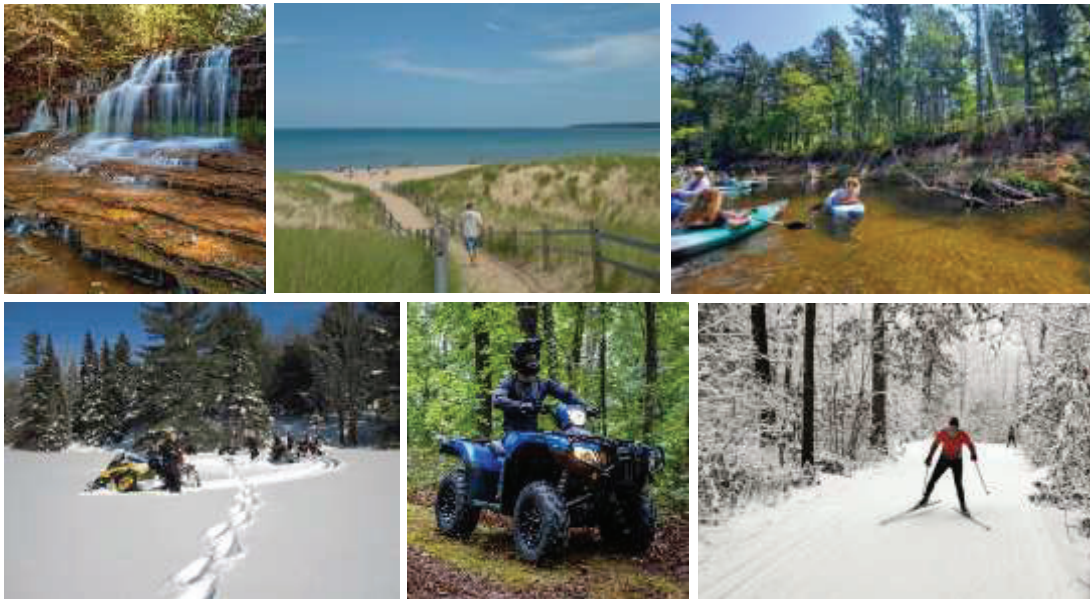


AU TRAIN

T O W N S H I P

Recreation Plan | 2023-2027



ADOPTED ON: MONDAY, JANUARY 30, 2023.

This Recreation Plan was prepared for Au Train Township with input from the Board of Trustees, Planning Commission, residents and stake holders. Professional consulting services were provided by Jason McCarthy of *Northwoods Planning & Zoning Services, LLC*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Professional consulting services for the Au Train Township Recreation Plan 2023-2027 were provided by Jason McCarthy of Northwoods Planning & Zoning Services, LLC., 325 Northwoods Rd, Marquette, Michigan 49855. Additional commentary and insight provided by Becky Cain, NEPA Planner, Hiawatha Nation Forest, 400 E. Munising Ave, Munising, MI 49862.



INTRODUCTION

The *Au Train Township Recreation Plan | 2023-2027*, will serve as a road map for the future of recreation planning and development within the community. The plan's primary focus is to ensure that quality recreational opportunities are provided for all residents, regardless of their age or ability. The variety and quality of recreational opportunities found in a community is a key characteristic of how residents view their quality of life.

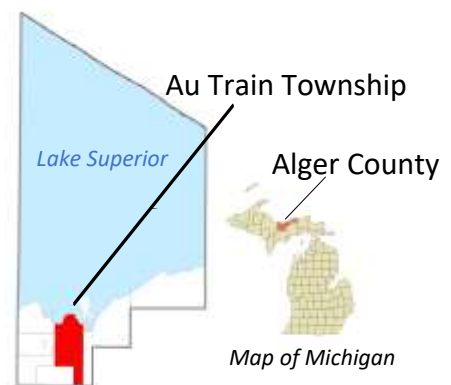
This plan was written in accordance with the [Guidelines for the Development of Community Parks and Recreation Plans](#), as administered by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Grants Management team. It has also been developed with the acknowledgment of the [Michigan Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan \(SCORP\)](#). Some of the goals and objectives found in this plan aim to align Au Train Township's goals with those found in the SCORP. Others are more reflective of the township's particular needs.

This plan also provides ways to achieve Au Train Township's long-range outdoor recreational goals and allow eligibility to apply for financial assistance from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant Programs. The five-year Action Program, which can be found later in the document, is based on input from residents, stakeholders, and elected and appointed officials. Additional input was received at an open house discussion at the Au Train Township Hall on Monday, January 17, 2022, at the Au Train Township Hall. Further input from residents was collected by way of a community recreation survey that was conducted in the Fall of 2022. A final draft of this document was distributed to surrounding municipalities, agencies, partners and the public, for a thirty-day review and comment period on December 20, 2022. At that time, the draft plan was also made available for review on township's website at: www.austraintownship.org Notice was also advertised in the Marquette Mining Journal.

COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

Au Train Township is a civil township located in Alger, County, Michigan and has a land area of 141.2 square miles. As of the 2020 US Census, there were 1,019 residents living in the community. However, the number of people residing in, or visiting the township fluctuates significantly with the seasons.

Au Train Township is home to world-class, four-season recreational opportunities. With nearly 12 miles of Lake Superior shoreline, inland lakes, the Au Train River, historical sites, and several local, county, state and federal recreational properties, and miles of trails, Au Train Township is truly destination for outdoor enthusiasts. Of the township's 94,363 acres, the Hiawatha National Forest comprises 52,687 acres, or 56% of the land in Au train Township's boundary.



This plan represents the desired and anticipated recreation projects for the residents and visitors of Au Train Township over the course of the next five (5) years. However, other municipalities within Alger County also conduct recreation planning at some level. As such, and when possible, Au Train Township aims to coordinate with surrounding governmental, educational and stakeholder’s efforts in order to support and advance recreational goals. The plan also speaks to a broader, regional audience and reflects on trends occurring in the area, which have led to recent discussion on issues and opportunities associated with them. For instance, with the increasing number of visitors to Munising and the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, Au Train Township has also seen an increase in visitors, largely due to the close proximity of the two communities. Additional demographic information from the 2020 U.S. Census, found below, is provided to further demonstrate the current site and situation in Au Train Township.

Age

52.6

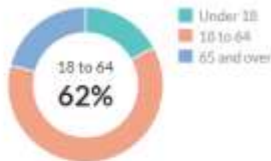
Median age

a little higher than the figure in Alger County: 49.6
 about 1.3 times the figure in Michigan: 39.8

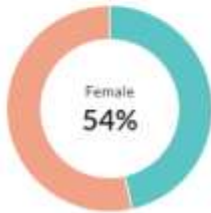
Population by age range



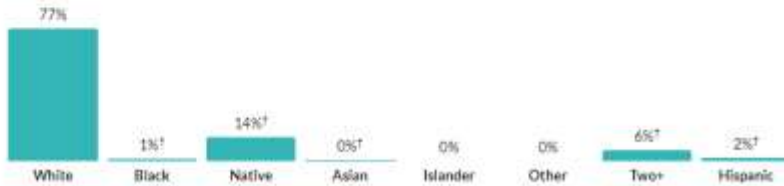
Population by age category



Sex



Race & Ethnicity



Income

\$26,016

Per capita income

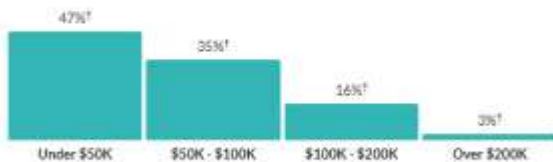
about 20 percent higher than the amount in Alger County: \$21,675
 about 80 percent of the amount in Michigan: \$32,854

\$54,250

Median household income

about 20 percent higher than the amount in Alger County: \$45,184
 about 90 percent of the amount in Michigan: \$59,234

Household income



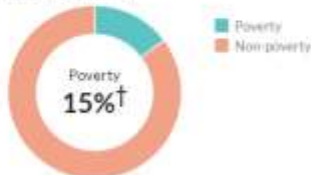
Poverty

13%

Persons below poverty line

about 20 percent higher than the rate in Alger County: 10.7%[†]
 a little less than the rate in Michigan: 13.7%

Children (Under 18)



Seniors (65 and over)



Households

470

Number of households

Alger County: 3,246

Michigan: 3,980,408

2.6

Persons per household

about the same as the figure in Alger County: 2.5

a little higher than the figure in Michigan: 2.5

Population by household type



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Marital status



* Universe: Population 15 years and over

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Marital status, by sex



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Units & Occupancy

1,216

Number of housing units

Alger County: 6,694

Michigan: 4,611,913

Occupied vs. Vacant



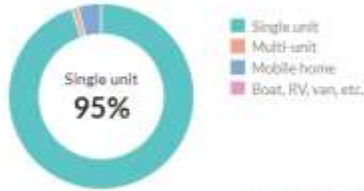
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Ownership of occupied units



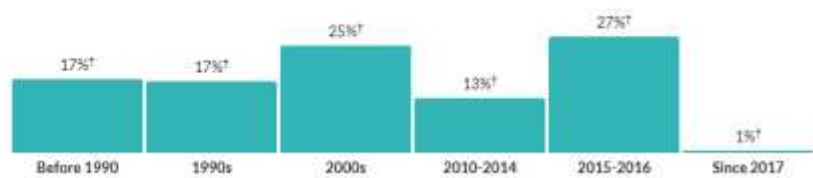
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Types of structure



Show data / Embed

Year moved in, by percentage of population



Show data / Embed

Value

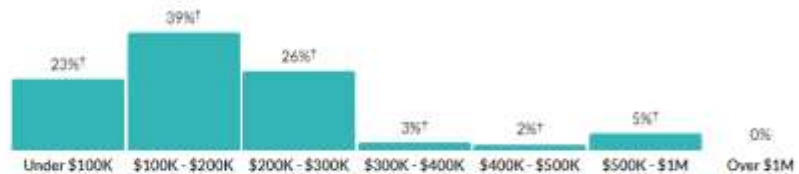
\$169,400

Median value of owner-occupied housing units

about 20 percent higher than the amount in Alger County: \$141,900

a little higher than the amount in Michigan: \$162,600

Value of owner-occupied housing units



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Educational attainment

98.6%

High school grad or higher

about 10 percent higher than the rate in Alger County: 92.2%

about 10 percent higher than the rate in Michigan: 91.3%

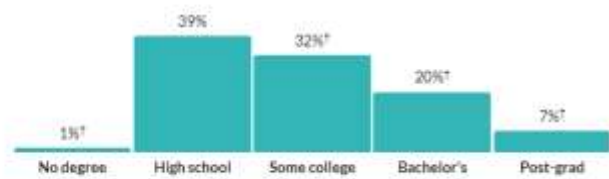
27.4%

Bachelor's degree or higher

about 1.4 times the rate in Alger County: 19.3%

about 90 percent of the rate in Michigan: 30%

Population by highest level of education



* Universe: Population 25 years and over

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Veteran status

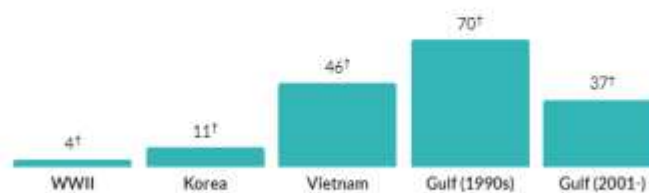
15%

Population with veteran status

about 1.4 times the rate in Alger County: 10.8%

more than double the rate in Michigan: 6.8%

Veterans by wartime service



* Civilian veterans who served during wartime only

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149 Total veterans

133 Male

16 Female

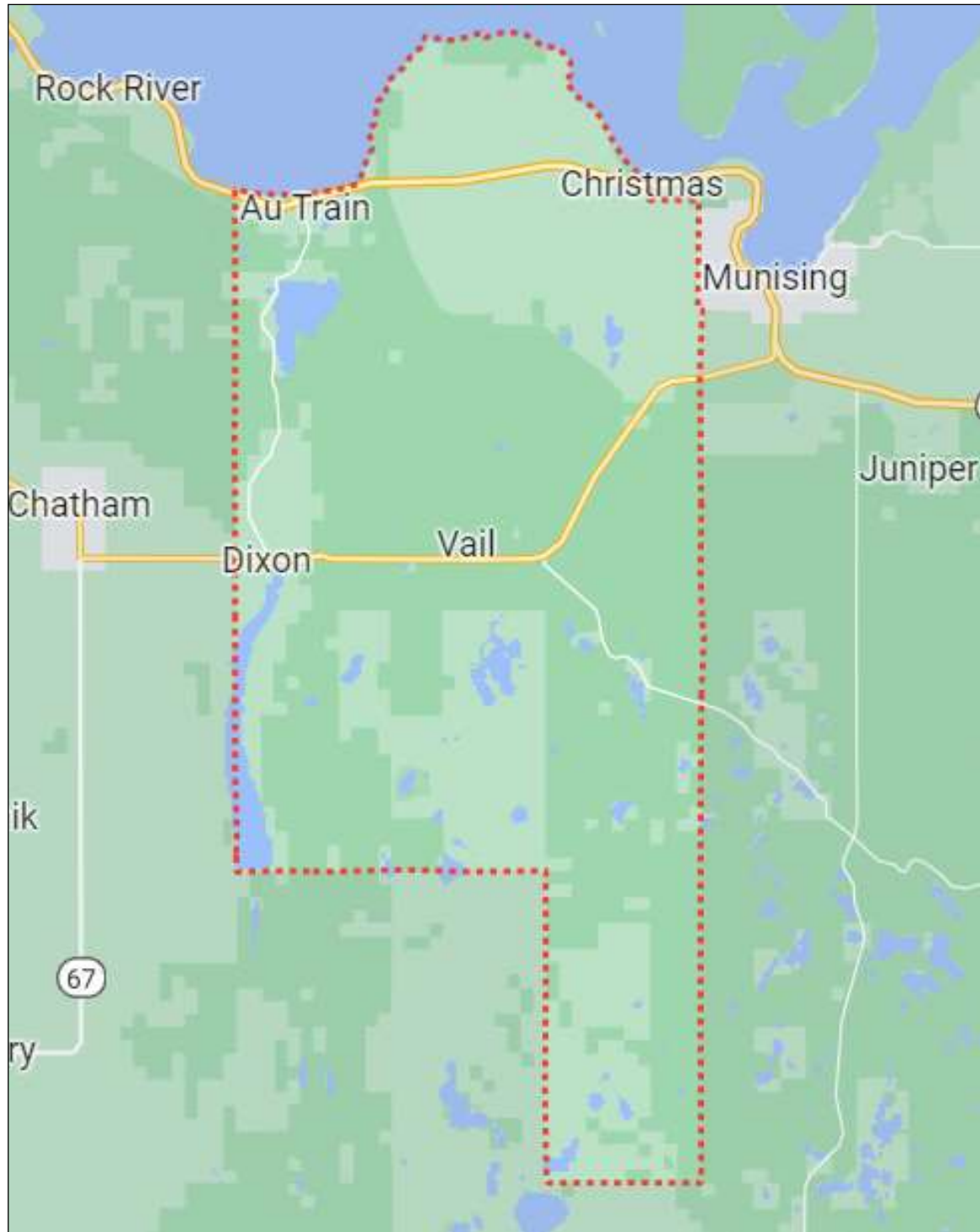
Au Train Township’s geographic location in the Upper Peninsula is relatively remote from larger, urban areas of lower Michigan. It is a 6.5-hour drive to Detroit and a 5.5-hour drive to Lansing. However, the cities of Marquette and Munising are located within close proximity to the township, offering amenities found in larger urban areas such as secondary schools, medical services, and regional shopping. Many other recreational and resort areas of the Upper Peninsula are within fairly close proximity to Au Train Township.

The major transportation route in Au Train Township is M-28 which traverses east and west along the south shore of Lake Superior. Au Train Township is located in between the cities of Marquette (to the west) and Munising (to the east).

Au Train Township is shown in the dotted red outline in the below map:



Au Train Township is shown in the dotted red outline in the below map. Also shown is the Hiawatha National Forest property within the township, in darker green:



ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

Planning for, and providing park and outdoor recreational opportunities for a community requires local official foresight and funds to purchase and develop facilities. This section describes how parks and recreation facilities are administered in Au Train Township.

Being a small, rural township, recreational operations, maintenance, and the proposed Action Program projects are financed by Au Train Township’s general fund and grant program opportunities. The Township Board of Trustees serves as the “Township Park Commission,” per *PA 157 Township Parks and Places of Recreation*, in the sense of budgeting, coordinating programming, and facility maintenance schedules. The Au Train Township Planning Commission also provides input to the Township Board on recreation planning and the township’s Building and Grounds Department maintains facilities that the community operates.



The Recreation Plan will be administered by the Township Board and it should be reviewed annually to assure that its goals, objectives, and Action Program continue to be focused on providing the highest-quality recreational opportunities available to the community. It is anticipated that this Recreation Plan will be updated every five years, thus providing additional opportunities to reflect on accomplished projects and continued long-range planning goals.

Five-Year Recreation Plan

The Planning Commission and Township Board will periodically review the Au Train Township Recreation Plan. The complete Recreation Plan will be updated at least every five years. The Planning Commission will submit recommended changes and updates to the Township Board for consideration and implementation. A copy of the most recent Recreation Plan is then placed on file with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR). Having responsibility for recreation planning and grants, the Township Board aims to assure that the funds will be made available for projects that will maximize community benefit.

Recreation Programs

The Township Board of Trustees has the continuing task of developing programs at township-owned parks.

Recreation Sites

Periodically, the Planning Commission inspects facilities located at township-owned parks and makes recommendations on issues and opportunities. Recommendations cover the use of the facilities, personnel required, the expenditure of funds on improvements to the facilities, and types of facilities that may be needed. The Planning Commission then advises the Township Board on potential acquisition of new recreation sites.

Current Funding Sources

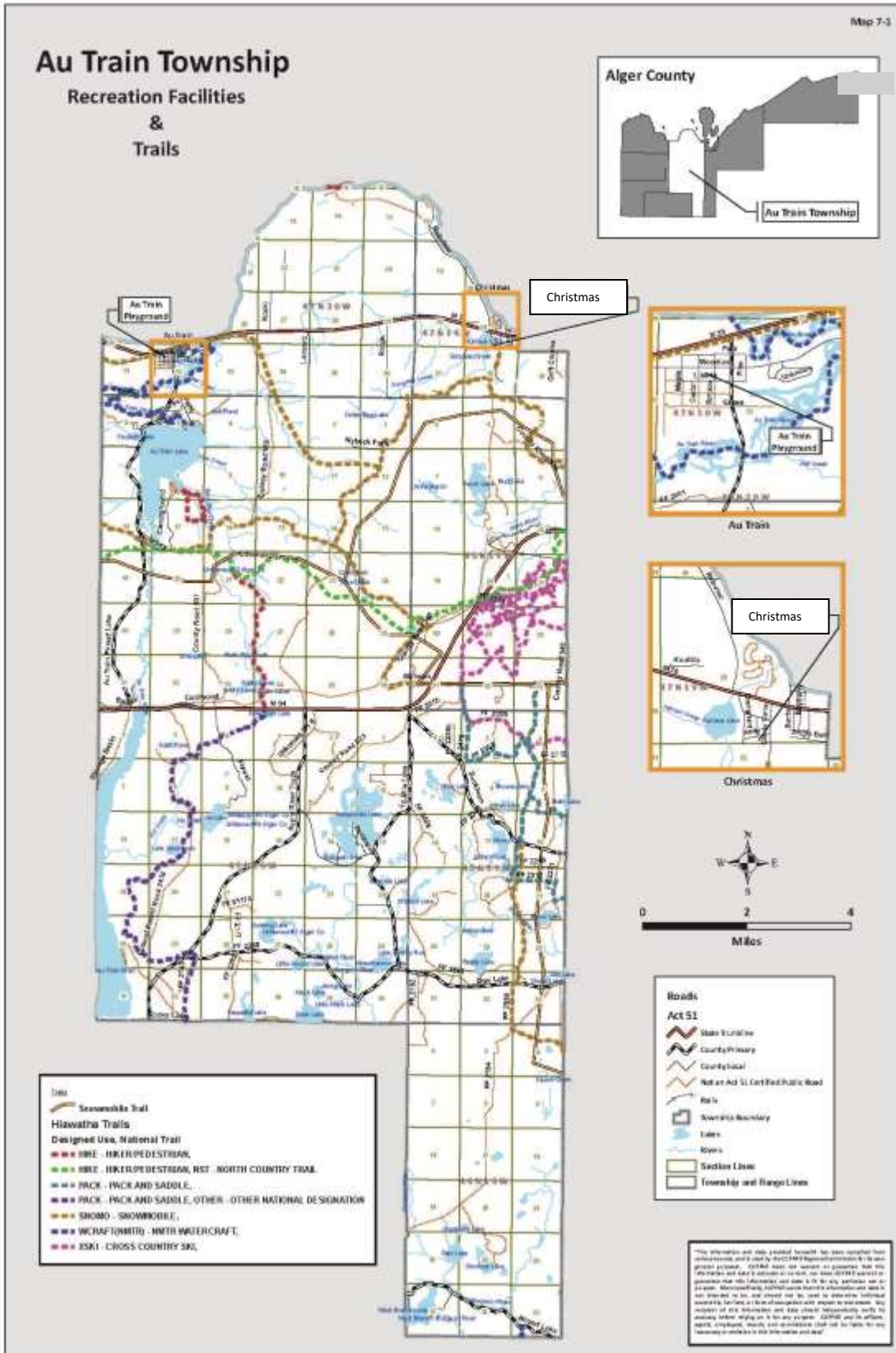
Funding for recreation improvements and services in Au Train Township comes primarily from the general fund budget. In 2022, \$12,000 was budgeted for recreation. However, as this plan will be completed in 2023, the Township will budget for proposed projects accordingly. Where and when feasible, the Planning Commission will assist the Township Board in identifying possible grant sources to help offset costs.

The Planning Commission may provide input in developing and preparing grant applications, although preparation and submittal of grant applications are still the responsibility of the Township Board.

Relationships with School Districts and Public Agencies

In previous years, Au Train Township was involved in a joint recreational partnership agreement that was administered by the Alger Parks and Recreation Department (APRD). The joint agreement between the City of Munising, Grand Island Township, Munising Township, and Au Train Township was funded by each of the community's general funds to provide programming of recreational classes, leagues and activities. These programs included activities such as athletics, enrichment and parks for seniors, adults, youth and families. Although no longer a part of that joint agreement, Au Train Township could consider joining again in the future, if it is seen as beneficial to the community.

Au Train Township Recreation Inventory Map



RECREATION INVENTORY

The following recreation inventory describes all parks, natural areas, as well as other public spaces and recreation facilities found in Au Train Township. Although there are many other recreational opportunities located within close proximity of Au Train Township, this inventory has emphasis on land and facilities the township owns or operates.

For those lands and facilities that are owned privately, owned by a nonprofit organization or owned by another governmental unit, the name, location and general information on the types of recreation and/or natural resource conservation are provided.

Description of Methods Used to Conduct the Inventory

The methods used to conduct the recreation inventory included a review of the previous version of the recreation plan along with a windshield survey of all parks, natural areas and public spaces in Au Train Township in order to update the current inventory.

Inventory of all Community-Owned Parks and Recreation Facilities

Township-owned parks and recreational facilities are discussed in this section along with non-township-owned facilities, other area recreational opportunities, as well as state and national historic sites.

Au Train Township owns one recreation facility. The Au Train playground is located in the Village of Au Train and is approximately one acre in size. The park has playground equipment and a basketball court.



The playground is antiquated and should be updated when feasible. The park also features an ADA accessibility score of 1.

Non-Township Owned Facilities:

The Township also hosts other recreational facilities that are administered by other entities. These recreational attractions are discussed below.

[Heritage Trail and Kayak Launch](#)

A DNR trail for ATV and snowmobile riders traverses Au Train. A DNR Trust Fund grant was awarded to the township that assisted with the planning and development of a historical information center which is full of historical photos. In addition, a handicap accessible kayak launch was installed and is open to the public, which is adjacent to the ATV and snowmobile trail. Au Train Township own and manages the buildings which are leased from land owned by the DNR.

[Au Train River/Au Train Lake](#)

The Au Train River got its name from the French word for dragging because early French voyageurs had to drag their canoes over a sandy shoal at the river's mouth on Lake Superior. The river empties into Au Train Bay in Lake Superior. In the 1880s it served as a major logging run, transporting 10 million board-feet of pine in one year. Today it carries families in canoes from the resorts that line the shores of scenic Au Train Lake to the popular swimming beach at the river's mouth. There is a one mile stretch of the Au Train River near the dam and is considered a class III/IV+ section of whitewater, according to American Whitewater. The remainder of the river is a popular destination for flat water paddling and canoeing.

Au Train Lake is the largest inland lake in the area. It is an 830-acre lake with a maximum depth of 30 feet and an average depth of 12 feet. The Au Train Campground, detailed below, has 36 large, wooded, campsites with tables and fireplaces. Au Train Lake offers sandy beaches.

The Au Train River and Au Train Lake offer great fishing as well as swimming, boating, camping, canoeing, kayaking and waterskiing. There are also plenty of modern cottage rentals as well as bed and breakfasts. Canoe and kayak rentals are also available. Bicycle rentals are also offered. There are also interconnecting trails for hiking.

In the winter, Au Train Lake is a popular place for ice fishing. Lake Superior also provides ice fishing opportunities. There are snowmobile trails within close proximity to the Lake and River.

[Au Train Falls](#)

[Au Train Falls](#) are located five miles directly south of Au Train and very near the intersection of M-94 and County Road H-03. The falls are located between the Au Train Dam and the generating plant near the Au Train Hydro Electric project. The upper falls are accessible from a large ramp about 40 feet high. The lower falls is a short walk down the road and consists of a drop of less than 10 feet. Au Train Falls are easily accessible and can be viewed from a bridge over the river.

[Scott Falls/H.J. Rathfoot Park](#)

Scott Falls is located approximately one mile east of Au Train, along M-28. The [Harold J. Rathfoot Roadside Park](#) provides a picnic area with a beach and is located on the south side of the highway. The Roadside Park is owned by the State of Michigan. The park is accessible, but the parking area is closed during the late fall, winter and early spring. There are picnic tables, a water pump and pit toilets. There is also a viewing platform, stairs to the beach, the "Face in the Rock" and a historical marker for Lake Superior. The terrain, except for the beach area, is mostly flat.

The "Face in the Rock" is a carving in the sandstone rock along the shores of Lake Superior. The



carving was left by a French voyager in 1820 as a tribute to “Powers of the Air,” the only survivor of the peaceful Chippewa band of Native Americans who lived on Grand Island in the 19th Century, but were persuaded to battle the Sioux Tribe in a battle in Minnesota. The “Face in the Rock” has been weathered by time, winds and water, but can still be viewed by taking the path from the east side of the park.

[Hiawatha National Forest](#)

The Hiawatha National Forest is comprised of 880,000 acres and is administered by the National Forest Service. The forest is physically divided into two subunits, referred to as the east unit and west unit. The Hiawatha National Forest can be found in parts of Chippewa, Delta, Mackinac, Alger, Schoolcraft and Marquette counties. Chippewa and Mackinac counties are on the east unit and the rest of the counties are located in the west unit. The west unit contains about 56% of the forest’s area. The forest headquarters are located in Gladstone. Commercial logging is conducted in some areas. The Hiawatha National Forest has over 400 lakes and many rivers and streams. Hundreds of miles of trails are open to the public for hiking, mountain biking, cross country skiing and horseback riding.

[Au Train Lake Campground](#)

This National Forest [Campground](#) is a bisected loop on the south shore of Au Train Lake adjacent to Buck Bay and Buck Bay Creek in heavily wooded native deciduous trees. There are 36 wooded combined tent and RV sites with picnic tables and fire rings. Drinking water and vault toilets are spaced throughout the campsite. Au Train Lake is an 830-acre lake with a maximum depth of 30 feet and an average depth of 12 feet. The campground's boat ramp provides access to water skiing, fishing and boating. There is a sandy swimming beach located at the day use area. There are no electricity, water or sewer hook ups at this campground. ATV's or ORV's are not permitted within the facility. The campground is open May 15th to September 30th.

[Bay Furnace Campground and Picnic Area](#)

This facility is a [Hiawatha National Forest campground](#) and provides 50 campsites, vaulted toilet facilities, and a sanitation station. Located in Christmas approximately 5 miles northwest of the City of Munising on M-28 on Lake Superior, the campground is located on Bay Furnace at the southwest shore of Lake Superior. Composed of two loops, some sites overlook Lake Superior while others are near Furnace Creek. The campground is known for spectacular sunrises and sunsets, and an occasional display of northern lights.

There is a short 1/8-mile accessible trail that encircles the stabilized ruins of a blast furnace where pig iron was made between 1870 and 1877. One of the last remaining structures of its kind in the Upper Peninsula, it is also a good place to view Lake Superior and Grand Island.

[Alger County Underwater Preserve](#)

In 1981, the MDNR declared the 113 square mile area an [underwater preserve](#), protecting its underwater natural resources. This preserve extends from Au Train Point to Au Sable Point and was the first underwater preserve selected in the state. Thirteen dive sites have been designated where varying features can be viewed at depths ranging from six to 100 feet. Diving enthusiasts can explore sunken ships, artifacts, large colorful rocks and sea caves. An extensive historical record of the shipwrecks has been compiled. Among the shipwrecks is the BERMUDA, a 150-foot



wooden hull schooner; the MANHATTAN, a 252-foot wooden hull freighter; the HERMAN H. HETTLER, a 210-foot wooden steamer; a 230-foot wooden hull steam barge, the SMITH MOORE; the steamer, SUPERIOR; the freighter, KIOWA; and a steel tug, the STEVEN M. SELVICK, the first vessel intentionally sunk within the Michigan underwater preserve system as a dive site.

[Valley Spur Cross-country Ski Trail](#)

Located within the Hiawatha National Forest, [Valley Spur](#) features 12 groomed and marked trails that cover 27 miles. Rental equipment is available in the warming shelter located in Au Train Township along M-94 about 5 miles southwest of Munising.

The Valley Spur trail system is managed by the Noquemanon Trail Network (NTN) by way of a special use permit with the US Forest Service. However, grooming and maintenance as well as the lodge operations are the responsibility of the non-profit group, Friends of Valley Spur. The cross-country ski trail system is groomed daily or as the need arises from December through March so that the trails are always ready. All trails are groomed for both skate and classic skiing. There is also a snowshoe trail available. Valley Spur also hosts several racing events during the year. In addition to wintertime activities, Valley Spur offers 26 miles of single-track bike trails for mountain biking enthusiasts. All of the trails are shared with hikers. The Valley Spur Lodge is also available for day-time rentals.

New to Valley Spur is single track mountain bike trails that are being built by Munising Bay Trail Network (MBTN). So far, the group has constructed 13 + miles of trails. MBTN also has a Snow Bike Trail located at the 2nd parking lot.

[Boy Scout Camp Hiawatha](#)

Boy Scout summer camp activities were consolidated into Camp Hiawatha in 1967. [The camp](#) is located on Doe Lake Road, off the Rapid River Truck Trail 12 miles south-west of Munising. Boy Scout Summer Camp, Junior Leader Training Conference, Cub Scout Resident Camp, Webelos Woods, Order of the Arrow events and training events are held there.

[Bay de Noc/Grand Island Riding and Hiking Trail](#)

[The Bay de Noc/Grand Island Hiking Trail](#) is a 40-mile trail through the Hiawatha National Forest, used mainly by horses and riders. The trail begins at M-94 south of Au Train and follows the Whitefish River valley along the river bluff. There is a parking area north of M-94 near Ackerman Lake. The trail passes Haymeadow Falls and campground north of Rapid River.

[ATV & Snowmobile Trails](#)

ATV trails are located in the [Hiawatha National Forest](#). The Coalwood Trail and the Haywire Trail are designated ORV Trails on abandoned railroad beds and offer good rides through the forest. There are also other trails on a portion of the signed road system. No off-trail or cross-country riding is permitted in the Hiawatha National Forest. ORV's may be ridden on the shoulder of some Alger County Roads.

Snowmobile Trail 418 connects Marquette to the Munising Junction trail and traverses through the Heritage Trail/Park in Au Train. Maps may be found online or at the Hiawatha National Forest Office.



[North Country National Scenic Trail](#)

The [North Country National Scenic Trail](#) bisects the northern half of Au Train Township and is located within the Hiawatha National Forest. The trail stretches more than 4,600 miles from Crown Point in eastern New York to Lake Sakakawea in western North Dakota. The trail is administered by the National Park Service, managed by federal, state, and local agencies, and built and maintained primarily by the volunteers of the North Country Trail Association (NCTA) and the US Forest Service.

Other Area Recreational Facilities:

[Au Train Beach \(MDOT Loop\)](#)

Easily accessible from M-28, Au Train Beach is also connected with the outlet of the Au Train River. Ample free parking is provided by MDOT. There is plenty of space to spread out with an area by the river that is slow flowing and shallow for small kids. The rest of the beach provides a lot of space for all visitors.

[Au Train Bay Boat Launch](#)

The Au Train Bay Boat Launch is located along M-28 on the Lake Superior shoreline in Onota Township.

[Bike Trails](#)

There are mountain biking opportunities on the trails and back roads of the Hiawatha National Forest. Bruno's Run is available for hiking and biking and is located about 11 miles south of Munising. There are several trails on Grand Island, with bike rentals available.

[Grand Island](#)

All except 44 of the island's 13,500 acres are part of the Hiawatha National Forest since being acquired in 1990 from the Cleveland Cliffs Iron Company. The island is accessible by private boat or Forest Service ferry service. Visitors can hike, camp, fish, sightsee, bike or kayak. A concessionaire provides a bus tour of the island from June through October. The ferry departs from the Grand Island landing. The landing is located one mile west of the Munising city limits. A 23-mile trail for biking and hiking follows the shoreline of the island. There are 17 campsites that include fire rings picnic tables, and bear poles. Multiple day-use areas have been developed that include toilets, benches and pedestal grills and two rental cabins.

[Grand Island Harbor Scenic Turnout](#)

This Michigan Department of Transportation rest area provides vaulted toilets, drinking water, a picnic table, information and a short pathway leading to an overlook of Grand Island and Munising Bay.

[Sand Point Beach](#)

Sand Point beach is located on Lake Superior just east of Munising and is part of Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore. Sand Point was named one of the "Top 5 Summer Beaches in America" by the Weather Channel. The undeveloped sand beach is ideal for children and a perfect place for kayaking launching. The beach is also a popular spot for watching the sunset over Munising Bay. A boardwalk is also located at Sand Point.



Munising Falls

Located across from Munising Memorial Hospital on Washington Street in Munising, Munising Falls is a part of the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore. This is a fully accessible site with parking and picnic areas, restrooms, the Munising Falls Interpretive Center, and a scenic 0.5 miles walk to the base of the 50-foot waterfall.

Wagner Falls

This scenic site is owned and maintained by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. It is located approximately 1.5 miles south of Munising on M-94. A short walking trail begins at the parking area and leads to a series of small waterfalls that stretch for about 100 feet.

Horseshoe Falls

This privately-owned site is located within the Munising city limits and small admission fee is required. It is open daily from May 1 through October 15 and is accessible from Bell Avenue near the southern city limit.

MNA Memorial Falls

The Michigan Nature Association acquired this site in 1987. It is located about 500 feet from the Rudy Olson Memorial Falls, but on a different stream. Access to the top of the falls requires a walk of only a few hundred feet off of Nestor Street on the City of Munising's east side.

U.S. Forest Service Trails

Many trails have been developed by the U.S. Forest Service to accommodate recreational activities such as cross-country skiing, biking, hiking, and horseback riding.

Island Lake Campground

This National Forest Service Campground is located approximately 10 miles south of Munising on FH-13, then 2 miles west on FR-2268, at the southwest end of lake. Island Lake is a 32.5-acre lake suitable for canoeing, fishing, hiking and camping.

Widewaters Campground

This National Forest Service Campground is situated on the Indian Wild and Scenic River, 13 miles south of Munising, on Highway H-13, then 1/2-mile NW on FR-2262. Widewaters Campground offers canoeing, fishing, hiking and camping in a quiet environment.

State & National Historic Sites:

Heritage tourism, or tourism oriented toward the cultural legacy of an area, is becoming increasingly popular. Heritage tourism involves visiting historical sites to gain an appreciation of the past. Special historical significance is recognized through listings of the State or National Register of Historic Places. Properties may receive designation from both. Identification and preservation of historical sites can enhance a community's awareness of its past. Area historical sites are listed below.

Lake Superior Informational Designation

A marker was established at the roadside park along M-28 in Au Train Township as an informational sign for Lake Superior. Lake Superior was listed on the state register of historic



places in January of 1957 and a marker was constructed in April of 1957. This designation is located at Rathfoot Park, near Scott Falls.

Bay Furnace Historical Structure

Bay Furnace is located in Christmas in Au Train Township. [Bay Furnace](#) is a significant reminder of the importance of the iron industry to the economy of early northern Michigan. The core of the local economy, Bay Furnace Stack Number One was put into operation on December 13, 1870. By January 1, 1874 Number One was producing fifteen tons of pig iron daily, profits of which spurred settlement and building activity. A second stack was built by demand in 1872. First used on December 15, 1872, Number Two had to be discontinued after one year for replacement of the boshes that were part of the stack. By 1874 fifty-two kilns had been erected throughout the timbered area owned by the Bay Furnace Company. Much of the iron produced at Bay Furnace was used for Bessemer rails, car wheels, stoves, and small iron domestic items. Bay Furnace closed forever when a fire in 1877 burned through the furnace and town, destroying all but three buildings. Due to a decline in the profitability in pig iron, the town was never rebuilt. Bay Furnace was listed on the State and National Registers in 1971.

Paulson House

[The Paulson House](#) is located south of Au Train on Au Train Lake Road. The Paulson House is a significant example of early ethnic log houses in Alger County. It was completed in 1883 by Charles Paulson, a Swede who established a homestead in Au Train after working as a miner in the Ishpeming-Negaunee area. Vacant for years, the building needed and received many internal and external repairs during the early 1970s. Prior to World War I the loft area upstairs was used as a schoolhouse for area children. The Paulson House was listed on the State and National Registers in 1972.

Grand Island Harbor (Christmas) Range Lights (Bay Furnace Range Lights)

The Grand Island Harbor Rear Range Light is a lighthouse located off M-28 near Christmas in the Hiawatha National Forest. This is the Grand Island Harbor Rear Range Light, sometimes known as the "Bay Furnace Light" or the "Christmas Light". The light tower is about 62 feet tall and is constructed from quarter-inch steel plates riveted by six 4x4 inch metal struts. It is bolted to a concrete foundation and contains a metal spiral staircase. It was built in 1914, replacing a wood frame structure that was constructed in 1868. The official Coast Guard Light list for 1915 indicates it contained a 1,500-candle power light, which was visible for 16 miles. Range lights were designed to work in pairs. By keeping the rear range light aligned with a front range light, mariners were able to stay on the proper heading through the narrow channel west of Grand Island which leads to Munising Harbor. The rear range light was abandoned about 1969, and in 1977 the parcel of land was declared surplus by the Coast Guard and transferred to the Forest Service. The rear range light was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1990. It is no longer an active aid to navigation. Tours of the Rear Range Light are available seasonally.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

Planning Method

Au Train Township will utilize the system planning method. This planning method uses the township’s metrics, priorities, needs, level of service and community-wide issues and opportunities to guide annual planning efforts. As planning efforts and projects are implemented, the system can be re-evaluated to measure success and guide future planning goals.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

Early Public Input

Au Train Township contracted with *Northwoods Planning & Zoning Services, LLC* to assist the Planning Commission and the community with updating the 5-year Recreation Plan. This process began in early 2022 by meeting with the Township Board to note demographic changes, desired recreation improvements and budgetary opportunities that the community may have to commence on identified recreation projects. It was agreed that a public input session would be held in January of 2022 to gather additional input from residents and stakeholders. A recreation survey was also conducted in the Fall of 2022 to garner additional input from residents. The results of the community survey are found in *Appendix A* of this document. Stated community needs and proposed projects have been identified by area residents and appointed and elected officials. Additional discussion on this topic is presented below.

Public Input Session

Because resident and stakeholder opinions on recreation and open-space priorities are paramount to this plan’s development, a Community Input Session was held at the Au Train Township Hall on January 17, 2022. This session offered an opportunity for residents to share their outdoor recreation ideas. Although attendance was limited, several residents offered their thoughts and ideas about future desires for outdoor recreation in the area. These comments along with the results of the community survey have been incorporated into the development of the Goals & Objectives and the Action Plan sections of this plan.



WANTED: Your recreation ideas!

This is a chance to bring your recreation ideas into ACTION, as Au Train Township prepares a Recreation Plan for the community and discusses potential grant funding opportunities.

You are invited to a Community Input Session: Monday, January 17, 2022 at 6 PM, at the Au Train Township Hall, N7569 Spruce Street, Au Train MI 49806



GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The State of Michigan's [*State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan \(SCORP\)*](#) provided assistance to the Planning Commission in developing Au Train Township's recreational goals and objectives. The goals and objectives from the SCORP have been adapted to fit the community's recreational needs. Public input from our residents and stakeholders also provided helpful engagement by way of a Public Input Session held on January 17, 2022. A community survey was also conducted in the Fall of 2022 to gather additional input from residents. There are also provisions to collaborate with those entities if and when those opportunities should arise.

Goal #1 – Foster stewardship and conservation with businesses, organizations, individuals and agencies in protecting Au Train Township's natural and cultural resources.

Objectives:

- Encourage efforts directed at improving both the visual and physical characteristics of all shoreline areas and the many scenic views in Au Train Township.
- Support and promote initiatives to improve and/or maintain the water quality of all inland lakes, rivers and streams.
- Promote the preservation and expansion of recreational shoreline and other water-oriented opportunities for recreation.
- Encourage developers to retain open space and preserve trail rights-of-way to further enhance Au Train Township's motorized and non-motorized transportation network.
- Collaborate with the Hiawatha National Forest and Michigan Department of Natural Resources Forest Management Division regarding planning and development concerns for any state or federally-owned properties in Au Train Township.

Goal #2 – Improve collaboration with recreation stakeholders to meet the outdoor needs of Township residents and visitors

Objectives:

- Collaborate with other municipalities, area trail networks, non-profit organizations and other recreation program providers for the purpose of expanding recreational opportunities in the area.
- Develop a trail network by collaborating with other municipalities, trail organizations, and recreational service providers.
- Participate in regional recreational planning to ensure multi-jurisdictional trail connectivity.

Goal #3 – Raise the awareness of residents and visitors on the variety of outdoor recreational opportunities available in Au Train Township.

Objectives:

- Coordinate with regional recreational planning efforts; build environments and programming activities that identify opportunities, fill deficiencies, and avoid



duplication of services and efforts so as to make optimal use of financial and other resources.

- Encourage cooperation and coordination between surrounding municipalities, school districts, recreational service providers, and developers with regard to recreational opportunities.

Goal #4 – Improve recreation accessibility for residents and visitors of all ages and abilities.

Objectives:

- Promote bicycling, walking, kayaking, canoeing, and boating activities that provide opportunities for people of all ages and abilities.
- Improve upon Americans with Disability Act (ADA) access, Universal Design features, and multisensory experiences to enhance access and attract all types of recreational users.

Goal #5 – Provide quality outdoor recreational experiences in balance with Township resource management and conservation.

Objectives:

- Acquire additional property to set aside, in perpetuity, for recreational use, where and when feasible.
- Identify, acquire and develop both motorized and non-motorized rights-of-way that connect residential, commercial, and recreational nodes where and when feasible.

Goal #6 – Enhance the health of Au Train Township Residents and visitors by providing physical outdoor recreational opportunities.

Objectives:

- Identify and develop safe motorized and non-motorized crossings at strategic intersections along the M-28, Au Train Forest Lake Road and Woodland Avenue corridors.
- Continue the development of the Au Train Township’s motorized and non-motorized transportation network and integrate with other trail networks, where available.

Goal #7 – Enhance economic prosperity by supporting a high-quality of life to attract and retain residents in Au Train Township

Objectives:

- Acquire local, state, federal, and private funding opportunities to develop regional and local motorized and non-motorized transportation routes.
- Take advantage of opportunities to expand and develop trailheads, public access sites, and other facilities which further encourage recreational uses of the natural assets in Au Train Township.



ACTION PROGRAM

The Action Program is the section of the plan that identifies how goals and objectives will be accomplished over the next five years. The following specific projects were identified during the planning process and a description of how they will meet goals and objectives are provided. Estimated costs are also included in each year's project list but will need to be further refined at the time of proposed construction. It should also be noted that any of the Action Program projects can be accomplished within any of the five years that the plan registered with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR). For instance, a project that is proposed for 2027 could be accomplished in 2025 if a grant opportunity was identified, or if other favorable circumstances were realized.

During the drafting of the latest version of the Au Train Township Recreation Plan, an Action Program has been developed to reflect comments received from residents at the public input session and by way of a community survey that was conducted in the Fall of 2022. This Action Program builds upon previously identified projects. Given the location of some of the proposed project, it is imperative that Au Train Township works with the Hiawatha National Forest when planning and implementing projects located within their jurisdiction.

- Provide vault restrooms and enhance parking lot for Au Train River Project within the Hiawatha National Forest.
- Modernization and improvement of existing playgrounds for the village of Au Train near the community building.
- Multi-purpose trail around Au Train Lake within Hiawatha National Forest.
- Cross country skiing trails around Au Train River Project area (high banks area) within the Hiawatha National Forest.
- Bike/walking path along Forest Lake Road – H-03.
- Bike path trails throughout the Township on secondary roads, Christmas to Munising.
- Improvements at Au Train River beach area.
 - A. Walkways
 - B. Benches
 - C. Picnic Tables
 - D. Handicapped Accessible grills.
 - E. Lifesaving station
 - F. Handicapped accessibility to river and lake.
- Fishing access for all – adults, children, people with disabilities. Due to demolition of Woodland Avenue bridge (Orange bridge) scheduled. Fishing access from this bridge area is a possibility with handicapped disability access.
- Fitness center in Au Train Community Center.
- Playground updates including a skating rink in the Au Train Village playground area behind the community center.
- Add a pavilion to the playground area behind the community center.

2023

- Coordinate with the Hiawatha National Forest for implementation of the proposed Au Train River Project to provide additional parking/access and associated amenities such as toilets, tables, signage, and grills.
- Coordinate with the Hiawatha National Forest for the design of the proposed cross-country ski trails throughout high banks area on the Au Train River, within the Hiawatha National Forest.
- Complete the lifesaving stations at the Lake Superior beaches by coordinating with MDOT.
- Fitness Center in Au Train Community Center.

Estimated Cost: \$100,000-\$300,000

2024

- Update Playground equipment to include basketball hoops and ice rink installation.
- Improvements at the Au Train River Beach area to include: Walkways, benches, grill stations, picnic tables, handicapped accessibility to lake and river.
- Coordinate with the Hiawatha National Forest for the environmental assessment of the proposed cross-country ski trails throughout high banks area on the Au Train River, within the Hiawatha National Forest.

Estimated Cost: \$75,000-\$100,000

2025

- Complete a handicapped accessible kayak launch and fishing pier at the end of Woodland Avenue.
- Coordinate with the Hiawatha National Forest for construction of the proposed cross-country ski trails throughout high banks area on the Au Train River, within the Hiawatha National Forest.

Estimated Cost: \$50,000-\$100,000

2026

- Add a pavilion on the playground grounds behind the Community Building.
- Coordinate with the Hiawatha National Forest for maintenance and grooming of the proposed cross-country ski trails throughout high banks area on the Au Train River, within the Hiawatha National Forest.

Estimated Cost: \$50,000-\$100,000

- Bike paths and walking trails throughout Au Train Township on secondary roads and around Au Train Lake.

Estimated Cost: TBD and dependent upon potential partnership with Alger County Road Commission.

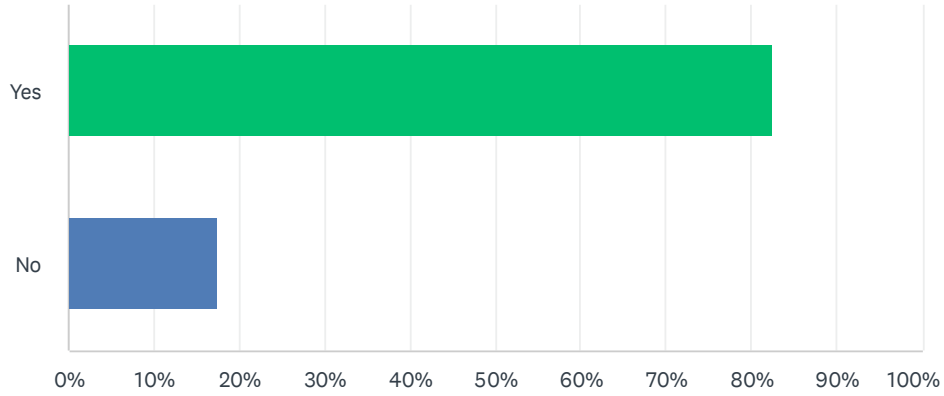
POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

Creative funding options for the abovementioned projects may come from a number of sources including but not limited to: local matching funds, the Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund (MNRTF) Development and Acquisition Grant program, the Recreation Passport Grant program, and private donations.

The Township Board may also want to consider a recreation millage in the future to provide matching funds for proposed future projects, as well as maintenance and upkeep of proposed facilities. It is also recommended that a study and/or master plan be conducted regarding Au Train Township-owned properties to determine the feasibility of developing (or not developing) the abovementioned recreational opportunities in the community.

Q1 Do you or your family use recreational facilities offered in Au Train Township?

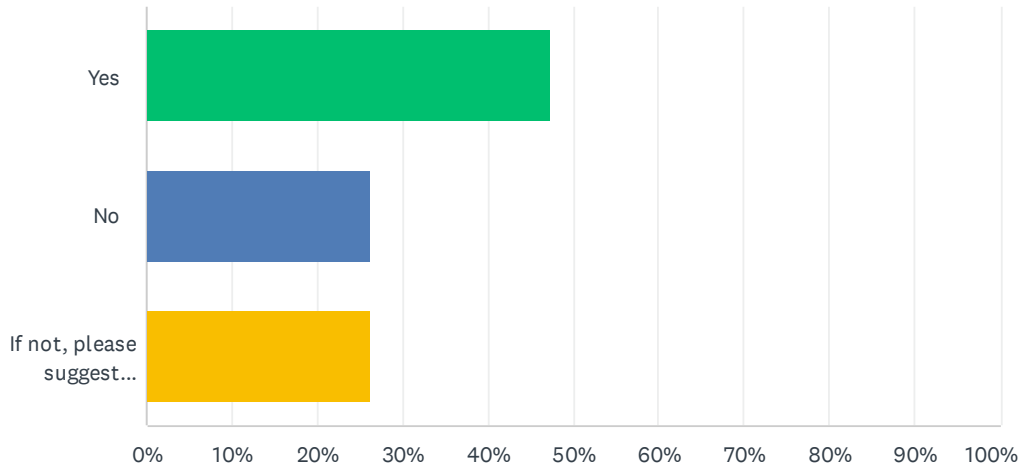
Answered: 57 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	82.46%	47
No	17.54%	10
TOTAL		57

Q2 Does Au Train Township have enough recreational facilities to accommodate our residents and visitors.

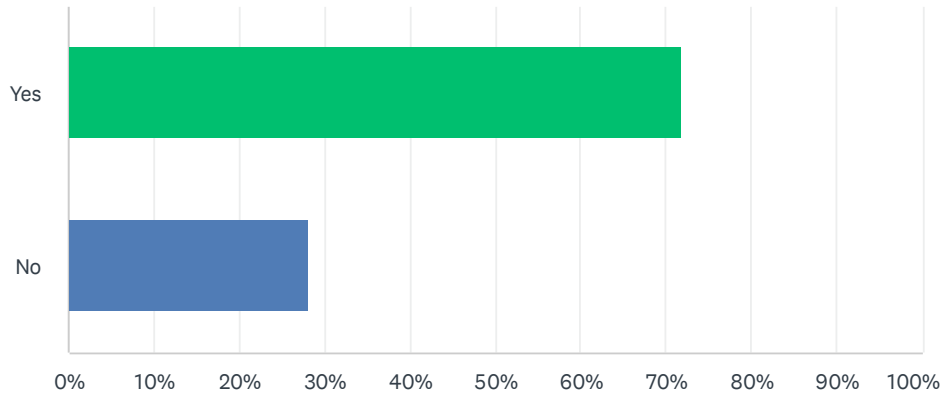
Answered: 57 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	47.37%	27
No	26.32%	15
If not, please suggest additional recreational opportunities you'd like to experience.	26.32%	15
TOTAL		57

Q3 Are Au Train Township's recreational facilities adequately maintained?

Answered: 57 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	71.93%	41
No	28.07%	16
TOTAL		57

Q4 What activities do you and your family members participate in for recreation? (please include all seasons)

Answered: 56 Skipped: 1

Q5 Are there additional recreational opportunities you would like to see developed in Au Train Township?

Answered: 48 Skipped: 9

Q6 How many hours spend per week do you spend recreating?

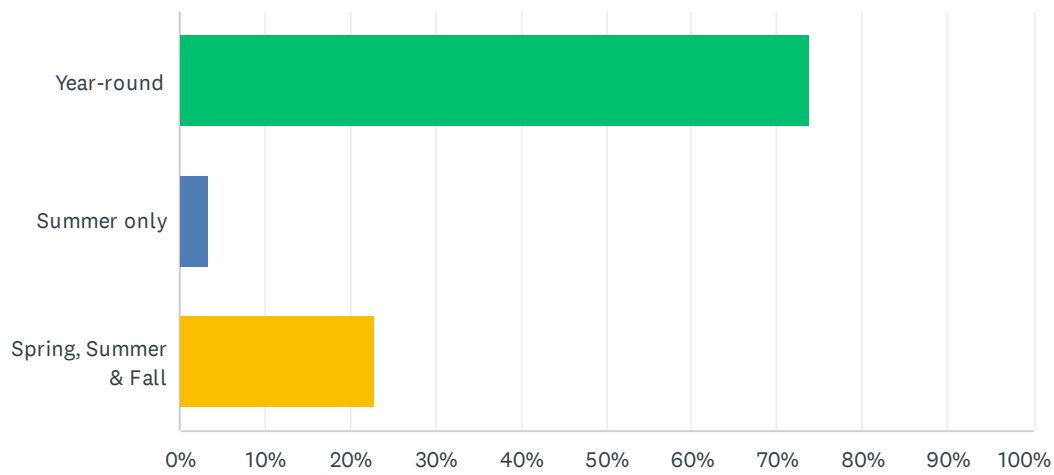
Answered: 54 Skipped: 3

Q7 How many children under the age of 19 live in your household?

Answered: 57 Skipped: 0

Q8 What time of year do you or your family recreate in Au Train Township?

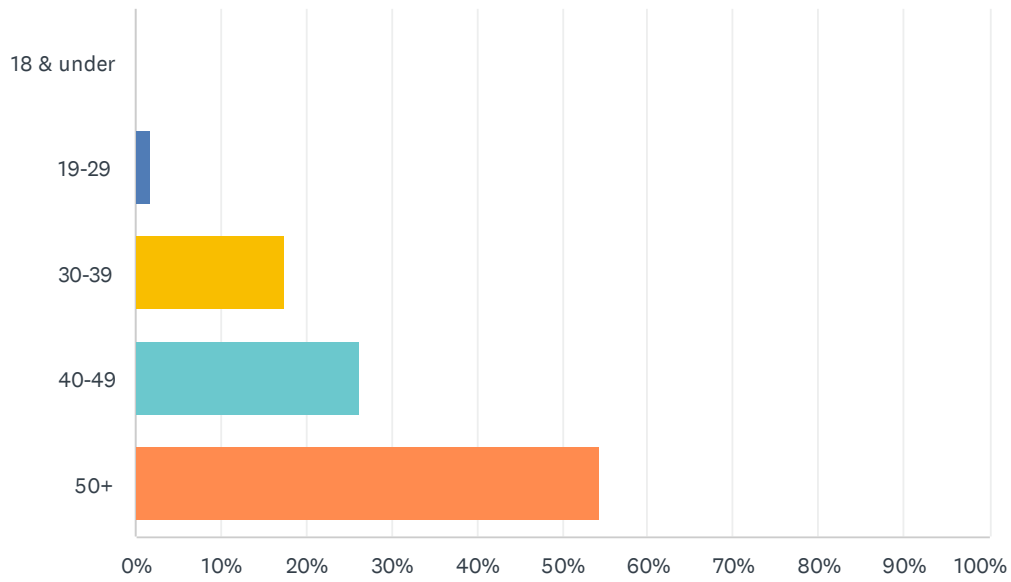
Answered: 57 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Year-round	73.68%	42
Summer only	3.51%	2
Spring, Summer & Fall	22.81%	13
TOTAL		57

Q9 What is your age?

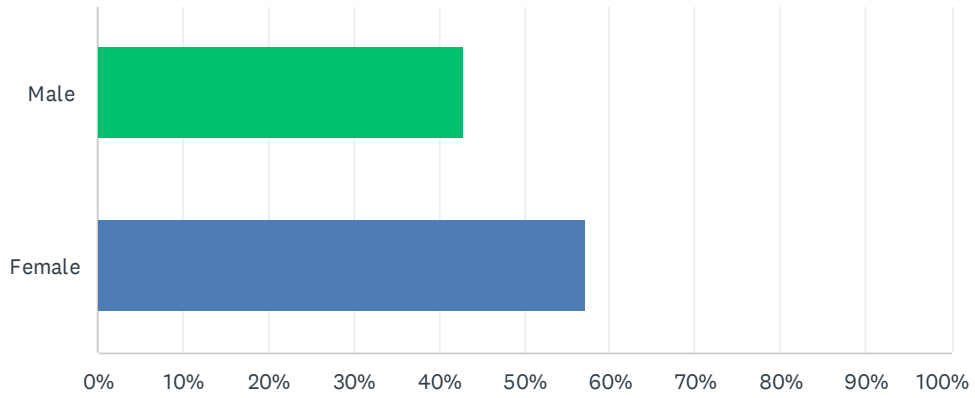
Answered: 57 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
18 & under	0.00% 0
19-29	1.75% 1
30-39	17.54% 10
40-49	26.32% 15
50+	54.39% 31
TOTAL	57

Q10 What is your gender?

Answered: 56 Skipped: 1



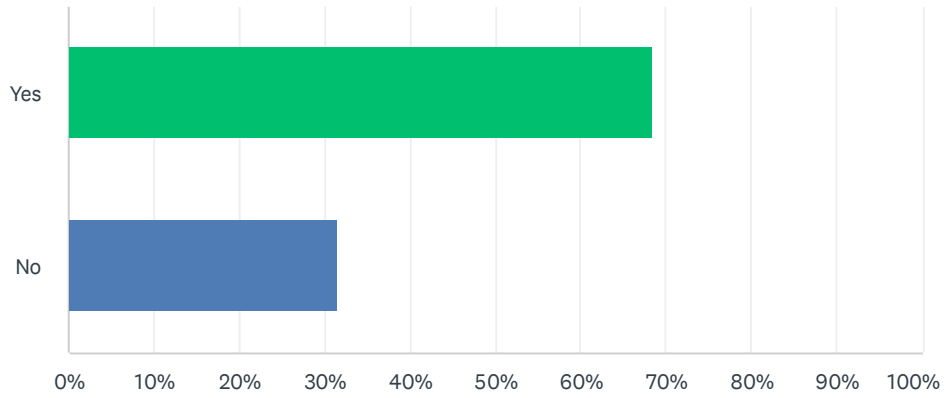
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Male	42.86%	24
Female	57.14%	32
TOTAL		56

Q11 How many live in your household?

Answered: 57 Skipped: 0

Q12 Do you live in Au Train Township year-round?

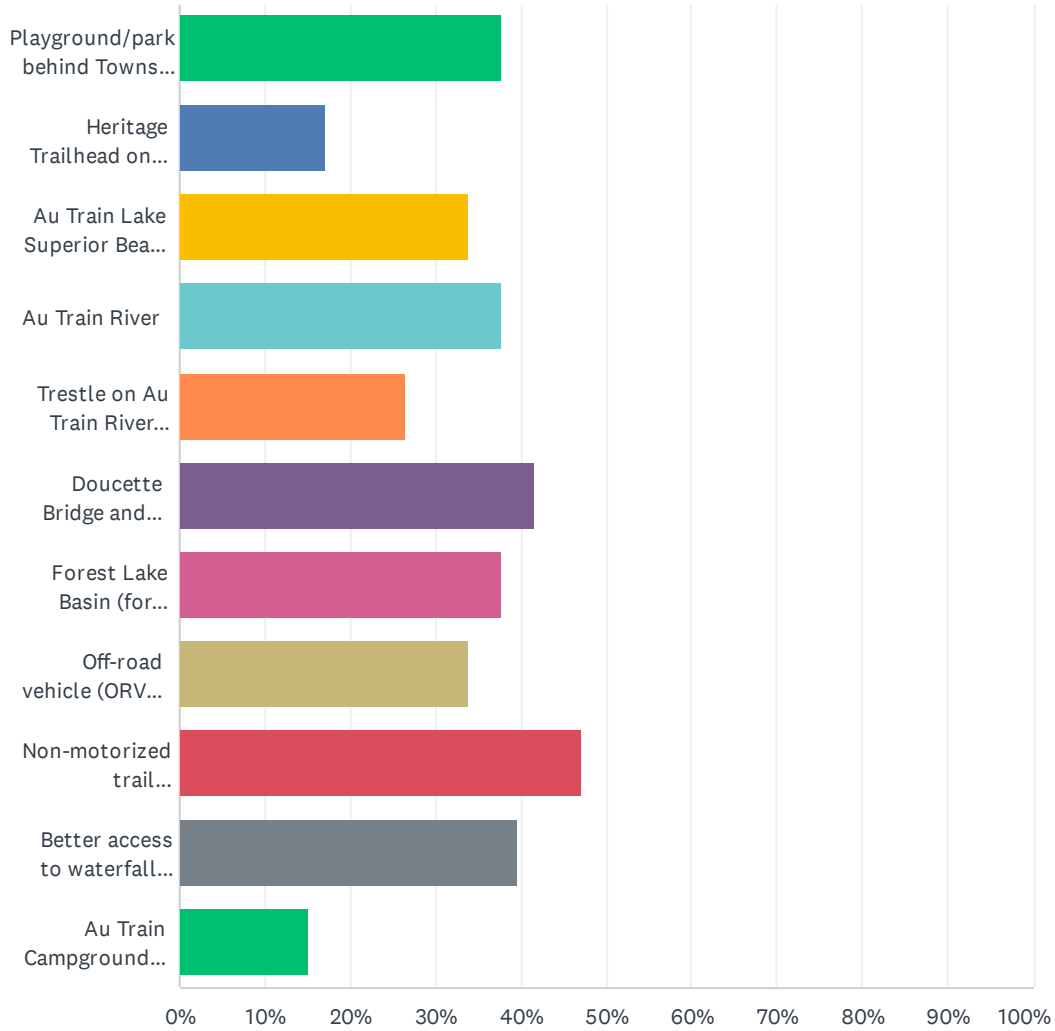
Answered: 57 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	68.42%	39
No	31.58%	18
TOTAL		57

Q13 Which of these Au Train Township recreation areas do you believe need additional improvements?

Answered: 53 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Playground/park behind Township Hall	37.74%	20
Heritage Trailhead on M-28	16.98%	9
Au Train Lake Superior Beach (owned and maintained by MDOT)	33.96%	18
Au Train River	37.74%	20
Trestle on Au Train River (for fishing pier), (owned and maintained by DNR)	26.42%	14
Doucette Bridge and Cameron Bridge (for kayak launch)	41.51%	22
Forest Lake Basin (for viewing wildlife),(owned and maintained by Renewable World Energies)	37.74%	20
Off-road vehicle (ORV) trail development	33.96%	18
Non-motorized trail development	47.17%	25
Better access to waterfalls in Au Train Township	39.62%	21
Au Train Campground (owned and maintained by Hiawatha Federal Forest Service)	15.09%	8
Total Respondents: 53		

2022 Au Train Township Recreation Survey – Hard Copy Responses (13)

Question 1: Do you or your family use recreational facilities offered in Au Train Township?

Yes – 10

No – 3

Question 2: Does Au Train Township have enough recreational facilities to accommodate our residents and visitors.

Yes – 9

No – 4

Written comments: Pickleball Court, fix bridge at the end of Woodlawn, more parking at kayaking areas, walking trail between the bridges used for canoeing, more trail maintenance during summer months,

Question 3: Are Au Train Township's recreational facilities adequately maintained?

Yes – 12

No – 1

Question 4: What activities do you and your family members participate in for recreation? (Please include all seasons.)

Written comments: Beach, walking trails, snowmobile and ATV Trails, biking, hunting, fishing, boating, SXS (ORV) trails, boat launch, swimming, hiking, establish an area for Christmas activities, snowshoeing, swimming, baseball, basketball, four-wheeling, trail riding, playground, mountain biking.

Question 5: Are there additional recreational opportunities you would like to see developed in Au Train Township?

Written comments: fishing pier, bicycle trails, pickleball courts (indoor & outdoor), fishing locations along river.

Question 6: How many hours per week do you spend recreating?

Average: 8

Question 7: How many children under the age of 19 live in your household?

Average: 1

Questions 8: What time of year do you or your family recreate in Au Train Township?

Year-round: 7

Spring, Summer & Fall: 6

Summer only: 0

Winter only: 0

Question 9: What is your age?

18 & under:

19-29:

30-39: 1

40-49: 3

50+: 9

Question 10: What is your gender?

Male: 10

Female: 4

**One husband and wife answered one gender each in household.*

Question 11: How many live in your household?

Average: 3

Question 12: Which one of these Au Train Township recreation areas do you believe need additional improvements?

- Playground/park behind Township Hall - 3
- Heritage Trailhead on M-28 -
- Au Train Lake Superior Beach (owned and maintained by MDOT) - 4
- Au Train River - 2
- Trestle on Au Train River (for fishing pier), (owned and maintained by the DNR) - 4
- Doucette Bridge and Cameron Bridge (for kayak launch) -
- Forest Lake Basin (for viewing wildlife), (owned and maintained by Renewable World Energies) - 2
- Off-road vehicle (ORV) Trail Development - 3
- Non-motorized Trail Development - 2
- Better access to waterfalls in Au Train Township - 1
- Au Train Campground (owned and maintained by Hiawatha Federal Forest Service) -