



# **MOFFATT TOWNSHIP**

**MASTER PLAN 2010**

**AND**

**REVISIONS 2024**

**Moffat Township, Arenac County, Michigan**

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## **Zoning Administrator**

John Hoffman

### **CONSULTANTS**

Don Hamilton, A.I.C.P.  
Scott Bell, A.I.C.P. & GIS Specialist  
Amanda Scott, Planning Assistant





The Moffatt Township Planning Commission has reviewed its existing Master Plan and current data that could have an effect on future land use planning. The “Vision” and the background data in the 2010 plan remain germane and pertinent, but new demographic and economic data were reviewed and analyzed and the goals and actions for future land use were revised. These sections have been replaced in this revised plan.

## **2024 Revisions to Master Plan**

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## **2024 Revisions to Master Plan**

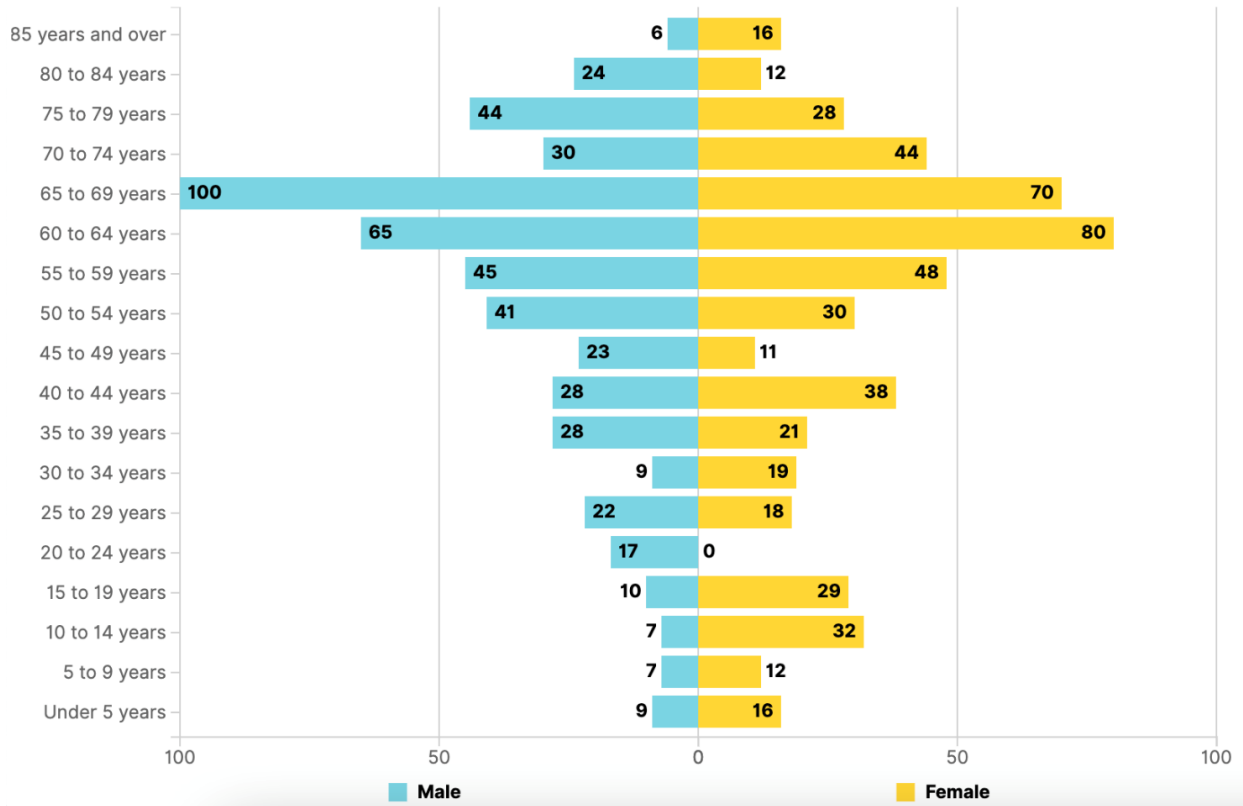
### E. Demographic Trends

According to the 2020 American Community Survey the Moffatt Township population was virtually unchanged over the last twenty years. From 2010 to 2020 the population decreased from 1,221 to 1,166. Over this 10-year period the Arenac County’s population decreased 9% while the state population increased approximately 1.2% in the past ten years.

<i>POPULATION TRENDS</i>			
	<b>2010</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>% Change</b>
<b>Moffatt Township</b>	1,221	1,166	-4.5%
<b>City of Omer</b>	336	274	-18.5%
<b>Arenac Township</b>	857	870	+1.5%
<b>Arenac County</b>	16,487	15,002	-9.0%
<b>Gladwin County</b>	26,076	25,386	-2.6%
<b>Ogemaw County</b>	21,862	20,770	-5.0%
<b>Michigan</b>	9,952,687	10,077,331	+1.2%
Source: 2010 American Community Survey 2020 American Community Survey			

Moffatt Township residents, similar to most of the region, are almost all white (97.0%) mainly of English, Irish, and German ancestry; they are almost equally divided between the sexes; and 97% of residents speak English at home. Residents are homeowners (91.3%) who live within family households (46%) where the average household size is 1.92 persons. Approximately 48.7% of occupied housing units are comprised of married-couple families, non-family households equal 43.8% and approximately 18% of the households have children under 18 years of age.

### Population Age Groups Moffatt township, Arenac County, Michigan



The median age in the township is 60 years, with 23.5% of the population aged between 65-74 years of age, a significant increase from 2000. The number of community members aged 65-74 years along with the township's median age, low number of households with children under 18 years of age and the average household size are indicators that the population is relatively old and is aging. It is evident that the township's population is increasingly consisting of elderly retirees. The age group of 45-64 has increased in population by 9.6% a possible indicator that people are preparing for retirement by living in the township or have retired and relocated from jobs located in the urban areas of the state. In the last ten years, more than 7% of Moffatt Township's residents moved from another county in Michigan with almost none from anywhere else.

Another indication of the changing profile of the township is the increase in the number of seasonal housing (vacation, second home, etc.). From 2000 to 2020 total housing in Moffatt Township increased by 2.8% and seasonal housing increased by 7.1%. This secondary, occasional-use housing still represents 43.3 % of township housing which is slightly higher than in 2000. Seasonal housing has increased in neighboring townships, the county and the region.

<i>SEASONAL HOUSING</i>			
	<b>2000</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Moffatt Township	354	379	+7.1%
Clayton Township	38	99	+106.1%
Arenac County	2,274	2,692	+18.4%
Ogemaw County	5,829	6,155	+5.6%
Iosco County	6,752	7,824	+15.9%

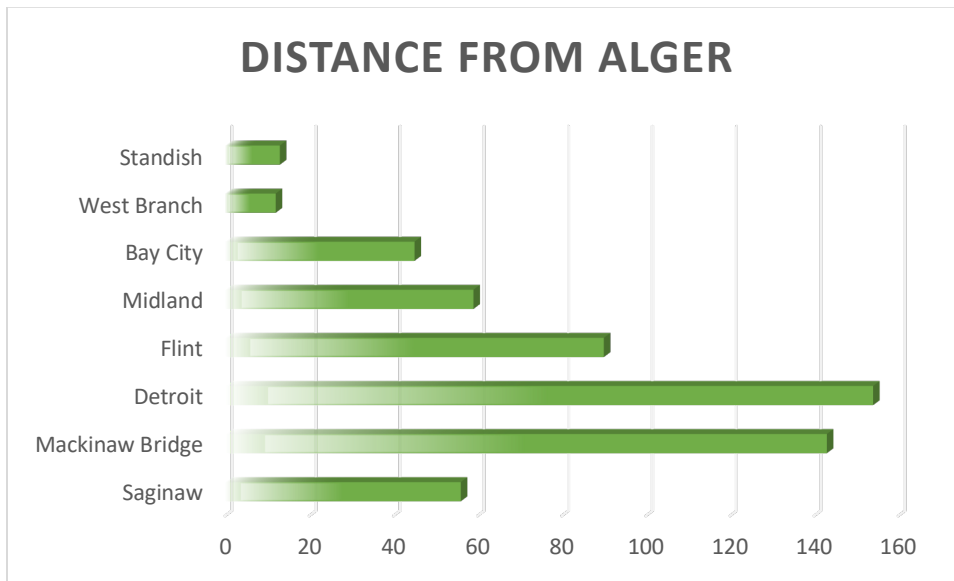
Zoning permits over the last four years show a fairly consistent amount of building activity. There were very few new houses constructed during this period. Permits were primarily for additions, decks, garages, and storage and pole barns.

<i>TOWNSHIP ZONING PERMITS</i>		
	<b>Moffatt Township</b>	<b>Clayton Township</b>
2022	26 Permits	45 Permits
2021	42 Permits	44 Permits
2020	55 Permits	44 Permits
2019	29 Permits	43 Permits



## F. Economic Profile of Arenac County

Arenac County is predominately a rural, farming and forested area. It is about 30 to 40 minutes north of the Michigan industrial tri-city region of Midland, Bay City and Saginaw. It borders on Lake Huron and the Saginaw Bay and is considered part of the northern recreational area of Michigan.

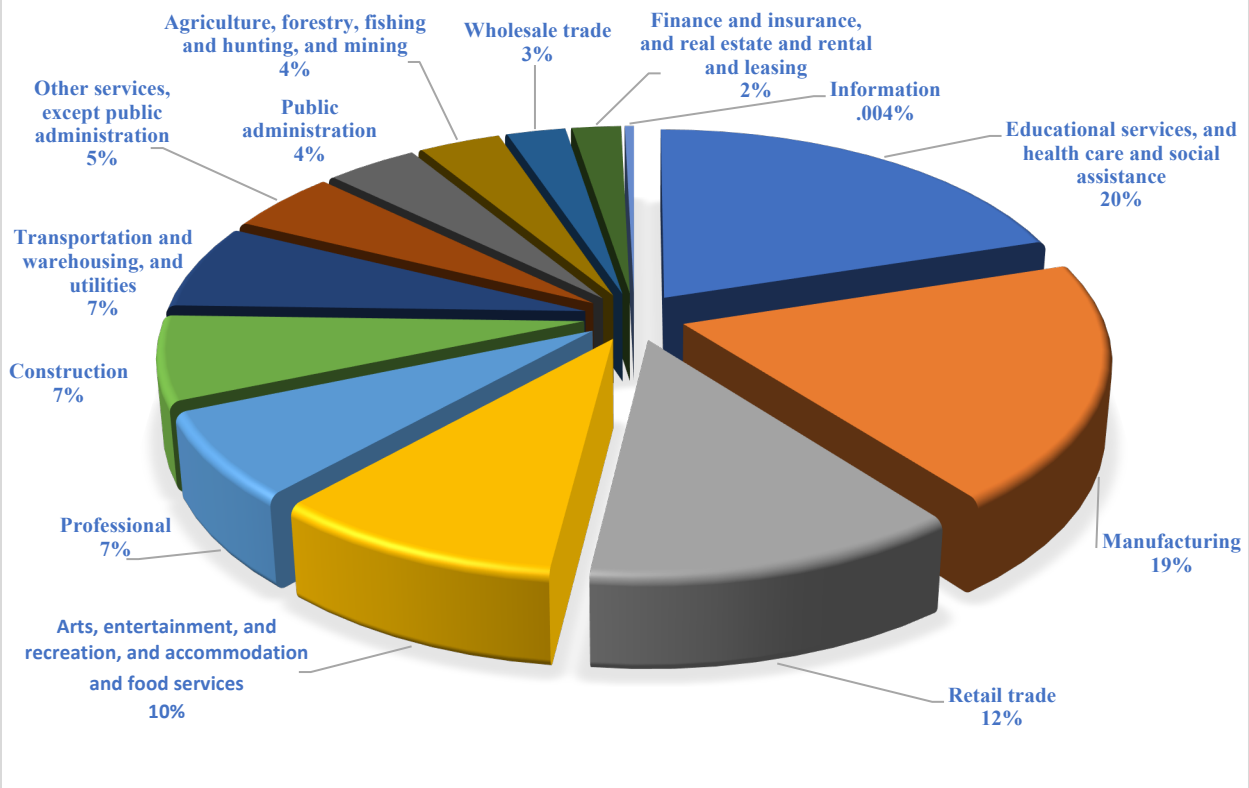


Source: Google Maps

According to the 2020 Census, the population of Arenac County is 15,002, a decrease of approximately 6% since 2010. Approximately 84% of the county population is of working age, 16 years or older. The current work force includes 6,446 people, of which 5,945 are employed, giving Arenac County a 7.7% unemployment rate. Of those that commute to work, 84% drive alone, and the average commute time is 28 minutes. Only 346 employees in the county work from home.

Approximately 89% of Arenac's residents over age 25 have high school diplomas compared to 75% in 2010 and now around 15% have bachelor's degrees versus the 2010 estimate of just over seven percent. The median income in Arenac County is \$28,881 (2020).

**ARENAC COUNTY PREDOMINANT INDUSTRIES BY THE PERCENTAGE OF WORKERS**



Source: 2020 US Census

The economic base of the county includes recreation, agriculture, manufacturing and government employment. The largest economic sectors in the county are transportation and utilities; producing annually \$42,250,000 and \$78,553,000 respectively (2019). Manufacturing, and health care are the two largest employers in the county, employing approximately nineteen percent and twenty percent of the workforce respectively. The largest employers in the county are the Standish–Sterling Community Schools, the Ascension Standish Community Hospital, and First American Healthcare, Inc.

Farming is among Arenac County’s most important economic sectors. It accounts for 48% of the County’s land use. According to the 2011 Arenac County Master Plan, 70,165 acres are in prime farmland, 8,710 total acres are in additional farmland of local importance, and 1,468 total acres are in unique farmland, other than prime. Agriculture generates approximately \$35,000,000 annually versus \$32,000,000 for manufacturing (2019).

There are four banks and three credit unions in the county with combined assets of over \$128 million. There is only one certified industrial park, the Standish Industrial Park, located west of downtown Standish.

The county has three colleges within close proximity: Saginaw Valley State University in Saginaw County; Delta Community College in Bay County; and Lake Superior State University in Roscommon County. There is one hospital in Arenac County, the Ascension Standish Community Hospital, which serves the residents of Arenac County and has a total capacity of 69 beds.

Major transportation routes cross Arenac County. Interstate I-75 transects the western portion of the county. US-23 splits off I-75 south of Standish and runs north along the Lake Huron coast. M-65 tees off US-23 just east of Omer and provides another northerly route. Michigan trunk line M-61 runs east and west and ends in Standish and M-33 joins I-75 in Alger in the northwest corner of the county and runs north to Mio and beyond.

There are three trucking companies that operate in the county. Bus passenger service is provided by Indian Trails from Bay City to St. Ignace.

The Arenac County Public Transit Authority is a non-profit organization that provides a demand response service for any Arenac County resident. The Lake State Railway hauls freight in the county. The nearest port is Alabaster, just north of the county line on Lake Huron. Air travel and freight can go through the MBS International Airport. (The Standish Industrial Airport has closed.) The largest airlines serving MBS are Northwest, Simmons and United Airlines.

<i>Arenac County</i>
<i>SIGNIFICANT EMPLOYERS</i>
ACE Hardware
Ascension Standish Hospital
Arenac Casting Inc
Bay Arenac CISD
Bopp-Busch Manufacturing Company
Forward Corporation
Magline, Inc
Maple Ridge Hardwoods
Saganing Eagles Landing Casino
Standish-Sterling Community Schools
Vantage Plastics

Source: DatabaseUSA

<i>ARENAC COUNTY OCCUPATIONAL DATA (2020)</i>					
<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Empl.</b>	<b>Mean Annual Wages</b>	<b>Unempl.</b>	<b>Unempl. Rate</b>	<b>Projected Annual % of Growth</b>
Sales & Related	532	\$35,800	58	9.5%	-1.9%
Production	569	\$38,800	58	8.5%	-1.6%
Office & Administrative Support	425	\$37,900	36	6.5%	-1.7%
Management	365	\$79,400	12	3.7%	-0.9%
Food Preparation & Service	361	\$26,600	71	13.0%	0.6%
Transportation	348	\$37,400	55	9.6%	-0.9%
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	231	\$91,800	6	2.2%	-0.6%
Construction & Extraction	197	\$46,400	33	10.3%	-0.9%
Business & Financial	191	\$65,800	8	4.7%	-0.4%
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	173	\$44,900	15	5.0%	-0.8%
Healthcare Support	161	\$30,700	17	7.1%	0.0%
Educational Instruction	153	\$47,600	8	5.8%	-0.5%
Architecture & Engineering	138	\$68,200	4	4.0%	-0.6%
Building & Grounds	109	\$31,500	18	9.4%	-0.8%
Art, Design, Entertainment, Sports & Media	72	\$45,100	9	15.4%	1.1%
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	66	\$29,500	9	10.5%	-1.2%
Personal Care & Service	64	\$31,600	13	13.2%	0.3%
Protective Service	63	\$47,700	4	4.9%	-0.8%
Computer & Mathematical	59	\$79,500	2	3.2%	-0.6%
Community & Social Service	57	\$46,400	2	4.0%	0.3%
Life, Physical & Social Science	16	\$69,100	1	4.7%	-0.6%
Legal	14	\$77,800	0	0.0%	-0.8%
<b>Total – All Occupations</b>	<b>4,262</b>	<b>\$47,000</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>8.1%</b>	<b>-0.9%</b>

The Au Sable State Forest covers much of the western side of the county. The Rifle, Pine and Au Gres Rivers flow through Arenac County to Lake Huron and the Saginaw Bay. There are approximately 156 miles of streams and 47 miles of Lake Huron shoreline in the county with 22 public access sites. There is resort and vacation development along the rivers and the Lake Huron shoreline and the county sports two golf courses. Seasonal population figures indicate the extent and importance of this sector in the county economy.

Real estate sales and values in the region have remained steady historically but dipped in the late 2010's. In 2020, there was a boom in real estate prices where some home and property prices increased by 50% or more from 2018-2019 prices. Due to the current volatile economy, high inflation, and the actions of the Federal Reserve, the current real estate market is unpredictable.

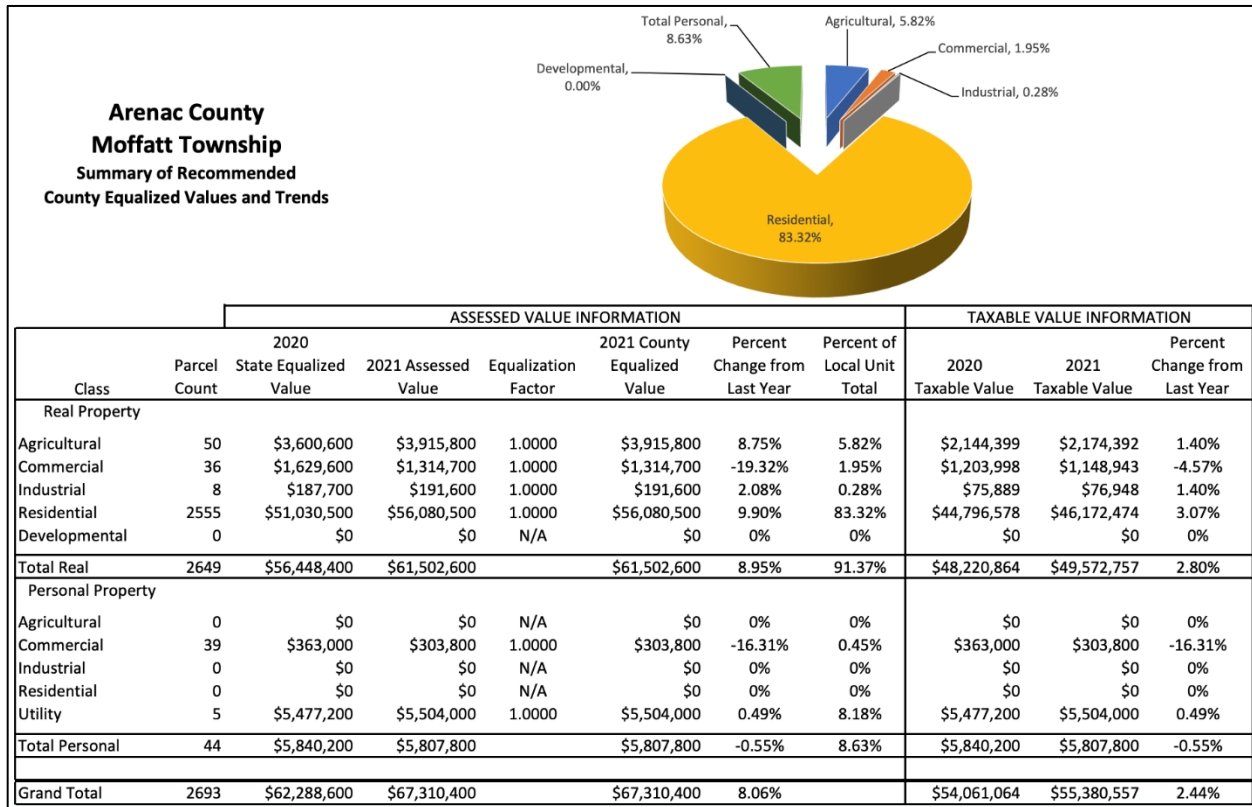
Approximately 90% of Moffatt Township residents own their homes versus the county's 85% and the largest percentage of homes range in value from \$50,000 to \$99,000.

PROPERTY VALUES			
	2000	2020	% Change
<b>Moffatt Township</b>			
Real	\$35,484,850	\$61,502,600	+73.3%
Personal	\$1,841,068	\$5,807,800	+215.5%
<b>Arenac County</b>			
Real	\$428,378,499	\$735,922,806	+71.8%
Personal	\$24,915,198	\$50,860,200	+104.1%

Sources: Arenac County Equalization Department, Ogemaw County Equalization Department

As a comparison, Ogemaw County's SEV values are:

Real                   \$1,132,330,690  
 Personal           \$ 73,007,538  
 Total                \$1,205,335,228 (as of 3/2023).



Source: Arenac County 2021 Equalization Report

## **Moffatt Township Zoning Ordinance Updates 2019-2023**

The following is a synopsis of amendments to the Zoning Ordinance introduced, deleted and/or altered to address concerns within our community including any technological advances while maintaining the intent and spirit of the Master Plan.

- Changes made regarding accessory buildings on lots one acre or less.
- Rear setbacks for residential districts changed from 25 feet to 10 feet.
- A blight ordinance was added to provide for the control of the storage, accumulation, and disposition of junk, trash, and rubbish, the maintenance of blighted structures and other blighted factors or causes, to provide penalties for the violation thereof. The additional rules regarding grass and noxious weeds is currently being discussed for future inclusion.
- Regulations regarding election signs were excluded from the ordinance due to recent Supreme Court rulings.
- Fencing height maximums were extended to 6 feet all around.
- A solar ordinance was added regarding abandonment, building integrated photovoltaics, commercial, ground mounted, private, roof or building mounted energy systems.



## 2024 Analysis & Determinations

### Analysis

Moffatt Township remains a desirable northern Michigan recreational community. Thirty-one percent of the township is Michigan State Forest lands and about 30% more is forested private lands. Rivers and creeks abound in the township and the Saginaw Bay and Lake Huron are only about 25 miles to the east of the township.

The Township is connected to the rest of Michigan by excellent and well-maintained highways that provide access for residents to services and shopping that are not available in the township and for visitors and vacationers to travel to the area.

The sparse township population has plateaued and is aging significantly (residents and probably in-migration of retirees). Commercial activity has continued to diminish, while residential activity is still positive and property values continue to increase. Eighty percent of land use in the township is residential.

Since the writing of the 2010 Master Plan, Alger has lost most of its businesses and other establishments (see p. 1-4 of the 2010 plan). The village now has only the post office, a mobile home supply business, a machine shop, a bait shop and has only two churches versus three in 2010.

Both the City of West Branch to the north and the City of Standish to the south have active small industrial enterprises advertising for employees. But the only county economic sectors predicting growth in the future are various services and healthcare.

The local roads are in good condition due in part to the township one-mil tax and participation by the Arenac County Road Commission. In 2020 the Forest Lake Dam spillway overflowed and washed out the spillway below a culvert. Plans have been prepared but repairs have not been done. Wet soils and high water tables predominate in the southern area of the township (State lands) but can be found throughout the township. These areas are difficult to use for development.

Residents in Moffatt Township are connected to the world by various internet services, and they can obtain the same plentitude of information and entertainment that only residents of urban areas had easy access to in the past.

Despite Moffatt Township's remoteness, it is still affected by national and world events. The state of the world now seems much less stable and predictable than earlier stages of the Moffatt Township Master Plan. Uncontrolled immigration, significant inflation, shifting power centers and international conflicts, declining educational standards, corruption of the country's medical sector, overreach by governments and institutions (U.N. / W.H.O, the World Economic Forum, and the major on-line providers), and the resurgence of Marxism, especially in academia, are affecting communities throughout the world.

Thankfully, Moffatt Township has not been overtly or overly affected by these things. Township officials must remain aware, though, of these factors and exercise its own powers to provide its services in the best manners possible and not to allow these elements to gain any purchase in the township.

The strengths of Moffatt Township include its location and its stable, upstanding population. The township is in a beautiful, forested area with rivers and small lakes and ponds. It is in a county with 27 miles of Saginaw Bay coastline. It is within commuting distance of active industrial and commercial enterprises. The township residents are friendly and there is almost no crime.

The challenge of Moffatt Township is to protect and maintain these assets and to remain open to residential development similar to existing development. The township should plan to budget for needed infrastructure (mainly roadways and storm water controls). It should take advantage of its location on I-75, opening up additional land for commercial and industrial development.

## **Goals**

In order to carry out this plan of managed growth, the following goals, policies, strategies and actions are put forth:

- ▶ To maintain the rural character and nature of the township.
- ▶ To maintain and improve existing primary and local roads and provide for adequate storm drainage.
- ▶ To provide areas for working families to establish homesteads and to ensure that dwellings are properly constructed and maintained.
- ▶ To foster the rejuvenation of Alger and development of the area surrounding the I-75 interchange for jobs and increased tax revenues.

- ▶ To protect the stream corridors, forests and all the natural resources of Moffatt Township.
- ▶ To provide high quality, necessary services for township residents.

### **Policies, Strategies and Actions**

1. Review the township zoning ordinance to ensure that it is fostering and permitting the type of development desired:
  - a) Determine proper zones with the desired allowed conditional uses;
  - b) Provide adequate land division controls;
  - c) Ensure there are standards and regulations for protection of the township's natural resources.
2. Take measures to ensure that the zoning ordinance will be enforced properly.
3. Promote and participate in Arenac County Road and Drain Commission activities that will address inadequacies in the township and other townships within the county.
4. Participate in various county meetings and activities to ensure Moffatt Township receives adequate and appropriate services.
5. Study the needs of the Alger and I-75 interchange area and prepare a development plan. Investigate possible funding for necessary improvements.
6. Examine and plan for possible capital expenditures including roads, buildings and recreation facilities. Prepare a recreation plan if application for Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) funds is indicated.

### **Future Land Use**

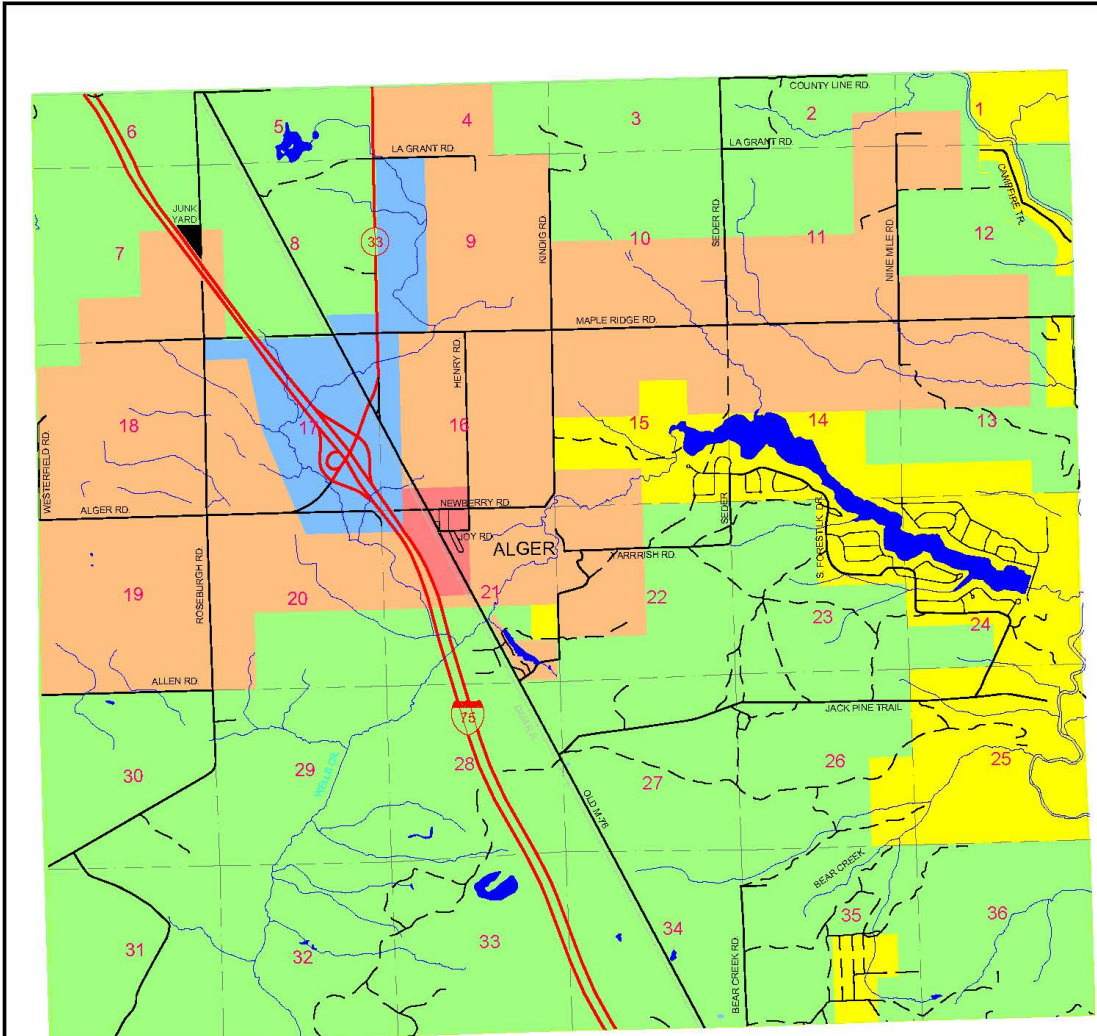
The land use districts set out in this master plan closely follow existing land covers and uses. The predominant land cover and the largest district is the *Forested District*. This area includes state forest as well as private forested areas in all areas of the township. In this district forestry and recreational activities as well as single-family home lots of 10 acres or larger will be allowed.

The *Agricultural/Rural Residential District* covers much of the central area of the township and encompasses most of the active farms. In this district existing agriculture will be protected and other agricultural activities will be encouraged. Single-family homes will be directed primarily to non-productive farmland at relatively low densities (5 acres or larger) unless part of a planned development approved by the Planning Commission.

The *Residential District* includes most of the existing and proposed high density residential areas of the township including the Forest Lake development, the Eymer Development in Section 35 and the development in the southeast corner of the district located off of LaGrant Road. These areas will allow higher density housing on smaller lots (1 acre or larger) in keeping with existing development patterns.

The Alger area has been designated *Village Mixed Use* in order that it may redevelop with standards appropriate for a small rural village.

Adjacent to this area and surrounding the I-75 interchange and north on M-33 is the *Highway Commercial District* where larger scale commercial or light industrial development will be encouraged.

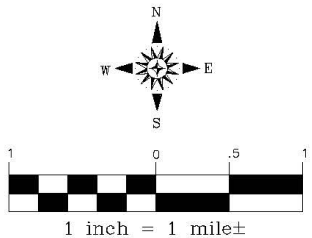


Source: Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources  
Michigan Resource Inventory System

MOFFATT TOWNSHIP, ARENAC COUNTY, MICHIGAN

**Future Land Use Legend**

- Highway Service District
- Agricultural District
- Residential District
- Village Mixed Use District
- Forested District
- Commercial District
- Highways
- County Roads
- Streets
- Two-Track



# Future Land Use Map