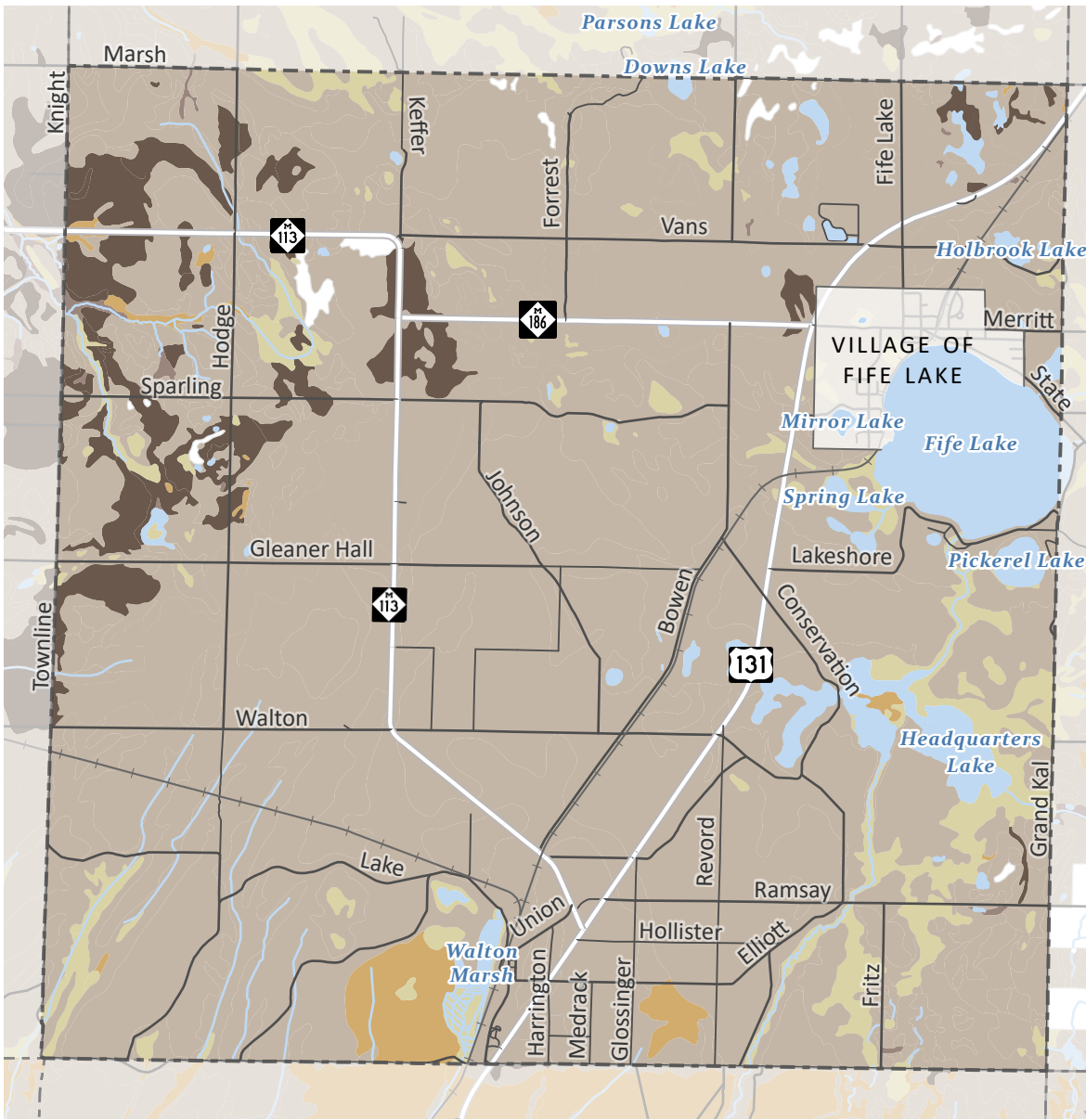
Parent materials of Fife Lake soils are entirely glacial in origin. These materials are composed primarily of till, outwash, and sedimentary lakebed deposits. As the glaciers advanced from Canada, they carried with them varying types of soil and rock and as they retreated, this material was left behind. As the areas dried out, wind action produced a fine material called 'loess' which, in some areas, completely covered even the basic glacial materials. A wide variety and mixture of sizes and types of parent material were then available for producing present day soils. The resulting weathering and erosion, both by wind and water, of this post-glacial landscape eventually formed the present-day soils of Fife Lake.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, furnishes technical information that can be applied in managing forest lands, selecting sites for roads, ponds, buildings, or other structures, and in appraising the value of tracts of land for agriculture, industry, or recreational purposes. Soil information of this nature is of substantial value in defining the basis for future land use patterns and in making decisions regarding zoning or rezoning.

The Village of Fife Lake and Fife Lake Township contain soils in six taxonomic orders. Soil orders are the highest level of classification and represent a grouping of soils with distinct characteristics and ecological significance. The dominant soil order in the Township and Village are spodosols (Map 3). These types of soils often form in sandy areas where large amounts of water infiltrate the ground and strip away the organic matter. This organic matter is relocated to the subsoil along with other minerals, which are most commonly aluminum and iron oxides. This typically occurs in the spring as a result of snowmelt. These soils also usually form under mixed forest types. Thus, the predominate soil type in the Fife Lake area is reflective of its snowy winters and history in the lumber industry.

More specifically, soil associations and series provide a picture of soils in greater detail. In Fife Lake there are 12 dominant soil associations. The dominant soil series in the Village is Rubicon Sand,

which covers 92.5% of the Village. This soil series has a good to fair bearing capacity for building foundations, but is subject to wind erosion. Areas containing Lupton Muck (the lake's southern shoreline) and Greenwood Peat may experience limited development, as it will be more difficult and expensive due to the existing soil conditions. Agricultural soils and the related vegetation types are located in the southeastern, northeastern, and northwestern corners of the Township. These support a major crop type of pine trees.


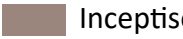

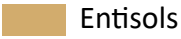





# Map 3 Soil Taxonomy

Fife Lake, Grand Traverse County, MI

Data Sources: NRCS, MI Open Data, MI DNR

## Legend

- |   |           |   |             |   |                    |
|---|-----------|---|-------------|---|--------------------|
|  | Alfisols  |  | Inceptisols |  | Data Not Available |
|  | Entisols  |  | Spodosols   |   |                    |
|  | Histosols |  | Water       |   |                    |

## Vegetation

The Fife Lake area has two primary vegetation types. These are highland associations and low or wetland associations. Included in the highland group are oak, maple, pine, and poplars. The lowland association includes cedar, birch, tamarack and hemlock. The high and low land types seem to be well-mixed throughout the Fife Lake area and this relationship provides for a wide variety of wildlife. The Village is almost completely forested, which provides for cool, shady summer breezes and moderate winter winds.

## Water Resources

### Lakes

The Fife Lake Community contains several bodies of water (Map 4). The largest of these is Fife Lake located in the northeast corner of the Township encompassing approximately 617 acres. Approximately one-third of the lakefront lies within the borders of the Village; the remainder lies within Fife Lake Township and a small portion of the lake lies within Springfield Township of Kankaska County. Other major bodies of water in the area include Headquarters Lake, Walton Marsh, Pickerel Lake, Spring Lake, and Mirror Lake.

A natural spring, called "Bluehole," is present between U.S. 131 and Headquarters Lake. A turnoff is located along U.S. 131, which provides access to the spring. This natural water resource occurs when a groundwater aquifer intersects the land surface at or below the water table and overflows onto the land. The amount of water flowing from the spring depends on the size of the groundwater aquifer and the amount of rainfall.

Most water bodies within the Fife Lake area have fairly high water-quality levels. Much of the freshwater inlet into Fife Lake comes from the aquifer recharge area located north of the Village. This is a unique geologic feature that transfers surface water directly into the groundwater table through a 70-foot-deep layer of sand. It is likely that the steep slopes of Rubicon Sand along the north shore of Fife Lake bring the recharge water directly into the lake. Water flows out of the lake by way of the Fife Lake outlet southerly through Headquarters Lake in the Pere Marquette State Forest, and then south ultimately to the Manistee River.

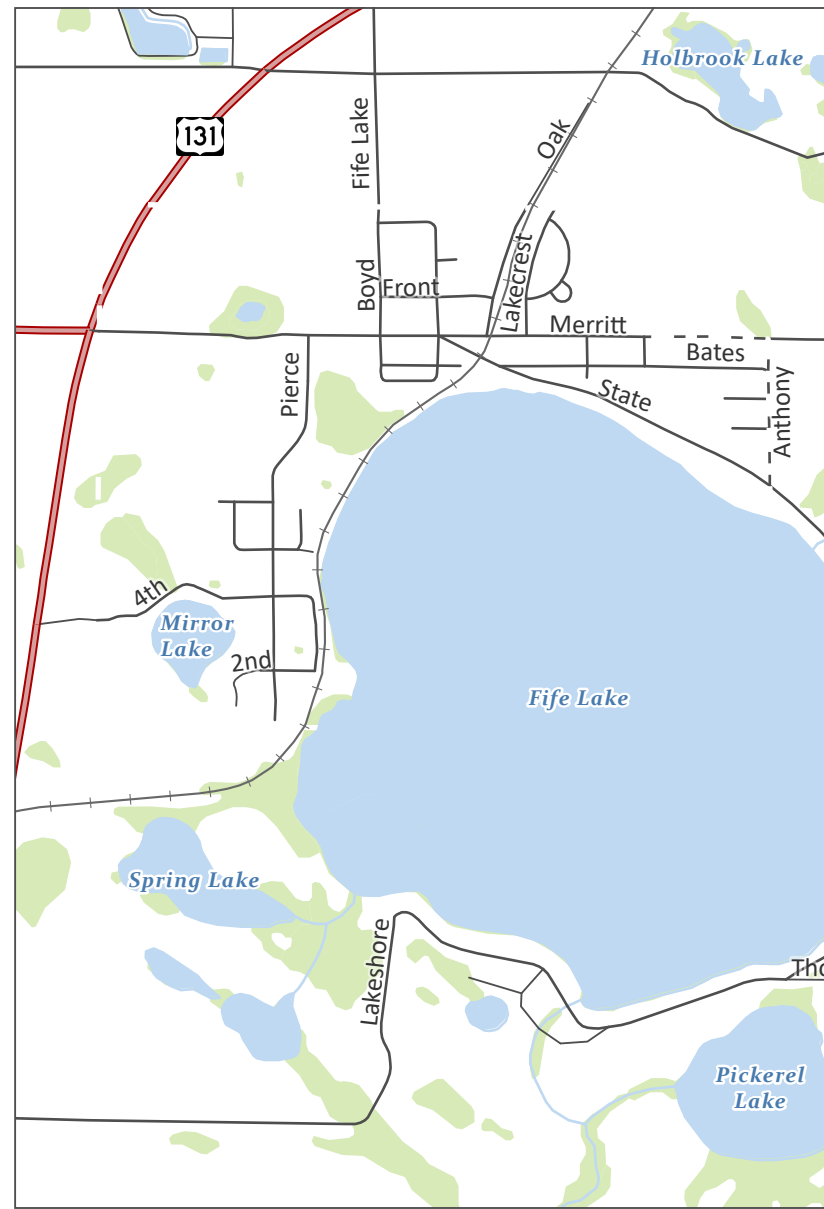
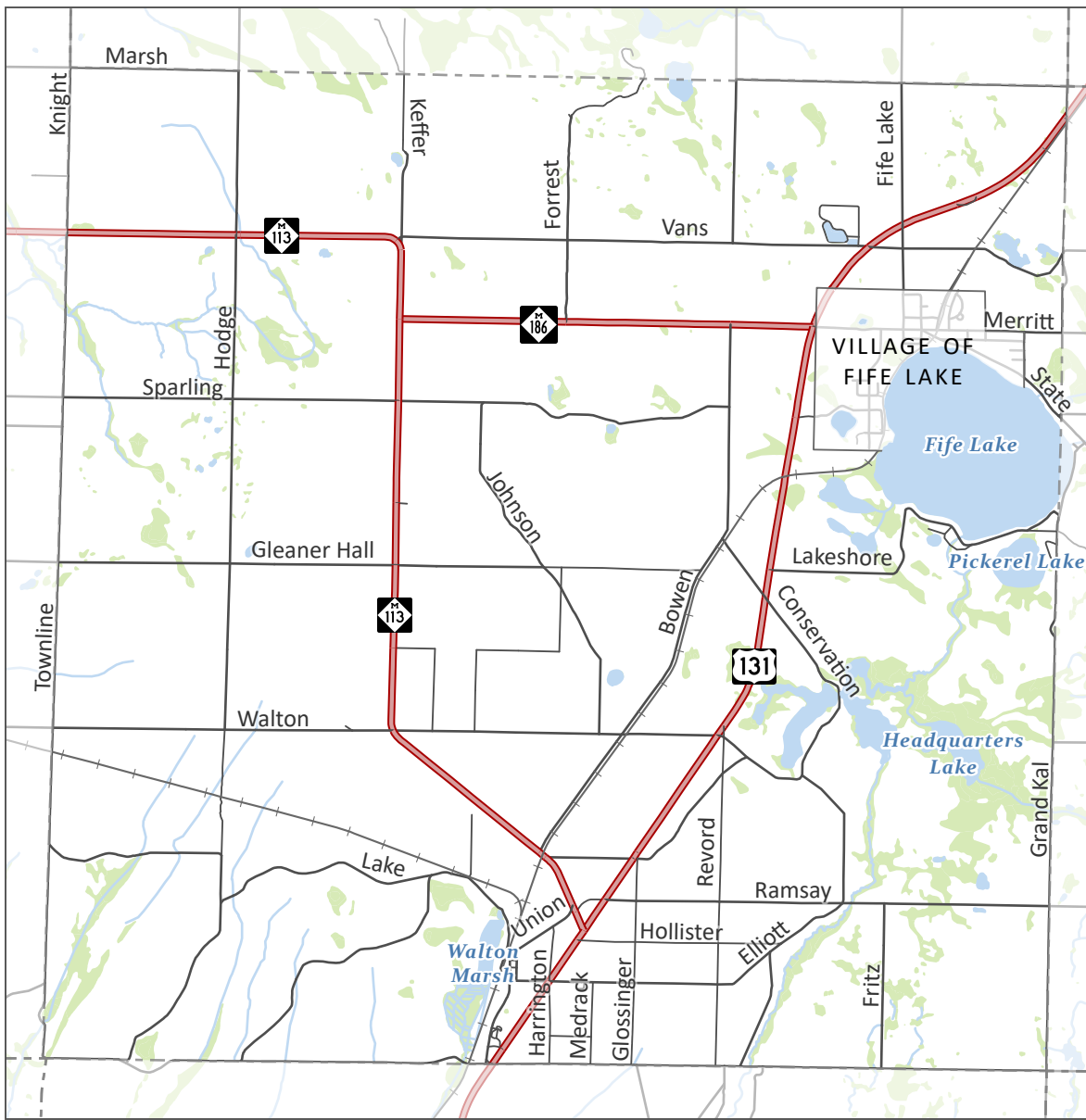
### Wetlands

Wetlands are most commonly located along lakes and rivers. In the Township, wetlands are most prevalent around Fife Lake, Headquarters Lake, Mud Lake, Pickerel Lake, and Walton Marsh. They are also common along streams. Although fewer wetlands are present in the Village, some exist along Mirror Lake and Fife Lake.

A marsh is also located in the Village of Fife Lake. Although unnamed, this marsh is located on State Street across from the elementary school and has been preserved among the various developments in the village. The land is owned by the Township and contains over 20 acres of marshland. It is likely that this marsh was once part of a larger wetland system around Fife Lake and its preservation contributes to the area's natural community.

## **Watersheds**

Groundwater and precipitation in Fife Lake flow to different bodies of water. An area where all water eventually flows to the same body of water is called a watershed. Watersheds are largely determined by the land's topography. The primary watersheds in Fife Lake direct water into Fife Lake, the Manistee River, and the Boardman River (Map 5). Water in the eastern half of the Township primarily flows into Fife Lake, while the western half of the Township is somewhat split between the Boardman River to the north and Manistee River to the south. Water in the Village drains almost entirely into Fife Lake.



Map 4  
**Water Features**

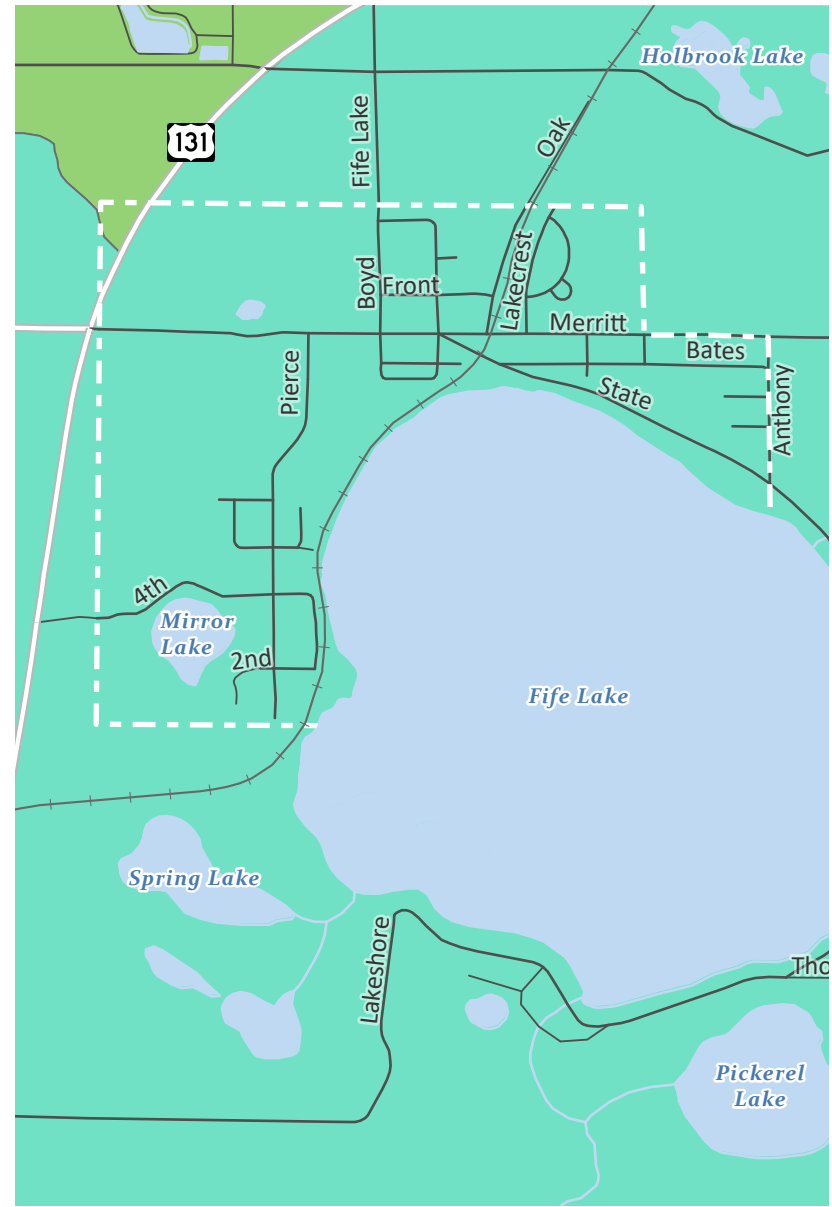
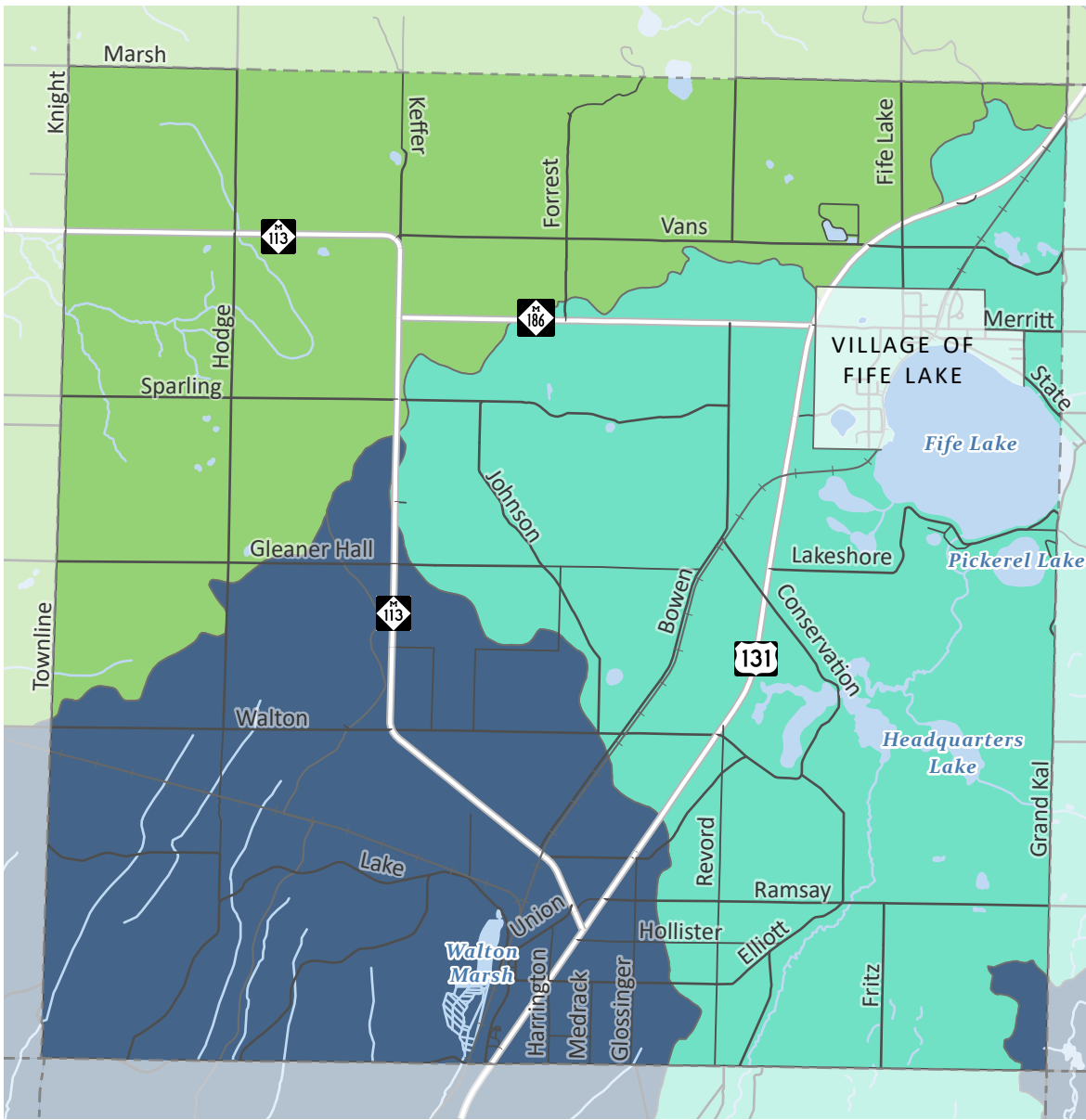
*Fife Lake, Grand Traverse County, MI*

**Legend**

- Rivers
- Lakes
- Wetlands

Data Sources: EGLE, MI Open Data, MI DNR





Map 5  
**Watersheds**  
 Fife Lake, Grand Traverse County, MI

- Legend**
- Boardman River
  - Fife Lake
  - Manistee River

Data Sources: NRCS, MI Open Data, MI DNR

## Chapter 3 – Population

Demographic factors are important for understanding community growth, development, and likely impacts on land uses. This section of the plan provides information about the population, housing, social, and employment characteristics of Fife Lake Township and Village. Understanding these conditions provides both a valuable insight into potential future conditions as well as a basis for projecting future needs in housing and land development.

### Data Sources

Fife Lake Township and the Village of Fife Lake are closely integrated as a community since the Village is surrounded by the Township. The Census Bureau considers villages in Michigan to be dependent upon the townships in which they are located. Therefore, the Census population count for a village is included in the township total. For this Master Plan, Village totals can be assumed to be incorporated in Township totals, unless specifically stated otherwise.

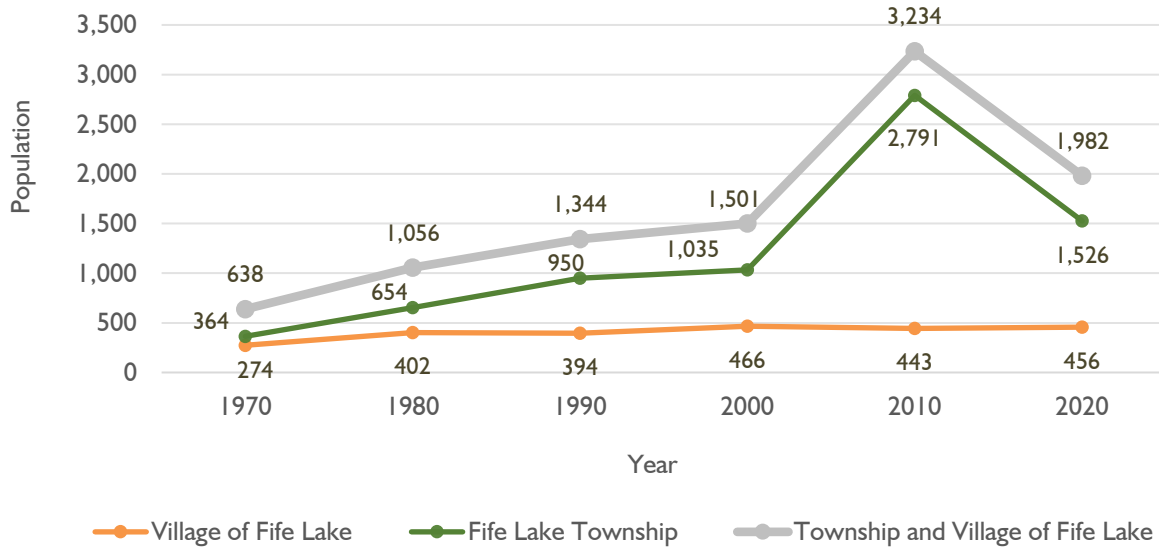
This chapter uses data from the United States Census Bureau and the American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS is an ongoing survey conducted by the Census Bureau that provides vital information on a yearly basis about the United States and its people. While the ACS results are offered on a yearly basis, the surveys are sent to a sample population rather than every person in the United States as provided by the Census. Because the ACS is not sent to every individual in the United States, it is not a perfect dataset, and the margin of error in some of the following tables and graphics may indicate some imperfections in the data. However, the ACS provides current information to communities to inform programming, economic development, emergency management, and local issues and conditions.

Most of the data within this chapter is from the ACS 2022 survey because this is the most recent year available for the Fife Lake Village and Township geographies.

### Population Trends

The overall population of Fife Lake substantially increased from 1970 to 2010 (Fig. 3.1). The Township experienced significant growth between 2000 and 2010, due to the population at Camp Pugsley, representing an increase of 118% during this time. The Village has experienced cyclical gains and decreases in population, with the greatest population increase of 47% between 1970 and 1980. Between 2010 and 2020, the Township population decreased due to the closure of the Pugsley Correctional Facility while the Village slightly grew, resulting in an overall decrease of 38.7% in the community. Comparatively, Grand Traverse County's population grew 9.5% from 2010 to 2020. Overall, as Grand Traverse County continues to be one of the fastest growing counties in the state, the Fife Lake area is expected to grow as a component of the County. Furthermore, as land surrounding Traverse City continues to develop, the County's population expansion can be expected to move into the County's southern portion, including Fife Lake.

**Figure 3.1. Population Growth in Fife Lake Township and Village**

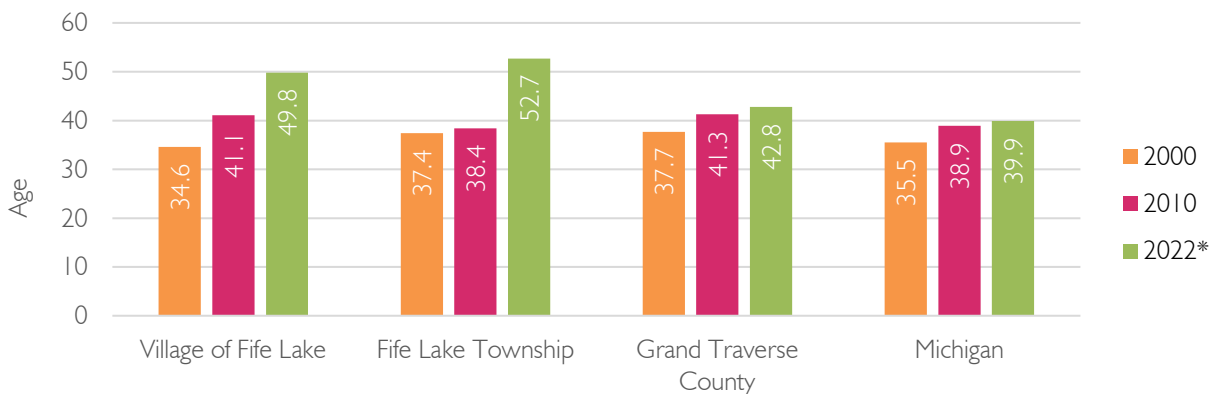


Source: US Census Bureau

## Age Composition

The needs and lifestyles of individuals differ among age groups, and the demands for retail goods and services as well as public or institutional programs change in concert. The Village and Township population skews older than Grand Traverse County and Michigan with a higher median age (Fig. 3.2). The distribution of ages between the Village and Township are relatively similar. The Village has a slightly lower percentage of people 18 or younger, suggesting more families with younger children in the Township (Table 3.1).

**Figure 3.2. Median Age**



Source: US Census Bureau

\*Estimate from the 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

**Table 3.1. General Age Summary in 2022**

	<b>Village Only</b>	<b>Township (Incl. Village)</b>	<b>Township (Excl. Village)</b>	<b>Grand Traverse County</b>
Total Population	338 persons	1,244 persons	906 persons	95,315 persons
Median Age	49.8 years	52.7 years	N/A	42.8 years
Under 18 years	12.4%	13.7%	14.2%	19.7%
18 years and over	87.6%	86.3%	85.8%	80.3%
65 years and over	20.7%	26.4%	28.5%	20.7%

Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

## Race and Gender

Residents of Fife Lake Township and Village are predominately White (Table 3.2). Other races represented in Fife Lake are Black or African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, and people of two or more races. The Census Bureau considers Hispanic or Latino descent separately from race. A person may be of any race and still have Hispanic or Latino descent. In 2022, only 3.2% of the Township, 0.9% of the Village, and 3.1% of Grand Traverse County reported having Hispanic or Latino descent.

Grand Traverse County (Table 3.3) is nearly split between male and female genders, with a similar ratio as the Village of Fife Lake. The Township has a slightly higher proportion of male residents to female residents.

Table 3.2. Race in 2020

	Village Only	Township (incl. Village)	Township (Excl. Village)	Grand Traverse County
Total Population	456 persons	1,526 persons	906 persons	95,238 persons
White	91.4%	91.9%	91.7%	90.8%
Black or African American	0.4%	0.3%	0.0%	0.6%
American Indian and Alaska Native	2.0%	1.6%	2.9%	1.0%
Asian	0.0%	0.1%	1.8%	0.9%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
Some Other Race Alone	0.7%	0.5%	0.0%	1.1%
Two or More Races	5.5%	5.6%	3.6%	5.5%

Source: 2020 U.S. Census Bureau

Table 3.3. Gender Distribution in 2022

	Village Only	Township (incl. Village)	Township (Excl. Village)	Grand Traverse County
Total Population	338 persons	1,244 persons	906 persons	95,315 persons
Male	54.4%	53.7%	53.4%	49.6%
Female	45.6%	46.3%	46.6%	50.4%

Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

## Education

In 2022, the percentage of residents with a high school education or higher in the Fife Lake Community was similar to Grand Traverse County (94.9%) and higher than the state of Michigan (91.8%) (Table 3.4). The Fife Lake area had fewer residents with a Bachelor's degree or higher compared to Grand Traverse County (23.0%). Generally, the Village mirrored the County's trends,

with a slightly higher percentage of population with an Associate's Degree and fewer with a Bachelor's Degree.

**Table 3.4. Educational Attainment in 2022**

	Village Only	Township (incl. Village)	Grand Traverse County
High School (or Equivalent) or higher	94.4%	95.9%	94.9%
Some College, No Degree	28.0%	24.0%	22.9%
Associate's Degree	11.2%	11.0%	11.0%
Bachelor's Degree	14.9%	18.5%	23.0%
Graduate or Professional Degree	5.2%	7.1%	15.6%

Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

## Household Composition

The number and type of households influence the social and economic dynamics of the Fife Lake Community and consequently impact the quantity and character of land development. Households are the standard unit of measurement for evaluating and projecting the number of housing units, retail sales, and community facilities and services. The Census considers a household as all people occupying the same housing unit, whether related or unrelated. Families are counted as all people living in a house who are related to the household by blood, marriage, or adoption.

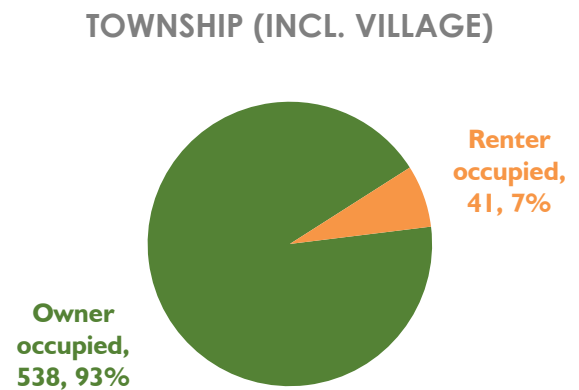
The average household and family sizes provide insight into the types of families residing in the Township and Village. In 2022, the Village and Township household compositions were relatively similar. Households with one or more people of age 60 years or older made up nearly 55.8% of the total households in the Township. The Village had a smaller percentage (45.8%) of people aged 60 or older than the Township (Table 3.5). Compared to Grand Traverse County, the Fife Lake Community had generally smaller families and fewer people under 18 years of age and more people of 60 years of age or more.

Table 3.5. Household Composition in 2022			
	Village Only	Township (Incl. Village)	Grand Traverse County
Total households*	251	847	45,776
Occupied*	169	641	39,819
Vacant*	82	206	5,957
Average household size	2.38	2.15	2.42
Total families	93	370	23,898
Average family size	2.75	2.61	3.02
Households with one or more people under 18 years	21.1%	17.8%	25.4%
Households with one or more people 60+ years	45.8%	55.8%	45.8%

Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates (\*2020 U.S. Census)

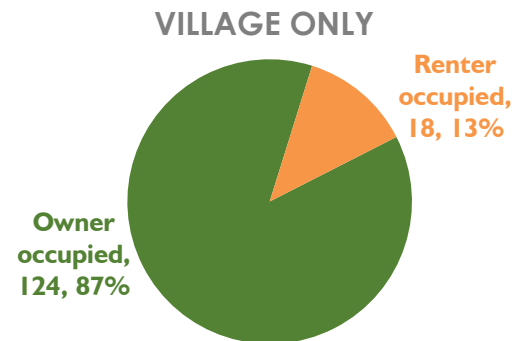
Figure 3.4. Occupancy of Homes

In 2022, most residents in the Fife Lake Community lived in the homes they own (93%) (Fig. 3.4). This indicates stability in the housing stock, since residents currently living in or moving to the Fife Lake Community prefer to own their homes. Since 2000, the percentage of owner-occupied units has increased (+12.8%) and the percentage of renter-occupied units has decreased (-9.8%). As is typical for more urban areas, the Village contains a slightly higher percentage of rentals than the Township.



The Township and Village have often experienced high percentages of vacant housing units, similar to other tourist areas in northern Michigan.

According to the 2020 Census, 24% of the Township's housing units were vacant. However, 83% of these vacancies were estimated for seasonal, recreation, or occasional use, indicating a strong presence of tourism in this area. Without seasonal vacancies, the Fife Lake area falls within a more reasonable range (8%). Yet, the Township and Village may continue to monitor vacancies to ensure the housing market remains stable and viable to support long-term populations.



Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates.

## Housing Value and Costs

In 2022, median home values in the Township (\$184,300) and Village (\$169,400) were both lower than Grand Traverse County (\$273,300) and Michigan (\$201,100). Home values in the Fife Lake Community were similar to those in Kalkaska County (\$152,800) (Fig. 3.5). This indicates that housing in the Fife Lake area may be more affordable than other areas in Grand Traverse County and more representative of those in neighboring Kalkaska County.

Aligning with more affordable home values, the Fife Lake area monthly mortgages and rental costs were also more affordable than Grand Traverse County. In 2022, median mortgage costs for owner-occupied homes in the Fife Lake Community were \$1,126, compared to \$1,478 in Grand Traverse County. Median monthly rent was \$850 in the Fife Lake Community, compared to \$1,147 in the County. It is important to keep in mind that due to the scope of the 2020 Census data, the statistics provided in this section are estimates from the 2022 American Community Survey and may have a significant margin of error in some categories.

## Village Housing Market Potential

Networks Northwest and Housing North partnered in 2020 to create a Residential Target Market Analysis for annual market potential in Grand Traverse County. This report specifically analyzed the Village of Fife Lake's market potential, which represents the total number of households moving into the Village each year, plus the number of existing households that move from one address to another within the Village. This was intentionally not adjusted for out-migration and only analyzed demand for homes that would be occupied year-round. However, the current seasonal impact on unit availability was still taken into account.



**Figure 3.5. Median Home Value Comparison**



Source: US Census Bureau  
 \*Estimate from the 2010 & 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

The market potential for the Village in 2020 was 13 additional rental units and seven homeownership units. The Village was also estimated to need more detached units (18) rather than attached units (2). Detached homeowner units may take the form of duplex houses and traditional houses, while detached rental units are often duplex houses, cottages, or accessory dwellings. Attached rental units could take the form of townhouses or urban lofts. Of the 13 potential rental units, the majority (11) were targeted for a household income of \$28,000-\$40,000 with an affordable rent of \$700 - \$1,000. Of the seven potential homeownership units, the majority (6) were targeted for a household income of \$70,000-\$100,000 with an affordable home value from \$175,000-\$250,000.

### Employment Location

The location of employment also contributes to the character of the Fife Lake community. If most residents leave the area to work, then the area can be classified as a “bedroom” community. In 2022, an estimated 89% worked outside the Township, and 29.2% of Township residents worked outside the County. Therefore, Fife Lake can be classified as a “bedroom” community, as the majority of residents leave both the Township and Village for work. About 3.0% of the people 16 years or older reported working from home.

The majority of Village and Township residents work within a 36.2-minute commute. This is longer than the mean travel time for residents in Grand Traverse County (20.9 min.) and Michigan (24.5 min.). It also aligns with the majority of residents traveling outside the Township and Village for work. This implies that many residents have jobs in neighboring communities within Grand

Traverse County or in neighboring Wexford or Kalkaska Counties. Traverse City and Cadillac are both around a 30-minute drive from Fife Lake and likely serve as large employment areas.

## Income

Household income is an important measure of the economic well-being of the Fife Lake community. Households are the basic social unit of any community, so the amount of income these households earn determines the quality and quantity of retail goods and service purchases both within Fife Lake and the Region. Figure 3.6 and Table 3.6 lists the median and mean household incomes for the Village, Township, and Grand Traverse County.

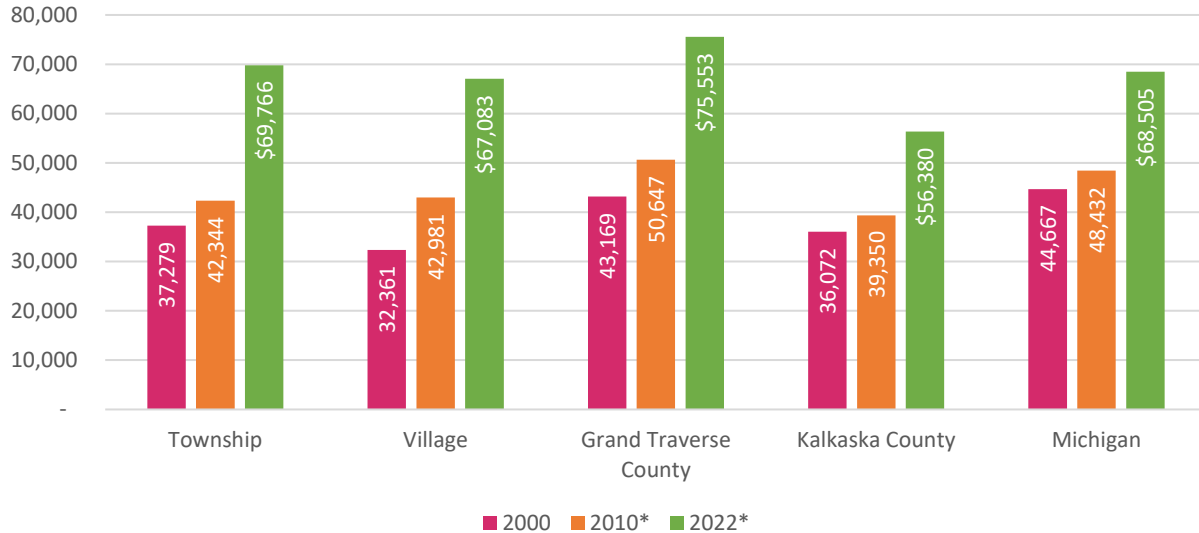
The median value is often the most representative of household incomes, as it represents the exact middle value of all the samples. The mean value is an average of all values and can be skewed by abnormally large or small values (outliers). In this case, the Township, Village, and Grand Traverse County all contain a subset of expensive houses that substantially increase the mean household income. Overall, the Village and Township generally contain lower incomes than Grand Traverse County, but higher than Kalkaska County. Household incomes grew considerably between 2000 and 2022, with the Fife Lake Community experiencing an 87% increase during this time.

**Table 3.6. Household Income Characteristics in 2022**

	Mean Income	Median Income	Median Income Percent Change 2000-2022
Village Only	\$79,591	\$67,083	107%
Township (Incl. Village)	\$73,504	\$69,766	87%
Grand Traverse County	\$96,733	\$75,553	75%
Kalkaska County	\$73,664	\$56,380	56%
Michigan	\$92,835	\$68,505	53%

Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

**Figure 3.6. Median Household Income Comparison**



Source: US Census Bureau

\*Estimate from the 2010 & 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

## Occupation and Industry Data

Occupation and industry data provides insight into the types of jobs held by residents of Fife Lake. While occupations describe the kind of work a person does to earn a living, industry is the type of activity that occurs at the workplace. In the Township, resident employment is relatively evenly distributed in a variety of occupations (Table 3.7). The most popular occupation in the Fife Lake Community is in management, business, science, and arts jobs, although the County has over 10% or more of its population in these types of occupations than both the Village and Township. Sales and office jobs are also commonly held by residents. . Both the Village and Township have considerably more workers in natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations than the County.

Retail trade, manufacturing, and educational services, health care, and social assistance industries were the most popular industries in the Village, Township, and County (Table 3.8). In the Township and County, educational services, health care, and social assistance contained the greatest percentage of residents. As already noted in occupations, industries containing construction and natural resources (agriculture, forestry, etc.) were more popular in the Fife Lake Community than Grand Traverse County.

Table 3.7. Occupation Types

	Village Only	Township (Incl. Village)	Grand Traverse County
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	176 persons	574 persons	48,469 persons
Management, business, science, and arts	18%	28%	39%
Service	14%	17%	17%
Sales and office	32%	26%	22%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance	16%	13%	9%
Production, transportation, and material moving	20%	16%	13%

Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Table 3.8. Industry Types

	Village Only	Township (Incl. Village)	Grand Traverse County
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	3%	2%	1%
Construction	14%	12%	8%
Manufacturing	17%	14%	11%
Wholesale trade	1%	0%	2%
Retail trade	17%	13%	13%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	9%	5%	3%
Information	1%	1%	1%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	6%	6%	7%

Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	5%	7%	10%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	15%	17%	25%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	4%	9%	11%
Other services, except public administration	3%	8%	5%
Public administration	4%	6%	3%

Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

## Employment & Unemployment

The unemployment rates in the Village and Township were lower than Grand Traverse County in 2022. They also had a lower percentage of the population participating in the labor force (Table 3.9). This suggests that a considerable portion of Township and Village residents are retired.

Table 3.9. Employment & Unemployment Data			
	Village Only	Township (Incl. Village)	Grand Traverse County
Population 16 Years and Over	307	1,095	78,512
Labor Force Participation Rate	59.3%	54.2%	64.3%
Unemployment Rate	2.7%	3.4%	3.9%

Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

## Chapter 4 – Community Facilities

Community organizations, services, and facilities, including schools, public safety, cultural experiences, and transportation infrastructure, are important to identify when planning for a community's future. This chapter describes these components of Fife Lake in more detail.

### Government

#### Village of Fife Lake

The Village of Fife Lake is a General Law Village with a Village Council comprised of an elected President, a Clerk appointed by ordinance, and an elected Treasurer, and six elected Village Council members. The Clerk and Treasurer are non-voting members. The Village Hall is located at 616 Bates Street. As a General Law Village, Fife Lake has only those powers granted to them by state statute. Those include the ability to hire a manager, assessor, police or fire chief, superintendent, and other necessary personnel. Villages are mandated to administer assessments, hold elections, and collect taxes. They are also required to be responsible for financial administration, including budgets, accounting, investments, and deposits. In addition, Villages may enact and enforce ordinances, including zoning. The Village currently is a zoned community under the control of the Fife Lake Village Zoning Ordinance, which is administered by the Fife Lake Area Planning Commission. A Zoning Administrator appointed by the Village Council is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the Zoning Ordinance. The Village, through its Council and Planning Commission, are actively involved in the Zoning Ordinance and the Zoning Districts Map. The Village is designated as a trail town.

#### Fife Lake Township

Fife Lake Township is a General Law Township with a Supervisor, Clerk, Treasurer, and two Trustees. The Township Hall is located at 134 Morgan Street in the Village of Fife Lake. As a General Law Township, Fife Lake Township has only those powers granted to them by State statute. Those include the ability to hire a manager, assessor, police or fire chief, superintendent, and other necessary personnel. Townships are mandated to administer assessments, hold elections, and collect taxes. They are also required to be responsible for financial administration, including budgets, accounting, investments, and deposits. In addition, townships may enact and enforce ordinances, including zoning. The Township is under the Fife Lake Township Zoning Ordinance, which is administered by the Fife Lake Area Planning Commission. It is the FLAPC's goal to have the entities under one Zoning Ordinance. Therefore, the Township is actively involved in the development of the zoning ordinance and map. Fife Lake Township also has a Zoning Administrator. The Township hires the Assessor to include assessing in the Village.

#### Fife Lake Area Planning Commission

The Fife Lake Area Planning Commission is a joint planning commission between the Village of Fife Lake and Fife Lake Township, in accordance with the Joint Municipal Planning Act (Act 226 of 2003). Joint planning commissions are often useful when a village is located within a township, as

is the case of Fife Lake. Through a joint planning commission, the municipalities can mutually benefit one another to combine resources, increase efficiency, and coordinate land use planning across municipal boundaries to benefit the greater community.

### **Neighboring Jurisdictions**

Inter-governmental relationships are important to the success of any governing body. Fife Lake Township and the Village of Fife Lake maintain a close relationship with neighboring jurisdictions, including Springfield and Union Townships. These relationships are discussed throughout this document.

### **Police Protection**

Police protection for the Township is provided by the Grand Traverse County Sheriff Department, headquartered in Traverse City. Fife Lake Township has a millage to fund a police officer 40 hours per week through the Grand Traverse County Sheriff Department. The Department has approximately 110 deputies for patrol within the County and the Township helps subsidize the use of one Sheriff Deputy for specific service in Fife Lake Township and Fife Lake Village. This service is adequate, especially given the service of a deputy hired specifically for Fife Lake. Additional protection is provided by the State Police, where posts are maintained in Cadillac, Houghton Lake, Traverse City, and Gaylord.

### **Fire and Emergency Medical Services**

The Fife Lake Area Emergency Services Authority (FLAESA) services Fife Lake, Springfield, and Union Townships. Union Township also contracts with FLAESA for fire protection services.

Fife Lake Area Emergency Services is paid and on-call personnel and safety equipment are based out of Station 6, located at the Township offices. The department has multiple types of equipment (including trucks, ORV, snowmobile, and boat) and technology apparatuses (including drone) to accommodate fire, wildfire, water, search and rescue, off-road, and winter-specific emergency situations. Training of personnel includes advanced life support (ALS) intervention procedures. Fire department personnel include a chief, deputy chief, and captain.

There are three regional hospitals, located in Traverse City, Kalkaska, and Cadillac, that are available to Fife Lake residents. Fife Lake is included in a countywide 911 emergency response system, operated through the Grand Traverse County Central Dispatch office in Traverse City. Air ambulance service is also available with the installation of a helicopter pad by The American Legion Post #219. The pad is located at the American Legion Post on M-186.

Munson Healthcare, based in Traverse City, is the leading healthcare provider in northern Michigan, providing extensive care in a variety of northern Michigan locations. The Kalkaska Memorial Hospital is located approximately 14 miles from Fife Lake. This hospital is an extension of Munson Healthcare. Munson also maintains collaborative partnerships with other major healthcare systems, such as the Mayo Clinic, Michigan Medicine, Corewell Health (formerly Spectrum Health), and Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital. Services featured at the Kalkaska Memorial Hospital

include cancer and infusion, diabetes education, surgery, pediatrics, radiology, rehabilitation, and assisted living.

The Grand Traverse County Health Department and Traverse Health Clinic provides additional medical care in the region, and the Crystal Lake Clinic in Kingsley provides some outpatient services and a walk-in clinic.

## Schools

Fife Lake Township is served by three school districts: the Forest Area Schools District, the Kingsley Area School District, and the Manton Consolidated School District. The majority of the children living in the Township attend schools in the Forest Area Schools District. Table 4.1 provides the number of students that attend each school in the district. There was a total of 487 students in the district out of which 72.3% come from economically disadvantaged households. Students with disabilities make up about 16.8% of all the students in the district.

Table 4.1. Student Counts			
School	County	Grade Span	Student Count
Fife Lake Elementary School	Grand Traverse	Pre-K-3	145
Forest Area Middle School	Kalkaska	4-8	212
Forest Area High School	Kalkaska	9-12	158

Source: 2023-24 Michigan School Data

The Forest Area School District consists of two separate campuses located a few minutes apart. Fife Lake Elementary<sup>1</sup> is located in the Village of Fife Lake and houses preschool through third grade students. Forest Area Middle and High School is located within Boardman Township, between the communities of Fife Lake and South Boardman, and includes fourth through twelfth grade students.

Kingsley Area School covers the northwest corner of the Township. It consists of a high school, middle school, and elementary school, all located in the Village of Kingsley, and offers busing in the area. There are approximately 1,550 students enrolled in Kingsley Area Schools. Manton Consolidated Schools are located just south of the Township. It consists of a high school, middle school, and elementary school, all located in Manton.

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<sup>1</sup> 108 Pierce Street, Fife Lake, MI 49633  
(231) 879-3362



Northwest Michigan College and Baker College provide higher educational opportunities to the area. In addition, vocational/technical programs are available nearby. The Northwest Education Services Career Tech Center (North Ed) offers 23 skilled trades certification programs in a variety of fields in Traverse City.

Daycare is available in the Village and Township, with two childcare centers in the Village accommodating at least 150 children, in addition to any licensed home providers. One facility is hosted at Fife Lake Elementary School, and another is a private facility.

## **Utilities**

### **Gas and Electric**

The Fife Lake area is served by two electric power utilities: Consumers Power and Great Lakes Energy. In the Township, natural gas service is provided by DTE Energy, Great Lakes Energy, and Consumers Power; however, areas with natural gas service are limited. In the Village, natural gas service is provided by DTE Energy.

### **Sewer**

To assure that the lake water quality of Fife Lake remains high, the area is served by the Fife Lake Area Utility Authority (FLAUA). FLAUA is comprised of nine members from the Village of Fife Lake, Fife Lake Township, and Springfield Township and provides sanitary sewer service to the parts of Fife Lake Township and Springfield Township of Kalkaska County. FLAUA provides sanitary sewer service for properties around Fife Lake and throughout the Village, while most of the Township is served by individual septic systems. However, FLAUA services the Fife Lake Township Industrial Park on US-131. The sanitary sewer system is a lagoon type treatment plant located at 10701 Vans Lane with a capacity of 80,000 gallons per day, or 30 million gallons a year, with the ability to discharge 300,000 gallons each day on the treatment fields. It contains around 8 miles of buried assets, in addition to several pump stations. The sewer system began operations in July of 1977. In 2014, FLAUA received a SAW grant for over \$650,000 from the state to fund testing and engineering for the 30-year-old system upgrade. In 2016/2017, the treatment plant underwent an approximate \$6.5 million upgrade. Funding was largely obtained from federal grant and loan dollars from the USDA. Upgrades included upgraded pumps, mechanical equipment, and replacement parts.

### **Solid Waste and Recycling**

GFL Environmental provides private solid waste collection in the Village and Township, and provides a recycling drop off site at the Village offices. Additional local waste haulers such as O'Tracey's Waste operate in the Village and Township to provide additional choices for residents and businesses. Additionally, the Village and Township host a spring clean-up day each year, typically in May.

## Internet

Most households in the Village and Township have computers and many residents in and around the Village of Fife Lake are connected to DSL or cable internet service, but many portions of the Township lack high-speed internet service. Broadband internet service in rural areas has become increasingly more important, especially since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Map 6 shows cable internet availability in the Fife Lake area.

## Cultural Facilities

### Fife Lake Public Library

The Fife Lake Public Library<sup>2</sup> is located in Fife Lake Village and serves the Village of Fife Lake and Fife Lake Township. Citizens of both entities contribute financially to the library via a millage, which is part of the Traverse Area District Library (TADL) system. The Fife Lake Library is a “member library” and autonomous with their own elected board. Patrons of the library have access to both local resources and a wider network of TADL e-resources and services. The Fife Lake Library serves as a vital community center and gathering place, offering various programs and events to all demographics of the community, including a co-location for the Grand Traverse Senior Center Network.

In 2021, the Library conducted a visioning workshop which revealed that a lack of physical space was becoming a bottleneck for providing services, growth in the Library’s collection, and staff effectiveness. Subsequent surveys of the community and the staff in 2022 pointed out the need for additional services that cannot be provided in the existing Library space. An architectural designer was engaged to develop various concepts for an expansion that could address the concerns that were defined by the workshop and the surveys. In early 2023, a steering committee created to review conceptual designs recommended that a two-story expansion with a basement would best fulfill the needs of the library at the most economical cost. The Board of Directors formally approved the two-story expansion, which will double the library’s existing space.

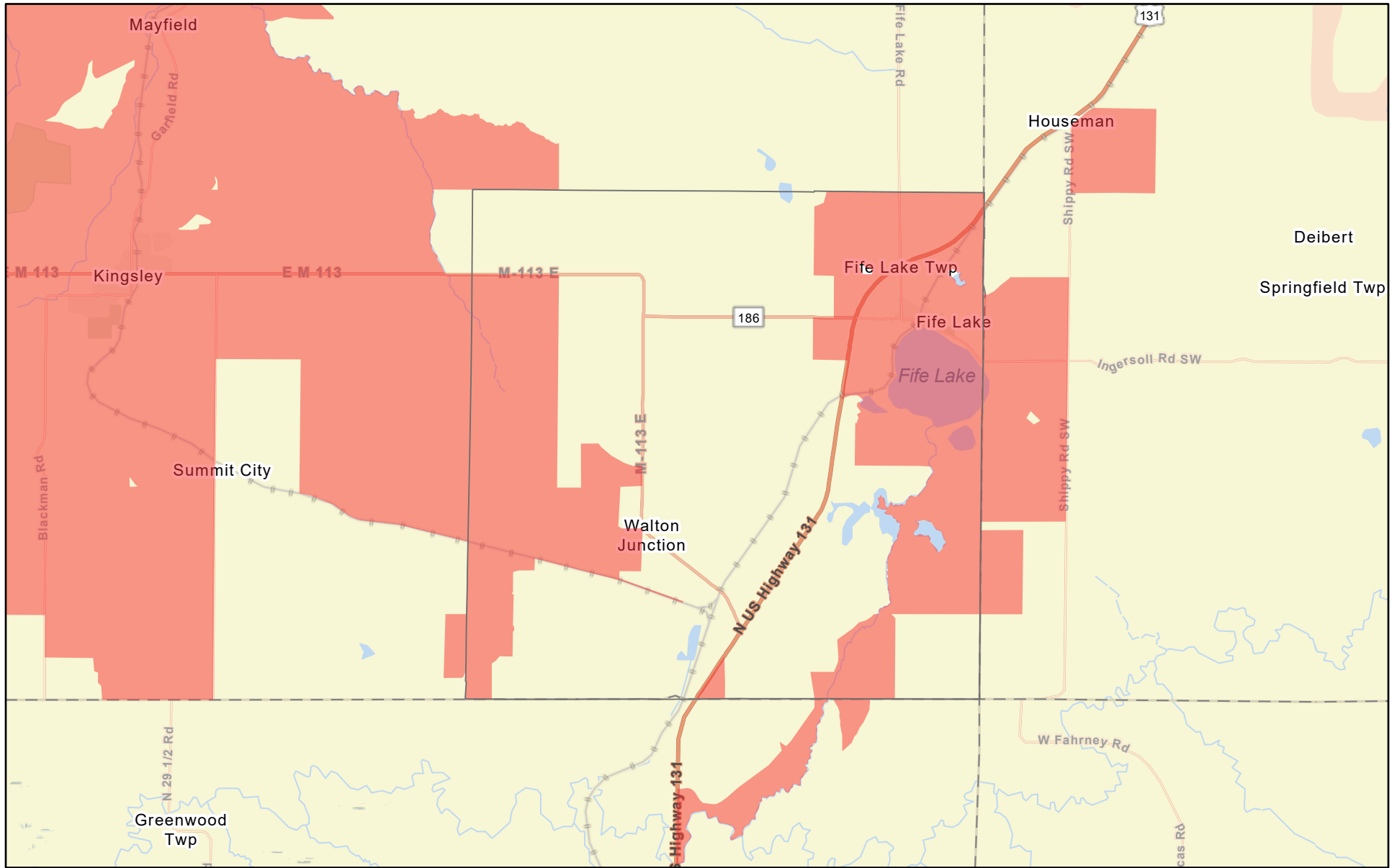
Since the Board’s approval, work has proceeded to finalize the conceptual design and to initiate fundraising for the addition, which has an estimated cost of \$1.2 million. As of early 2024, the library has contracted with various engineers to perform the expansion’s detailed design. Fundraising is proceeding in tandem with the design work and is being sought via local donations, grants from private donors, grants from local, state, and federal governments, and eventual in-kind donations from construction contractors. The Library will not seek any property tax millage to fund the project.

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<sup>2</sup> 77 Lakecrest Lane, Fife Lake, MI 49633  
(231) 879-4101

Draft October 2024

Construction start will depend on the pace that funding becomes available. The goal is for construction to begin as early as 2nd quarter of 2025. With the expansion, the Library will be equipped to continue meeting the evolving needs of the Fife Lake community.

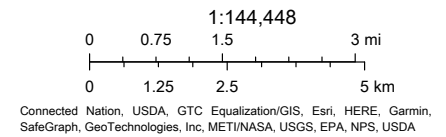


# Map 6 Cable Coverage

*Fife Lake, Grand Traverse County, MI*

Data Sources: NRCS, MI Open Data, MI DNR

**Cable**  
 At Least 100M/10M



Connected Nation

## **American Legion**

The American Legion Post 219<sup>3</sup> functions as a community center and social gathering hub for the Fife Lake community. Post 219 family includes Veterans, Sons, Riders, and Women Auxiliary. The American Legion provides regular meals and events. They also host holiday events for the community.

## **Fife Lake Historical Society**

The Fife Lake Historical Society operates three buildings in the Village of Fife Lake area, preserving a large collection of items such as photos, artifacts, and family histories. The Fife Lake Historical Museum<sup>4</sup> is located downtown and offers residents and visitors over 50 exhibits which detail the area's past. The museum is run by the local historical society and is operated as a nonprofit facility. It is open to the public during limited hours in the spring and summer only. In 2022, the Historical Society supported the establishment of the Fife Lake Area Genealogical Society to further document information on the Historic Families of Fife Lake.

The historical society also operates a one-room country schoolhouse<sup>5</sup> exhibit in the Village, across the street from the museum. The schoolhouse was constructed in 1878 for the population living along the north side of Fife Lake, but was quickly moved to a larger building after the Village was incorporated. The building was then used as the township hall and later the public library. Once the library was expanded, Fife Lake Township offered the building to the historical society, who now stages it as a realistic representation of a schoolhouse in the 1880s.

The Fire Barn<sup>6</sup> is the third building maintained by the historical society. This building was built in 1876 and originally used as the schoolhouse for another population living around Fife Lake ("Southtown"). When the Village of Fife Lake was incorporated and a larger school was built, this building was converted to host the volunteer firefighting team. Today it contains historic uniforms from over 100 years ago, firefighting equipment, a 1937 fire truck, and several displays.

The historical society also maintains an historic walk throughout the Village of Fife Lake. This includes 27 display plaques that contain photos and explanations of historic Fife Lake. Photos were all taken during the late 1800s and early 1900s, contributing to the rich and unique history of the area.

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<sup>3</sup> 10283 M-186, Fife Lake, MI 49633  
(231) 879-4475

<sup>4</sup> 136 W State Street, Fife Lake, MI 49633  
(989) 781-0512

<sup>5</sup> 137 W State Street, Fife Lake, MI 49633

<sup>6</sup> 109 W State Street, Fife Lake, MI 49633

## Downtown Development Authority

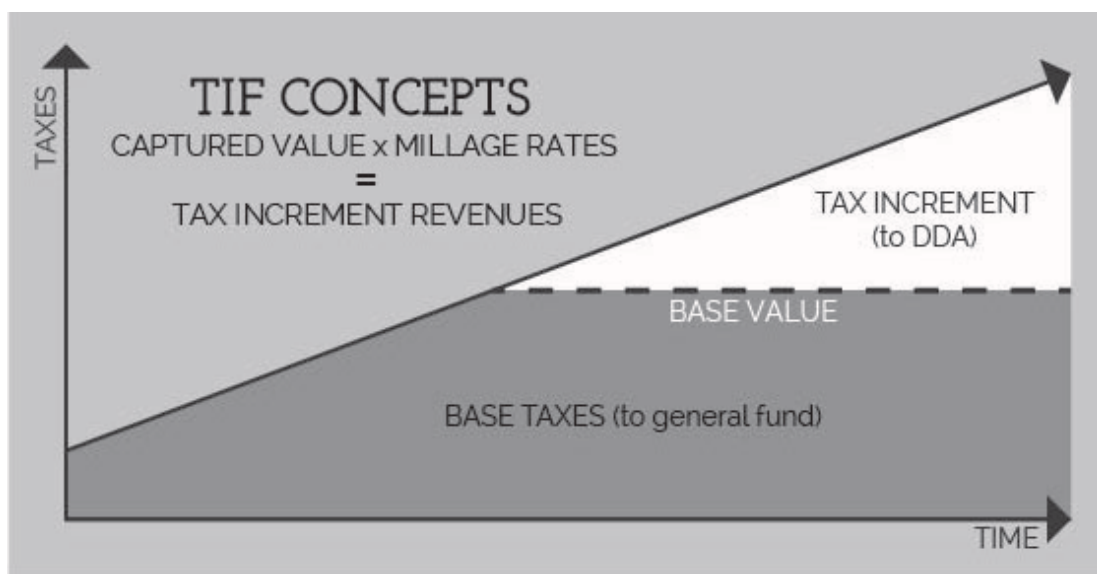
The Village Council created a Downtown Development Authority (DDA) in 1993 pursuant to PA 197 of 1975. The primary purpose of the DDA is to encourage local economic development, revitalize, and prevent deterioration in the DDA district. The Plan was updated in 1999, and has contributed to streetscape and economic development improvements in the downtown area.

These have included installation of new curbs, sidewalks, brick paving, and street trees. A sidewalk was installed that runs from Pierce Street east to the Ball Park, and another from the elementary school to the U.S. 131 roundabout. The DDA also installed street lighting in the downtown.

An ISTEA Grant in the amount of \$413,000 was granted in 1999. The grant, plus a bond of \$200,000, was utilized for streetscape improvements including new curbs, sidewalks, brick pavers, retaining walls, and street trees. In 2004, another ISTEA grant was received in the amount of \$169,000 with a local match of \$75,000 for the installation of street lamps from U.S. 131 to the Ball Park.

In addition to grants and other sources, the DDA generates revenue using tax increment financing (TIF). This is a tool by which the DDA “captures” tax increment for use within the DDA’s boundaries. Tax increment is the difference between the taxable value in the DDA District in 1999 (when the DDA began to capture taxes), and the current taxable value in the DDA District. Thus, an active DDA can create a continuously growing fund as property values increase due to the investments by the DDA.

In January of 2023, the DDA contracted with Networks Northwest to update the DDA/TIF Plan. Adopted in April of 2024, the plan established new goals for improvements to the DDA business district.<sup>7</sup>



<sup>7</sup> See <http://www.fifelakedda.org> for additional information regarding the Fife Lake DDA

## Chamber of Commerce

The Fife Lake Chamber of Commerce is organized to advance the general welfare and prosperity of the Fife Lake area so that its citizens and all areas of the business community will prosper. As a community non-profit organization, it hosts events such as the Best 4th in the North celebration, the Scarecrow Festival, Christmas in the Village, the seasonal Farm & Craft Market, and other events to bring our residents together and provide events that will welcome visitors. As of 2024 the Chamber has over 50 members comprised of area businesses, organizations and individuals. The Chamber works beside local businesses and organizations to provide networking and marketing events and provides a monthly newsletter for the community.

## Transportation

### Roads

US-131 is the primary north-south route which connects Fife Lake with local and regional hubs, which converts from a freeway to a two-lane highway within three miles of the south Township border. US-131 connects Fife Lake Township and Village with Cadillac to the south and Petoskey to the north. The Village and Township are approximately 75 miles south of the Mackinac Bridge, and the nearest transload facility is approximately 60 miles to the south in Clare. MDOT recently invested millions of dollars to install a roundabout at the major intersection of US-131 and M-186. The Grand Traverse County Road Commission plans to continue identifying and improving other sections in the Fife Lake Area, as the need arises and funding becomes available.

The primary roads within the Township consist of US-131, M-113, M-186, and Walton Road. These state highways and Fife Lake Road (County Road 605) are primary connectors to the greater Traverse City area for employment, shopping, and other services. In 2021, MDOT also made major safety improvements to the intersection of Fife Lake Road and U.S. 131, by adding a left turn lane. Passing lanes exist on M-113 through the Township.

The Village receives funding from the Michigan Transportation Fund (MTF) from Public Act 51 of 1951 to maintain its own streets with equipment and personnel located at the Village Offices. The Township works in partnership with Grand Traverse County on road maintenance and improvements. Boyd and State Streets are major transportation corridors in the Village, which are extensions of M-186 and Fife Lake Road (County Road 605) in the Township, and are the only roads in the Township that are eligible for Rural Task Force gas tax dollars.

The Michigan Rural Task Force also provides federal funding to rural counties (population <400,000) for road and transit projects. This task force provides funding through the Surface Transportation Program (STP) and the Transportation Economic Development Fund (TEDF). The State Street redevelopment project was the last major road project in Fife Lake, which occurred in 2007. Future road projects could consider funding from the Rural Task Force as a potential match for Act 51 monies.

## **Rail Service**

Rail service has been greatly influential in the history of Fife Lake. Originally used to move lumber, rail service helped establish the Fife Lake area and Springfield Township. Today, the Great Lakes Central (GLC) Railroad line, owned by MDOT, serves the Township with freight service. Generally running in a north-south route, the railroad enters the Township just west of US-131, passes through the Village of Fife Lake, and travels north into Kalkaska County. A switch yard for the rail line is located in Walton Junction. Another branch runs through Walton Junction from Kingsley to Traverse City. The Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities is currently developing a round-trip passenger train to travel from Ann Arbor to Traverse City. This would offer a nearby alternative for transportation across lower Michigan for Fife Lake residents.

In July, Michigan State lawmakers, included \$1 million to advance the Northern Michigan passenger rail Phase II planning study in the State of Michigan's 2023 Labor and Economic Budget. The proposed railroad corridor will run from Southeast Michigan to Traverse City and Petoskey. The planning study will focus on an active state-owned railroad corridor that runs from southeast Michigan to the Traverse City and Petoskey areas and will focus on both passenger and freight rail development. The project is still early in the planning phase, and any development is still years away.

## **Freight**

Networks Northwest is an agency that facilitates and manages various programs and services for the 10 counties including Grand Traverse County of Northwest Michigan. The Traverse City Small Urban Area is expected to transition to a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPOS) based on 2020 Census results. As part of this transition, the Traverse Transportation Coordinating Initiative (TTCI) has taken up work to create a freight plan which will help serve as a guide to improve the transportation network which helps the movement of freight and the region's economic growth.

## **Airports**

Cherry Capital Airport in Traverse City, about 30 miles to the northwest, is the closest major airport offering commercial flights with connections to larger hubs and around 300 total domestic and international destinations. Additionally, there are several smaller general aviation airports in the region, such as the Wexford County Airport in Cadillac, which cater to private pilots and charter flights.

## **Explore 131 North**

The Village of Fife Lake and Fife Lake Township are community partners with Explore 131 North, which is a collaborative project between local government and community leaders along 90 miles of the northern U.S. 131 corridor. Other community partners include Cadillac, Manton, Kalkaska, Mancelona, Boyne Valley, Walloon Lake, and Petoskey. These communities have recognized the high volume of traffic along U.S. 131 and their ability to provide travelers with outdoor recreation, scenic vistas, and local business goods and services.



## Parks and Recreation

In early 2022, the Village and Township adopted the Fife Lake Area Parks and Recreation Plan. This recreation plan is intended to provide a vision for the future development of parks and recreation facilities in the Fife Lake community. This includes an inventory of existing park and recreation facility conditions, identification of needs and opportunities for future improvements, and a recommended action plan to implement the community's vision for recreation.

This plan will serve as both a decision-making guide for local officials and also a resource for members of the local community engaged in recreation efforts. It also incorporates the requirements set forth by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) for the development of community park and recreation plans. The MDNR requires that a community have an up-to-date recreation plan on file before applying for any state recreation grants, which include Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grants, Land and Water Conservation Fund grants, and Passport grants. The plan is valid from 2022 through 2026, at which time it will need to be updated to maintain eligibility for DNR grants. While a detailed inventory is available in the Parks and Recreation Plan, a list of facilities is also included below:

### Parks and Recreation Areas:

- Memorial Park
- Fife Lake Area Park
- Sandy Beach
- Pierce Street Park (includes 12-hole disc golf course)
- Lakeside Park
- Fife Lake Elementary School
- Mirror Lake Property
- Township Marsh Property
- Fife Lake Roadside Park

### Public Water Access:

- DNR Fife Lake Boat Ramp/Dock
- Fife Lake Public Boat Launch
- Walton Marsh
- Public Road Ends (approximately 8)

### Pathways:

- LP-5 Snowmobile Trail
- North Country National Scenic Trail
- Shore-to-Shore Equestrian Trail
- Grand Traverse Motorcycle Trail
- MCCCT Cross State Connector Trail
- Grand Traverse ORV Route

### Regional Assets:

- Fox Run Family Campground
- Spring Lake State Forest Campground
- Springfield Recreational Area
- MDOT Fife Lake Roadside Park
- Countless parks around Traverse City, Kalkaska, and Cadillac

Fife Lake Township is also a partner with the Civic Center South located in the Village of Kingsley, west of Fife Lake Township. The park offers baseball/softball fields, soccer fields, tennis courts, basketball courts, children playground, a pickleball court, skating rink, walking trail, full-service pavilion, and an 18-hole disc golf course. The center is home to baseball/softball and recreational soccer leagues as well.

## Other Plans

The following plans also concern the Village of Fife Lake and Fife Lake Township, particularly with socio-economic and environmental aspects of both communities. The Village and Township should continue to support the policies and implementation of these plans:

- Fife Lake Parks and Recreation Plan
- Fife Lake Village Storm Water Management Plan
- Fife Lake DDA/TIF Plan
- FLAUA Asset Management Plan
- Grand Traverse County Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Housing North Housing Market Analysis
- Regional Freight Plan
- Childcare Study
- A.L.I.C.E Ratings
- CEDS Regional Economic Development Plan
- Michigan DNR 2013 Fife Lake Area Fisheries Reports/Water Quality Studies
- NWMI Regional Recovery and Investment Study
- WIOA-Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Plan

## Chapter 5 – Existing Land Use

### Existing Land Use Inventory

An existing land use inventory is a necessary step in planning for the future of Fife Lake. The inventory depicts the existing distribution and location of land uses within Fife Lake Village and Township. The Existing Land Use Map (Map 7) is based upon parcel data supplied by the Fife Lake Community and review of the information by the Planning Commission. The following classifications are used in the land use inventory.

### Land Use Classifications

The following land use categories were used to generally depict land use patterns in the Township and Village:

- **Agricultural:** This category may consist of croplands, permanent pasture, or orchards. Agricultural lands include the farmstead occupying the land.
- **Residential:** The area in which dwellings with their accessory buildings occupy the major portion of the land.
- **Commercial:** An area or facility used for the sale of retail goods or the provision of personal or business services. The subcategory includes structures, adjacent land, and parking areas dedicated for the use of employees and customers.
- **Industrial:** An area where raw or unfinished materials or commodities are used to produce a product or service. This can also include wholesale business activities, including warehouses.
- **Exempt:** These areas contain properties that are tax exempt. These primarily include public or quasi-public facilities, which are used by the Village, Township, county, school district, or state agency to meet the needs of the community. Most of this area contains the Pere Marquette State Forest. Other uses include schools, parks, public parking lots, public utilities, and other public uses.

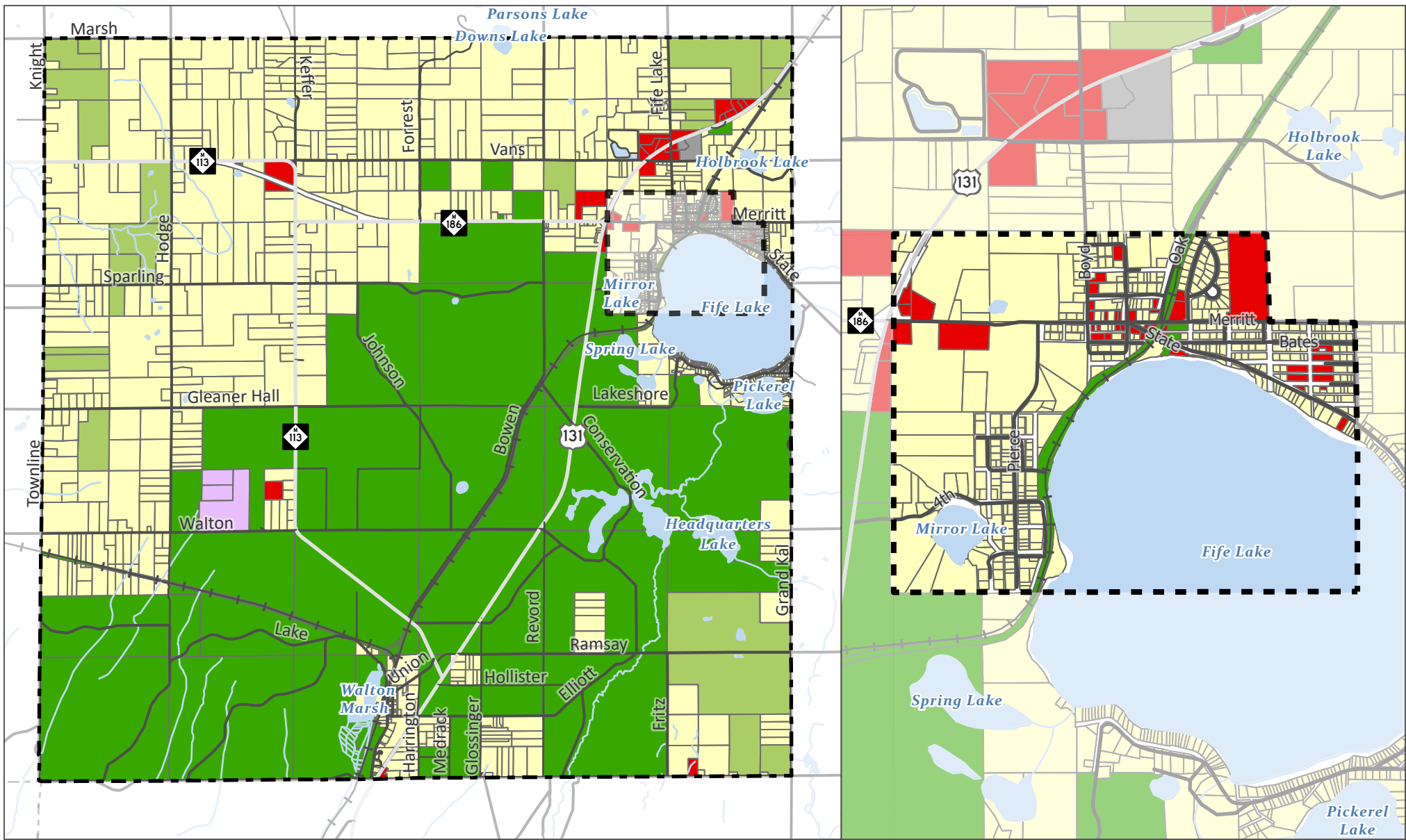
### Trends and Analysis

Fife Lake Township covers an area of approximately 22,996 acres. The Township is made up primarily of open space and forested areas, with some agricultural lands and scattered single-family residential homes. Approximately half of the Township's land area is State-owned forest.

The Village of Fife Lake encompasses 749 acres (including water) within the geographic area of the Township and is comprised primarily of residential, commercial, and woodland land uses.

Table 5.1 shows the distribution of major land uses by acreage and percentage within Fife Lake Township. Residential properties and State-owned forests are the predominant land uses in the Township. The majority of small lot, residential development is around the Lakes. Commercial uses, such as retail businesses and offices, are primarily found along US-131 and within the Village of Fife Lake.

Table 5.1. Existing Land Use Distribution		
	Acres	Percent of Total Area
Agriculture	2,460	11%
Residential	8,602	37%
Commercial	117	<1%
Industrial	22	<1%
Exempt	11,158	49%
Fife Lake (not incl. Springfield Twp.)	637	3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22,996</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



0 0.75 1.5 3 Miles

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

# Map 7 Existing Land Use

*Fife Lake, Grand Traverse County, MI*

- Agriculture
- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Planned Development
- State-Owned Lands

Data Sources: MI Open Data, MI DNR, Fife Lake Community



## Chapter 6 – Vision, Goals, and Objectives

This section identifies the vision, goals, and objectives for the Village of Fife Lake and Fife Lake Township. The vision statement provides a long-term look at the desired future of Fife Lake, about 20-30 years into the future. The goals help guide Fife Lake to meet its vision and the objectives are designed as milestones for achieving each goal. The plan's objectives are the basis for the action plan in Chapter 9.

In each instance, the goals seek to describe a desired end state, outcome, or result, looking about 20-30 years into the future. The goal statements are felt by the Planning Commission to be a reflection of the values of the overall community and are informed by the community engagement process conducted in support of this Master Plan. Certainly, not every citizen of Fife Lake will embrace every specific goal or objective, but on the whole, these are believed to reflect a general consensus viewpoint.

### Vision

The Fife Lake Community is known for its historic and quaint downtown, picturesque natural landscapes, abundant recreational opportunities, and small-town charm. The Village downtown provides safe, accessible, and connected places for people of all ages and abilities, while the Township offers natural settings for recreation and relaxation. Together, the Village and Township preserve the beauty of their natural environments, encourage the viability of businesses, and promote stability of neighborhoods.

Fife Lake Township will be characterized by attractive neighborhoods, served with a balanced mix of commercial and institutional services surrounded by significant areas of permanently preserved open space, lakeshore and woodlands to assure that future generations shall enjoy the benefits of the natural features of the area.

### Goals & Objectives

#### NATURAL AREAS

1. **Goal.** The forested areas of the Village and Township shall continue to form an important part of the community's character, strengthened by effective forest management techniques.

*Objectives:*

- Encourage woodland preservation and management by all landowners through education of and participation in sustainable natural resource practices.
- Promote native species and sustainably manage woodlots through efforts to enhance soil and replant trees after clear-cutting.

2. **Goal.** The Fife Lake Community will be a responsible steward of its natural environment and water features through protection of environmentally-sensitive areas and open spaces to ensure future generations enjoy the benefits of natural features in the area.

*Objectives:*

- Maintain and enforce zoning standards to protect natural resources from development related impacts.
- Establish an inventory of important natural resources in the Township and Village that are most deserving of protection and incorporate strategies for their protection in the zoning ordinance or other regulations as applicable.
- Implement water quality protection strategies in the Community, such as through green infrastructure, vegetative buffers along streams and lakes, and best management practices for stormwater management.
- Encourage developments that support groundwater aquifer recharge through limited impervious surfaces and preservation of open spaces
- Encourage the health of aquatic communities by protecting riparian wetlands and healthy aquatic plant communities, referencing management directions recommended by the Michigan DNR Status of Fishery Resource Report.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE AND MOBILITY**

1. **Goal.** The residents and businesses of Fife Lake Village and Township will be served with an efficient wastewater system sized adequately and managed effectively to meet the needs of the community.

*Objectives:*

- Work cooperatively with the Fife Lake Area Utility Authority to coordinate development with the capacity of existing and proposed infrastructure.
  - Review and amend the Zoning Ordinance, as necessary, to promote development densities that align with available utilities.
2. **Goal.** Fife Lake Village and Township will be served with a safe and efficient system of roadways and pathways, providing effective connections between neighborhoods, shopping, employment, and recreation areas.

*Objectives:*

- Communicate with the Michigan Department of Transportation and the Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Missaukee, & Wexford County Road Commissions to identify growth-related impacts and existing weaknesses on state and county-maintained roads and facilities.

- Cooperate with the Michigan Department of Transportation and the Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Missaukee & Wexford County Road Commissions to maintain and enforce zoning standards of private roads.
  - Link streets and parking areas to pedestrian and trail systems to provide easy access to parks, open spaces, and attractions in Fife Lake, Springfield Township, and the Pere Marquette State Forest.
  - Encourage safe roadways and pedestrian travel downtown Fife Lake through measures such as improved crosswalks, sidewalk connectivity, signage, and traffic calming.
3. **Goal.** Land uses and development in Fife Lake Village and Township will reflect safe and attractive building forms and zoning practice.

*Objectives:*

- Review and update, as necessary, zoning ordinances to support the essential policies of this master plan.
- Regularly review and update, as necessary, existing ordinances to ensure they meet the community's needs.
- Consolidate the Village and Township zoning ordinances into a single, joint zoning ordinance.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

1. **Goal.** Fife Lake Village and Township will encourage a balanced mix of commercial and industrial development to meet the needs of the community in accordance with the character and capacity of the Township and Village.

*Objectives:*

- Develop and maintain an inventory of development sites in the Village and Township that can be shared with economic development entities, including information such as parcel size, cost, description of available services, contacts and other relevant business information.
  - Review and amend, as necessary, ordinances to ensure viability of low-intensity, home-based businesses that strengthen the Village and Township, reduce the demand on transportation systems, and maintain site standards that contribute to an attractive residential character.
  - Consolidate the Village and Township Ordinances into a single joint Zoning Ordinance.
2. **Goal.** Prioritize commercial development along the US-131, M-113 and M-186 corridors to serve both travelers and residents of the community, while complementing more intense commercial uses in the Village center.



*Objectives:*

- Communicate with the Village of Fife Lake to retain and encourage existing commercial development within the Village and expand complementary commercial development in the Township.
  - Maintain and enforce design standards for commercial land uses to promote commercial development.
3. **Goal.** The Village of Fife Lake will offer a small-town character attractive to both residents and tourists through defining characteristics such as historic shops, natural features, recreation opportunities, and cultural history.

*Objectives:*

- Ensure zoning standards allow for a variety of shops that support the downtown environment and redevelopment efforts, such as a streamlined review process and incorporation of attractive site design elements.
- Pursue “walkability” in downtown Fife Lake through a system of pathway and sidewalk connections to shops, neighborhoods, parking lots, and recreation areas.
- Maintain wayfinding signage to direct residents and visitors to facilities and attractions offered in the Fife Lake Community.
- Enhance the historic and natural features of the Village and area by encouraging interpretative cultural displays and tours.
- Promote the Fife Lake Community as a year-round destination, with a variety of activities and appeal to a wide range of lifestyles, and to take advantage of the area’s seasonal climate changes.

## SCHOOLS

1. **Goal.** Development in Fife Lake Village and Township shall be planned and located with regard to the growth and development needs of Fife Lake, the Forest Area Community School District, Northwestern Michigan College, Baker College, and Northwest Education Services Career Tech Center.

*Objectives:*

- Communicate with local School Districts on projected residential development in the area and work towards potential programs to meet growth in student population.
- Encourage education of young people on local government and land use issues.

## HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

1. **Goal.** Residents of Fife Lake Village and Township enjoy a range of residential housing choices, meeting the needs of various lifestyles and arranged to strengthen the community’s neighborhoods and commercial areas.

*Objectives:*

- Maintain a range of housing types.
- Explore factors that may encourage affordable housing, such as allowing smaller homes, accessory dwelling units, and long-term rentals.
- Investigate the viability of a short-term rental ordinance to encourage neighborhood stability and reduce negative impacts from short-term rental units.
- Any new housing development takes into account natural features and preserves open spaces.

## RECREATION

1. **Goal.** Recreational land uses in Fife Lake Village and Township will be accessible to all local residents and visitors to the area, with facilities arranged and developed to complement the recreational use of Fife Lake and State Forest Lands.

*Objectives:*

- Maintain an up-to-date Recreation Plan that fosters the preservation of the area's natural resources while offering recreational trails winding through the Pere Marquette State Forest and adjacent communities by communicating with adjacent communities, such as Kingsley and Kalkaska plus TART and the MDNR Trust Fund, to pursue trail connections and explore grant opportunities.
- Identify areas of land for future acquisition for recreation development.
- Explore the feasibility of multi-jurisdictional parks and recreation organizations.
- Pursue motorized and non-motorized pathways and trail connections to enhance pedestrian and other connectivity where appropriate.
- Establish marketing, communication and education program for parks and recreation facilities.
- Engage with neighboring communities, nonprofits, government agencies, and businesses to encourage retention, expansion, and enhancement of recreation resources to meet community needs.

## GOVERNANCE

1. **Goal.** The Township and Village will work together in planning and land use decisions to further economic development, environmental protection, adequate housing, maintenance of infrastructure and mobility options, and more.

*Objectives:*

- Consider merging of the individual Township and Village zoning ordinances into a joint zoning ordinance to facilitate easier planning and land use decisions.

## Chapter 7 – Future Land Use

### Introduction

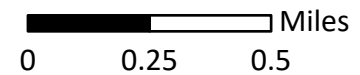
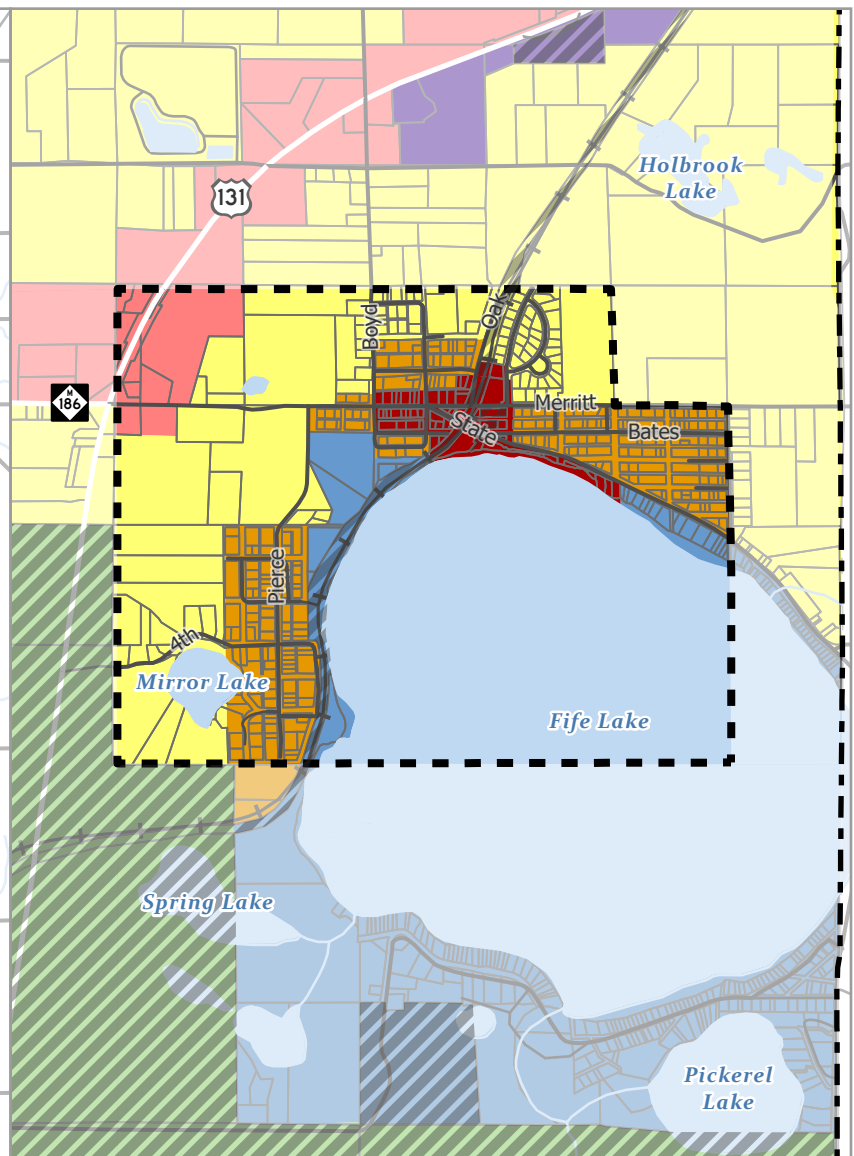
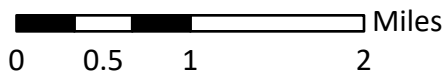
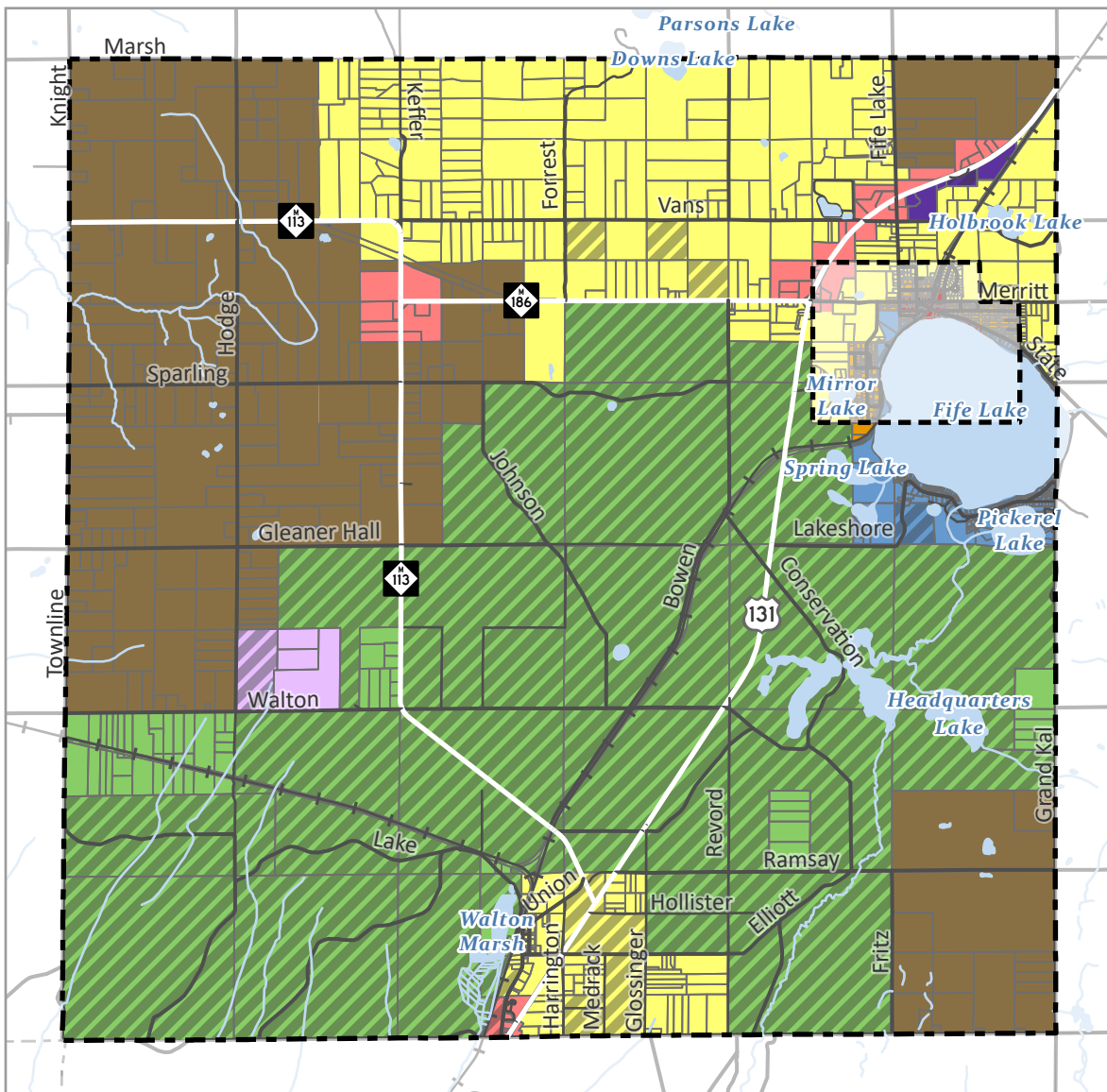
Future land use planning in Fife Lake Village and Township is founded in preservation of the Township's rural nature, particularly its undeveloped forested areas, and support of appropriate residential and commercial development in the Village where existing public infrastructure and population density is highest. Therefore, this future land use plan aims to encourage denser development within the Village of Fife Lake and "clusters" of development surrounded by natural areas in the Township.

The future land use patterns proposed in this Plan consist of a concentration of higher density residential development within and around the Village of Fife Lake and around areas of existing residential development. The remaining land in the Township is intended to remain primarily in state forest lands, private woodlands, limited agricultural and open space, or low density, rural residential development. Business activity is planned primarily along U.S. 131 and at the M-186/113 intersection in the Township, and within the Village of Fife Lake, down to the County line. Additionally, business activity is proposed at the Planned Development District on Walton Road. Industrial development is concentrated on the U.S. 131 corridor within the Fife Lake Industrial Park.

Map 8 illustrates the boundaries for future land use designations and the narrative in this chapter explains the desired uses in each category. Future land use boundaries are approximate; where two or more land use designations are adjacent, either may be considered an appropriate designation. Yet, these boundaries have been carefully considered and significant departures from the designated future land use categories are generally discouraged except in unique circumstances and only when the public health, safety, and welfare would not be compromised.

### Zoning Plan

Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Act 33 of 2008) requires that Master Plans include a zoning plan to explain how the future land use categories in this Plan relate to the zoning districts. Each land use description includes a table, which relates the more general future land use categories with the zoning districts that are best matched to them. The Zoning Plan should be considered when reviewing requests to rezone lands consistent with this plan.



# Map 8 Future Land Use

*Fife Lake, Grand Traverse County, MI*

Data Sources: MI Open Data, MI DNR, Fife Lake Community

- Agricultural
- Lake Residential
- Light Industrial
- Forest Recreational
- Downtown
- State-Owned Lands
- Residential
- Planned Development
- Village Residential
- Commercial



## Forest Recreation

The Forest Recreation designation recognizes the extensive state land holdings found primarily in the Township as well as areas with significant natural features in private ownership. This designation includes all of the lands within the Pere Marquette State Forest as well as non-state lands located in the northern-central portion of the Township. The intent of this district is to preserve, to the greatest extent possible, the natural and rural character of the Township, while permitting modest levels of residential development that is harmonious with the area’s natural features. The Forest Recreation land use designation is intended to support low density single family residential development and low-intensity recreational uses, such as hunting and fishing. Forest Recreation designation is also intended for such land uses as forestry, agriculture, and wildlife areas. Wherever possible, new home sites should be situated to protect the rural scenery from roadways and neighboring properties. Conservation cluster developments should be encouraged to protect significant natural features with innovative design techniques.

Table 7.1. Forest Recreation Future Land Use Designation			
Zoning Area	Zoning Districts		Notes
	Compatible	Potentially Compatible	
Township	FR	R-2, AG	Intended for areas where natural areas and recreation are prominent. Development should be harmonious with surrounding natural features.
Village	N/A	N/A	

## Agricultural

The Agricultural future land use designation is intended to promote farming, forestry, and low intensity land uses that are conducive to the preservation of productive agriculture. This land is located primarily in the Township. Non-farm residential development should be located and configured in a manner to reduce conflicts with existing agriculture activities. While residential densities should be quite low for active farms, conservation cluster developments and small lot sizes may be appropriate to allow development in areas poorly suited to agricultural uses and to preserve the agricultural integrity of larger unfragmented parcels. Field crops, orchards, vineyards, hobby farms, tree farms, and livestock operations, as well as low density residential uses, should characterize the Agricultural areas.

Table 7.2. Agricultural Future Land Use Designation			
Zoning Area	Zoning Districts		Notes
	Compatible	Potentially Compatible	
Township	AG	R-2, FR	Intended primarily for farming, agriculture, forestry, and large-lot residences. Smaller lots may appropriate where open space or natural features are preserved.
Village	N/A	N/A	

## Residential

This land use designation is intended to permit low-intensity residential development in the area generally north of M-186 and along M-113 north of Gleaner Hall in the Township and along Village boundaries. Residential development should be characteristic of existing single-family homes on large lots. Density may slightly increase near the Village, with densities up to 1/2 acre per home. In limited areas in the Village, increased densities for two-family or multi-family housing may also be acceptable only where they would remain small in scale and not impact the natural setting and community character of the Village. Achievement of maximum density levels in this classification shall be dependent upon the availability of public utilities. Lesser densities may potentially be achieved without public utilities for single-family homes. These communities are to be designed for passenger car travel and pedestrian mobility, while preserving options for future public transit. Good connections to nearby commercial and institutional land uses should be planned in new developments. Conservation cluster patterns may also be anticipated where important natural features may be preserved.

**Table 7.3. Residential Future Land Use Designation**

Zoning Area	Zoning Districts		Notes
	Compatible	Potentially Compatible	
Township	R-2	R-1, AG, RF	Intended primarily for low-density neighborhoods and large-lot residences. Neighborhoods are characterized by open spaces and low speed streets.
Village	R-1	R-2, C-1	

## Lake Residential

The purpose of the Lake Residential future land use designation is to permit low-intensity residential development while protecting the integrity and uniqueness of Fife Lake, Holbrook Lake, and Pickerel Lake. Development in the Lake Residential designation should consist of traditional single-family homes.

All new development should be designed to preserve wetlands around the lakes, promoting sustainable development. In addition, development within the Lake Residential designation should prohibit “keyhole” development, which is the use of a shared waterfront lot to provide lake access to non-riparian landowners.

Table 7.4. Lake Residential Future Land Use Designation			
Zoning Area	Zoning Districts		Notes
	Compatible	Potentially Compatible	
Township	R-1	R-2	Neighborhood density is influenced by the availability of public utilities and services. Developments should support natural resource preservation and water quality.
Village	R-1, R-2	C-1	



## Village Residential

The purpose of the Village Residential future land use designation is to permit low and moderate-intensity residential development in the historical platted lots in the Village of Fife Lake. These areas are generally arranged on a traditional grid pattern and do not have lake frontage. They are near or adjacent to the Village’s downtown, so land uses in this area should consist of traditional single-family homes, or occasionally two-family homes, on small lots.

All new development should be designed to preserve and enhance the historical development pattern of the village. Many of the existing homes in this area have very shallow front yards and many are served with alleys in the rear yard. These patterns of development should continue to encourage additional development that is compatible with the Village’s aesthetic.

Table 7.5. Village Residential Future Land Use Designation			
Zoning Area	Zoning Districts		Notes
	Compatible	Potentially Compatible	
Village	R-1, R-2	N/A	N/A

## Downtown

The Downtown future land use designation is intended to promote and preserve the historic and quaint character of the Village's downtown area. This area accommodates both local residents and tourist populations through a variety of commercial uses, such as personal services, lodging, restaurants, institutional uses, and related recreational areas. Unique and historic architecture should be preserved when possible and new developments should align with the existing historic character of the area.

This area is intended to be pedestrian-oriented. Pedestrian walkability is encouraged in all developments through a connected system of sidewalks and pathways, allowing movement between shops, residences, mixed-use buildings, and recreation. Building scale and design should be at a pedestrian scale, such as through unique architecture, windows on the first floor, and limited building setbacks. Safe and efficient transportation is also encouraged, including appropriate vehicle speeds, crosswalks, and signage.

Table 7.6. Downtown Future Land Use Designation			
Zoning Area	Zoning Districts		Notes
	Compatible	Potentially Compatible	
Township	N/A	N/A	Development is pedestrian-oriented and highlights the historic character of the Village. Site features include landscaping, quality building materials, sidewalks, pathways, and street lighting.
Village	C-1	R-2, C-2	

## Commercial

This future land use designation recognizes the emerging growth of Grand Traverse County with the improvement of the US-131 corridor north of Cadillac. As the southern portion of the County continues to grow, commercial services for retail, recreation, and repair are anticipated to meet the needs of the expanding population and vacation traveler. Concurrently, agribusiness, highway traveler, and commerce services are expected to require locations on major transportation routes. Therefore, nodes of commercial land uses are planned in the Township and Village to meet the needs of both local residents and regional travelers.

In and around the Village of Fife Lake, development should use public wastewater services and will, therefore, tend to be more intensely developed than other anticipated areas. Whenever commercial uses abut residential land uses, development regulations should mitigate incompatible off-site impacts such as odors, noise, lighting, and traffic through the use of vegetative buffers and larger building setbacks.

Within Fife Lake Township, this future land use designation is primarily located along the US-131 corridor immediately north and west of the Village of Fife Lake. In addition, a small pocket of commercial zoning is anticipated at the southern end of the Township adjoining similar uses in Wexford County. In the future, a limited node of commercial zoning may develop at the intersection of M-186 and M-113 as traffic into the urbanized area of the county warrants it.

This future land use designation is intended to be more automobile-oriented. Preserving the integrity of US-131, M-186 and M-113 as primary regional transportation routes is a priority in this designation. Parts of this area may be further regulated by an overlay district for new development that would require managed access for all parcels. Increased front yard setbacks, shared access points, frontage roads, and building placement may be a part of the overlay district and generally encouraged for developments in this designation.

Table 7.7. Commercial Future Land Use Designation			
Zoning Area	Zoning Districts		Notes
	Compatible	Potentially Compatible	
Township	C-1	R-2, AG	Development is automobile-oriented and designed to limit strip development. Uses are more intense in character, but maintain safe traffic circulation, attractive buildings, and appropriate screening.
Village	C-2	C-1, R-1	

## Light Industrial

The Light Industrial area is intended to provide economic development and jobs for the community. The area should include industrial and office uses suited for a small, relatively rural community. Because of the relative proximity of this area to residentially developed areas, sites that adjoin residential areas should include vegetative buffers and larger building setbacks to control off-site impacts such as odors, noise, lighting, and vibration. In addition, preserving the integrity of US-131 as a primary regional transportation route shall be a priority in this designation. Parts of this area may be regulated through an overlay district for new development that would require managed access for all parcels. Increased front yard setbacks, shared access points, frontage roads and building placement may be a part of the overlay district.

Table 7.8. Light Industrial Future Land Use Designation			
Zoning Area	Zoning Districts		Notes
	Compatible	Potentially Compatible	
Township	I-1	C-1, AG	Site features include landscaping and quality building materials, with screening between incompatible uses.
Village	N/A	N/A	

## Planned Developments

Throughout the Township, there are areas with unique characteristics and development potentials. These are shown on the future land use map as “Planned Developments.” The intention of illustrating these areas in such a manner is to suggest some flexibility in dealing with future land use given that plans can be drawn to address each area comprehensively.

These areas are summarized as follows:

### Walton Crossing Area

Walton Crossing, formerly known as Pugsley Correctional Facility, is located at the northeast corner of Walton Road and Hodge Road. It operated as a correctional facility from 1956 to 2016, when it was closed due to a declining prison population within the state of Michigan. There are no plans to re-open the facility and a planned development has been approved on the property.

The site contains a number of buildings and offices. Presently, the Grand Traverse County Sheriff’s Department has a training facility located on the property. Due to its close proximity to M-113, US-131, an active rail line, and its centralized location between the communities of Fife Lake and Kingsley, possible future uses could include commercial, industrial, residential, or recreational uses. While this Master Plan calls for flexibility to allow for creative reuse of the property, it is important that future uses be designed and operated in a manner that is harmonious with surrounding properties and the natural environment.

Table 7.9. Planned Development Future Land Use Category			
Zoning Area	Zoning Districts		Notes
	Compatible	Potentially Compatible	
Township	All districts		Development based on site-specific features and opportunities. Designs and uses should be compatible with the surrounding area.
Village	All districts		

## Chapter 8 – Action Plan

Developing the community envisioned by this plan involves several steps that must be effectively implemented. This chapter is intended to help define and prioritize actions that will help the community achieve the goals and objectives of this plan. These actions are intentionally general, allowing flexibility as the Fife Lake Community prioritizes specific tasks and strategies within their overall municipal operations. Further circumstances, such as funding and available opportunities, will likely influence the time and duration of projects. The following recommended actions are based on the input received from the community survey, Fife Lake officials and staff, and an inventory of existing conditions.

### Zoning Ordinance Revisions

A zoning ordinance provides the primary mechanism for implementing the Master Plan, as it regulates land uses in the Village of Fife Lake and Fife Lake Township. The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act requires that a zoning ordinance be based on a master plan and it is important that the Village and Township ordinances accurately portray this plan's policy. Therefore, an evaluation of both the Village and Township zoning ordinances is recommended. This may include a revision of each zoning map, as appropriate, to support the future land use plan.

Because the Village and Township are governed by a joint planning commission, it may be beneficial to condense standards into a single zoning ordinance pertaining to both the Village of Fife Lake and Fife Lake Township. This could allow for a more streamlined review process for the planning commission and provide consistency of governance between municipalities. If a joint zoning ordinance does not come to fruition, zoning district uses, definitions, processes, and other standards should be reviewed for consistency between municipalities to provide continuity of land development across municipal borders. Other considerations could include:

- Updated signage definitions and regulations that are consistent with case law and modern planning and zoning practices.
- Historic preservation.
- Language to encourage walkability, landscaping, and open space.
- Site and building design standards in commercial and industrial districts.
- Increased graphics for user-friendliness and interpretation.
- Evaluation of the zoning map when compared to the future land use map.
- Language to encourage environmental protection.
- Evaluation of standards to allow housing variety and affordability.
- Other changes necessary to meet the goals and objectives of this Master Plan.

#### *Recommended Actions:*

- Review and update Township and Village zoning ordinances as necessary.
- Consider creating a joint zoning ordinance.

*Key Responsibilities:* Fife Lake Area Planning Commission, Township Board, and Village Council

## Complete Streets

The Village of Fife Lake and Fife Lake Township offer distinct settings for transportation and recreation. The Village design was largely influenced by historic settlement patterns and the presence of a railroad, which is reflected in its modern streets. Today, tourism heightens the use of street systems with vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles. The Township contains a more typical grid pattern often characteristic of rural areas; yet, the presence of the Pere Marquette State Forest introduces a variety of transportation options such as ATVs, hikers, horseback riders, motocross, snowmobilers, and others. Therefore, this plan supports complete street principles, in which streets are planned, designed, and constructed to allow safe and efficient travel to all legal users.

### Village

Responses to the community survey indicated a safety concern at the intersection of State and Merritt Streets. The irregular intersection at this location limits visibility for vehicles and pedestrians, resulting in a hazardous crossing. This intersection should be targeted for improved safety. The community survey also indicated a strong desire for sidewalk connectivity in the downtown area. Sidewalks or pathways were desired to provide safe connections to parks (Lakeside Park and Sandy Beach on State Street), the library, bus stop, grocery store, and along streets that extend from the downtown (Oak, Boyd, State). Connected paths between homes, shops, and parks were important to the community to allow safe and efficient pedestrian and bicycle travel. This is particularly relevant as the Village is recognized as a North County Trail “Trail Town”. Promoting a bike and pedestrian-friendly downtown will encourage residents and tourists to visit the downtown, enhancing the local economy.

#### *Recommended Actions:*

- Create a strategy for incrementally improving and expanding pathways near the downtown that accommodate all ages and abilities, prioritizing connections to parks, public services, and neighborhoods.
- Improve accessibility at the intersection of State and Merritt Streets, such as through signage and crosswalks.
- Consider installing and maintaining amenities and facilities such as bike racks and water stations to support different modes of transportation and calm vehicle traffic downtown.
- Support and implement the Fife Lake Area 5-Year Parks and Recreation Plan.
- Encourage mixed uses and housing above retail shops that offer convenient access to the downtown area.
- Update and maintain the Fife Lake DDA/TIF Plan.

### Township

Township roads and pathways accommodate a different user group than the Village due to the rural environment and presence of the Pere Marquette State Forest. Contained within the Township are portions of the North Country National Scenic Trail, Shore-to-Shore Equestrian Trail,

Michigan Cross Country Cycle Trail, dirt bike track, and several ORV routes. ORVs can ride on County roads and along many DNR roads. While the Township is not responsible for maintaining these roads, it may promote safe travel by encouraging best practices for shared roads. The Township may also consider future opportunities to connect or support various transportation users, enhancing these routes through Township land when possible. Informational material such as maps and road information may help users understand permitted uses on roads. Signage may also be beneficial to enhance navigation for different users on township roads.

*Recommended Actions:*

- Provide information regarding permitted road users and best practices for shared roads.
- Explore the feasibility and effectiveness of directional and/or informational signage along roadways.
- Consider opportunities to enrich the existing non-motorized transportation network through Township land, where possible.
- Maintain communication and coordinate efforts with the Grand Traverse Road Commission and MDNR for safe roads and pathways.

*Key Responsibilities:* Fife Lake Area Planning Commission, Township Board, Village Council, and staff.

## Water Quality Protection

The Fife Lake Community contains abundant water features, with Fife Lake being a focal point for recreation and tourism. In the community survey for this plan, natural resource preservation/management was identified as a top community characteristic that would contribute to a desirable future. Therefore, this master plan supports continued efforts to protect these water features through sustainable planning and management.

**Wetlands.** Wetlands naturally purify water, reduce flooding, and prevent soil erosion. Preservation of these features around lakes is vital to maintaining water quality.

**Development Locations.** The location of new development can enhance water quality through placement in low-sensitivity areas. Developments can also preserve open space and significant natural features through alternative developmental designs.

**Stormwater Management.** Impermeable surfaces such as buildings and parking lots increase risk of pollution and flooding as water cannot soak into the ground. Stormwater management techniques aim to minimize the impacts of runoff through site design and development standards.

**Education.** Public education is an important aspect of water quality protection. This may include topics such as septic tank maintenance, beach cleanliness and maintenance, agricultural best management practices for groundwater protection, and appropriate fertilizer application in residential areas.



*Recommended Actions:*

- Review and amend the zoning ordinance as necessary to preserve wetlands and natural resources, such as through open space provisions or flexible development designs that preserve natural features.
- Plan areas for higher density developments in locations that are less impactful to groundwater quality.
- Implement the adopted village stormwater management plan.
- Regularly communicate with the public regarding water quality protection efforts such as through the website, emails, or a newsletter, and consider organizing clean-up events for parks and beaches.

*Key Responsibilities:* Fife Lake Area Planning Commission and Township/Village staff

## **Community Outreach and Communication**

Changes in social and economic environments present unique land use challenges, as public opinions regarding growth, economic development, natural feature preservation, and other land use issues often change and differ among individuals. Therefore, planning is a dynamic process that requires continued education of Fife Lake officials and citizens. Fife Lake officials should seek opportunities to increase understanding of current land use trends, opportunities, and issues that may affect the community. Important issues and trends affecting the community should then be communicated to the public, as appropriate. Additionally, citizen understanding of the general planning process and the policies of this master plan are critical to the success of Fife Lake planning efforts.

Communication with the public is essential to engaging citizens in community planning efforts. The Village and Township should look for ways to provide residents with news and information regarding their government and local planning actions, such as through the Township and Village websites, special meetings, emails, newsletters, or other forms of media. Informational material could also be created and kept at Township and Village halls.

Lastly, the creation of committees is encouraged to delegate responsibilities for achieving this plan. These could include elected or appointed officials, community stakeholders, or interested citizens. These committees could help achieve greater implementation of goals and objectives, while allowing greater public involvement in planning processes.

*Recommended Actions:*

- Encourage continued education of Township and Village officials and staff through attendance at conferences or seminars on relevant planning and zoning topics.
- Enhance public communication methods to provide news and information regarding the local government.
- Establish committees to delegate responsibilities for achieving the goals of this master plan, as appropriate.

*Key Responsibilities:* Fife Lake Area Planning Commission and Township/Village staff

## Cooperation with Neighboring and Regional Governments

Many of the policies of this master plan require the cooperation of both the Township and Village of Fife Lake. The presence of a joint planning commission allows these municipalities to function as a relatively integrated unit. Both the Township and Village should continue to seek consistency of land uses and planning processes across these municipal boundaries. Further, communication and cooperation with surrounding townships will also be necessary. Discussions regarding land use conditions, planning issues, zoning trends, and other beneficial strategies are encouraged between all neighboring municipalities. A collaborative approach is important for addressing land uses consistently and gaining insight on area opportunities.

The Fife Lake Community should also continue to seek relationships with Grand Traverse County, the Michigan DNR, and other regional organizations to actively plan for the future of the Fife Lake community and achieve the goals of this master plan. The County can offer valuable resources for policies related to groundwater, tourism, natural resources, and other land use trends. They can also provide insight into strategies for public education.

### *Recommended Actions:*

- Establish bi-annual meetings with governing bodies in neighboring communities to discuss land use issues and trends in the area.
- Maintain communication with Grand Traverse County and the Michigan DNR and seek their input on land use and planning policies, as applicable.

*Key Responsibilities:* Fife Lake Area Planning Commission and Township/Village staff.