

SAGOLA TOWNSHIP POLICY PLAN

**SAGOLA TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION**

**With assistance from:
CUPPAD REGIONAL COMMISSION**



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
1. INTRODUCTION.....	3
2. POPULATION AND POPULATION TRENDS	3 through 8
3. HOUSING	8 & 9
4. EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME	10 through 12
5. COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES	12 through 16
6. TRANSPORTATION	16 through 19
7. LAND USE	20 through 21
8. ZONING	21 through 25
9. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	25 through 27
10. SAGOLA TOWNSHIP GOALS AND POLICIES	28 through 31
11. FUTURE LAND USE MAPS.....	31 through 37
12. SAGOLA TOWNSHIP CITIZEN SURVEY WITH RESULTS	38 & 39

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

The Sagola Township Policy Plan has been developed by the Sagola Township Planning Commission, with assistance from the CUPPAD Regional Commission. The plan is a comprehensive, long-term guide for the future development, land use, zoning and overall growth of the community. The master plan aims to balance economic, social, physical, environmental and fiscal planning within the township. The plan represents months of discussion by the Planning Commission and interaction with its residents. By establishing goals and policies we will help guide the township's land use decision-making in the future. One important aspect of the Master Plan is the availability of the current information. While addressing each chapter we discovered that Census Information has not been completed for the township that would be most current.

The first section of this plan contains background information which describes the township's current population demographics and mapping the trends of the community. The facilities and services offered by the township, as well as the assets that make up the community.

The Master Plan will reference characteristics that other successful communities have used with the intention of incorporating them into our future and development. Having a vision for the future is where we start. Inventory the assets that we currently have and develop a growth plan around our existing infrastructure. Involving the community through education and incentives to inspire teamwork and encourage a volunteer atmosphere. Picking and choosing projects and activities within the community to encourage a neighborly atmosphere. Having strong leaders and active citizens are essential for driving community initiatives. Based on the township survey and interaction with the residences of the township, we identified needs, goals and objectives. In addition to the needs, goals and objectives we are developing its policies to help local government address problems in such a way that Sagola Township retains its rural character, protects its natural resources, and continues to provide adequate community services and facilities to residents and visitors.

The final section of the plan contains maps showing land use and various physical constraints on use and projected future development.

This plan, used in concert with the Sagola Township Zoning Ordinance and other local ordinances, will help to promote wise use of local resources to facilitate appropriate growth. It is important to be dynamic and flexible as the execution of the master plan may require changes as conditions change within the township.

CHAPTER 2 - POPULATION

The information presented in this section will describe Sagola Township in terms of its population, housing, economy and the facilities and services offered to township residents, as well as characteristics of the township's physical environment, such as soils, land capability and land use. This information will help to identify the township's strengths and weaknesses and will then lead to goals and policies which local officials can implement to help the township to grow and prosper.

Examining population trends, composition, and projections can reveal much information about a community. For example, if population trends show sharp fluctuations during certain periods, that prompts examination of other factors to find out why. Changes in age composition of the population can point out possible future needs for schools, health services, or certain types of housing, while changes in family size

or the racial composition of a local population can mirror state or national trends. A discussion of the population trends and characteristics in Sagola Township and Dickinson County follows.

Population Trends

Sagola Township has experienced population increases according to the 1980, 1990, and 2000 Census; following at least three decades of population decline from 1940 to 1970; then also decline in 2010. The population chart below indicates that despite the gains of the past 20 years the population of the township has yet to reach the levels of the 1940s or even the 1950s. The initial loss of population can very likely be attributed, at least in part, to the closure of the Groveland Mine in 1981, which resulted in the permanent layoff of approximately 500 people. Although LP in Sagola had a substantial increase in its plant manufacturing, most of the jobs it had created are being filled by people living outside the township.

The population growth rate of the township was 25% from 1970 - 1980, however from 1990-2000 the growth rate stayed the same, then from 2000 to 2010 the decrease was 6%. And in 2020 a much more substantial decrease of 18.4% has occurred.

Table 1-1
Population Changes, 1960-2020

	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2020</u>
Sagola Twp	952	918	1146	1166	1169	1106	903
% Change	-20%	-4%	25%	2%	0%	-6%	-18.4%
Dickinson Cty	23,917	23,753	25,341	26,831	27,481	26,168	25,947
% Change	-4%	-1%	7%	6%	2.4%	-5%	-1%
Upper Peninsula	303,054	302,892	320,272	313,915	317,676	311,361	301,608
% Change	.2%	-1%	5%	-2%	1.2%	-2%	-3%
State of MI	7,820,000	8,870,000	9,260,000	9,300,000	9,952,000	9,878,000	10,197,600
% Change	23%	13%	4%	0.40%	7%	-1%	3%

Source: U.S. Census, 1960-2020

Population Composition

The proportion of the population which is under 18 years of age has decreased from 1970 to 2010. In 1970 nearly 35 percent of the population was less than 18 years old, but by 2010 the proportion of persons less than 18 had fallen to just over 19.4 percent. In 2020 that percentage of the population age group increased by 1 % to 20%. This increase can be misleading because the overall population decreased by 22.4%. The true reflection is that we did not gain in younger people but reduced the community by 34 people in that age bracket. For those people between 18 to 64 years of age, we have declined again from 668 to 487 residences. This is a substantial decline of over 27%. For those people **over the age** of 65 the decrease in percentage in 1970 went from 16% to 15.1% in 2010. In 2020 this age bracket increases by 12 residences or 5%.

Table 1-2
Population by Age, 1970-2020

	<u>1970 No. of Persons</u>	<u>1980 No. of Persons</u>	<u>1990 No. of Persons</u>	<u>2000 No. of Persons</u>	<u>2010 No. of Persons</u>	<u>2020 No. of Persons</u>
UNDER 18	320	369	330	332	215	181
% of Population	34.9%	32%	28%	28%	19%	20%
18-64	451	612	664	660	668	487
% of Population	49%	53%	57%	57%	65.50%	54%
65 & over	147	165	172	177	223	235
% of Population	16%	14%	15%	15%	15.10%	26%
Total:	918	1,146	1,169	1,169	1,106	903

A closer look at age cohorts, as displayed in Table 1-2, reveals that much of the population increase in Sagola Township over the past 30 years is due to the in-migration of people between the ages of 25 and 64. In other words, people who are probably participating in the labor force.

For example, the 116 people counted as being between the ages of 15 and 24 in 1970 would be counted in the 25-34 age group in 1980. Even assuming no death or out-migration among this cohort over the 10 years, an additional 41 persons would have to have moved into the township to account for the 157 persons in the 25-34 age group in 1980. This trend continues from 1980 to 1990, as these same people move into the 35-44 age group. Again, assuming no death or out-migration over 10 years, this age group grew by 14 persons.

The trend reverses itself in the oldest age group. As those people who were in the 45-64 age group in 1970 and 1980 moved into the 65+ age group in 1980 and 1990, the numbers decreased. This shows a loss due to death and/or out-migration.

In 1990, the median age of the population of Sagola Township was 36.4. This is up 16 percent from the 1980 median age of 31.5, and reflects county, regional, state and national trends towards a slightly older population, as the so-called "baby boomers" age.

There are slightly more males (53 percent) in Sagola Township than females (47 percent), which is the opposite of county, regional and state populations. Most populations show slightly more females than males, reflecting the somewhat longer average lifespan of females. For example, the 1990 population of the state of Michigan was 48.5 percent male to 51.5 percent female. This difference does not appear to be significant, however.

The racial composition of the population of the township is and has historically been almost entirely white. Most of the people counted in the 1980 Census identified themselves as white, while in 2010 all but fifteen of the 1,087 people in the township reported their race as white. The

racial composition of the township's population is illustrated in Table 1-3. No significant changes in the amount of racial diversity seem very likely in the foreseeable future.

Table 1-3
Population by Race, 1980-2020

	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
White	1,144	1,159	1,148	1,087	813
Black	1	0	0	4	1
Native American	1	5	10	8	0
Asian	0	0	1	3	0
Other	0	2	10	4	89
Total:	1,146	1,166	1,169	1,106	903

Household Characteristics

A household is defined in the Census as all persons who occupy a housing unit; e.g., a single family, one person living alone, two or more families living together, or any group of related or unrelated people sharing living quarters. A family consists of a householder and one or more other people living in the same household who are related by birth, marriage or adoption.

In 2010 there were more households and more families in Sagola Township than in 1980, as shown in Table 1-4. The number of married-couple families increased only slightly over the 10-year period from 2000 to 2010. The number of non-family households and householders living alone also increased. In 2020 there was an increase in the family households but a substantial decrease in the married couple families. Female households declined slightly but the male households increased substantially.

Household Characteristics, 1980-2020

Table 1-4

	1980: # and %	1990: # and %	2000: # and %	2010: # and %	2020: # and %
Family Households	3.19 - 79.4%	333 - 75.3%	323 - 68.0%	329 - 66.6%	332 - 81%
Married-couple/Family	278 - 69.2%	280 - 63.3%	274 - 57.7%	281 - 56.9%	254 - 62%
Female Householder	24 - 6%	36 - 8.1%	27 - 5.6%	28 - 5.7%	25 - 6%
Male Householder	17 - 4.2%	17 - 3.8%	22 - 4.6%	20 - 4%	53 - 13%
Non-Family Household	83 - 20.6%	109 - 24.7%	152 - 32.1%	165 - 33.4%	78 - 19%
Householder alone	80 - 19.9%	99 - 22.4%	134 - 28.2%	138 - 27.9%	71 - 18%
Total Households	402 -100%	442 - 100%	475 - 100%	494 - 100%	410 - 100%
Average Household Size	2.85 persons	2.64 person	2.46 persons	2.24 persons	2.2 persons

Source: U.S. Census, 1980-2020

Population Projections

Accurate population projections can be useful to any entity, whether public or private, which provides services to or for the general public. However, the art and science of projecting the "future population" for a minor civil division (i.e. a township) is very tenuous. While the future birth and death rates can be determined for smaller areas with some degree of accuracy, the in and out-migration of the population is largely dependent on the strength of the economy of the region, not just the township.

Because much of the township's labor force is dependent on employment outside of the boundaries of the township, the changes in population which will occur in the coming years will be dependent on the changes which occur elsewhere in Dickinson County, as well as in surrounding counties and, to some extent, northeast Wisconsin.

The current trend shown in Table 1-5 shows an alarming decrease in population for Sagola Township. The age changes within the township would reflect that the younger population is leaving the area while the older population is increasing. Eventually the elderly population will decline as they need to move to assisted living or nursing homes. Unfortunately, the death rate will most likely increase over the next handful of years.

Table 1-5
Population Projections for Sagola Township and
Dickinson County

Sagola Township

Dickinson County

Year	Population	Population Change	Total	Total Change
1940	1,561		28,731	
1950	1,184	-24%	24,844	-14%
1960	952	-20%	23,917	-4%
1970	918	-4%	23,753	-1%
1980	1,146	25%	25,341	7%
1990	1,166	2%	26,831	6%
2000	1,169	0%	27,481	2.4%
2010	1,106	-4%	26,168	-5%
2020	1,066	-18%	25,947	-1%

Source: U.S. Census, 1940-2020; Mich. Dept. of Management and Budget

Issues and Needs

The population of the township has decreased over the past 20 years and is expected to continue to decrease. The current trend is not a positive one. For this trend to be reversed new growth will need to come through small businesses and advertise the township to attract younger families. Leveraging what the area has to offer both current business and services that will create a community image that people are looking for.

The median age of the township is declining, and the number of people over 65 is increasing. This trend, which is expected to continue, could lead to increased needs for housing and services specifically designed for the elderly. It could also indicate that the lure of Sagola Township may be one of a nice place to retire. Catering to that count also could be a way of reducing the decline in population.

CHAPTER 3 - HOUSING

Housing is an important element in any community. It is necessary to consider housing when assessing a community's needs, since it is in the community's best interests to have a population that enjoys adequate, affordable housing. The type of housing available in a community is also related to other factors, such as income level, family size, age, etc. The following analysis examines recent housing trends.

Housing Units

According to the 2010 Census, there were a total of 962 housing units in Sagola Township, of which 431 or nearly 44.8 percent were considered to be for seasonal, recreational or occasional use.

Table 1-6 Population Projections for Sagola Twp and Dickinson County

Sagola Twp			Dickinson County		
	Population	%		Population	%
1940	1,561			28,731	
1950	1,184	-24%		24,844	-14%
1960	952	-20%		23,917	-4%
1970	918	-4%		23,753	-1%
1980	1,146	25%		25,341	7%
1990	1,166	2%		26,831	6%
2000	1,169	0%		27,481	2.4%
2010	1,106	-4%		26,168	-5%

Source: U.S. Census, 1940-2010; MI Dept of Management and Budget

The total number of housing units increased by 3.4% percent between 2000 and 2010, with the largest increase occurring in the category of Renter Occupied housing. In comparison the largest increase in change in Dickinson County was in Vacant housing.

Housing Age and Condition

Over 26 percent, or 206, of Sagola Township's 894 housing units were reported as being built in 1939 or before, according to the 1990 Census. This means that more than one-fourth of the township's housing stock is 80-100% years old, and older housing often suffers from deterioration, or is less energy-efficient, spacious and accessible than newer housing.

The 1990 Census reports that 150 units were constructed between 1970 and 1979, although the township's population increased by only 228 persons during the same period. This can be presumed to mean that many of the new homes were seasonal dwellings. Between 1980 and 1990, Census figures show 131 units constructed, while the population increased by 20 persons. This reflects the reported increase of 122 seasonal units during the decade.

Needs and Issues

As previously mentioned, the need for housing designed for elderly residents may increase as the population ages.

Hunting shacks and seasonal residences which are built without proper permits and adequate facilities may pose a threat to health and safety.

CHAPTER 4 -EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

Information on employment helps local officials and planners understand where residents work, what types of jobs they hold, how many are unemployed, and what skills are available in the local labor force. Trends in employment reflect the changing economy, as certain types of jobs become prevalent in the workforce, or as firms expand or go out of business.

Employment information is compiled in the U.S. Census, and by the Michigan Employment Security Commission. The Census information on employment by industrial sector, which is presented in Table 1-7, shows what types of jobs are held based on the number of households (430) in Sagola Township, although those jobs may be in another community, county, or state. The data from the MESC, on the other hand, compiles the types of jobs which are in a governmental unit, such as a county.

Unemployment rates are compiled by the MESC and are based on the number of claims filed. The unemployment rate for Dickinson County, then, would reflect the number of people who have filed claims for unemployment in the county. The table below is reflective of the number of households and the breakout of employment by industry.

Table 1-7
Sagola Township Employment by Industrial Sector, 1980-
2010

	2000		2010		2021		2026 proposed	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Mining	25	5.0	20	4	15	4.6	43	10
Construction	57	11.7	44	8.9	40	12.3	21	4.9
Manufacturing	77	15.7	97	19.6	64	19.7	40	9.3
Transportation, Communications & Utilities	45	9.2	32	6.5	33	10.2	24	5.7
Wholesale/Retail Trade	95	19	90	8.3	37	11.4	27	6.2
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	12	2.	8	1.6			17	3.9
Public Administration/Info	23	5.	31	8.3	37	11.4	48	11.1
Professional, management, administrative, waste management	58	7.8	45	9.1	32	9.8	15	3.6
Educational, health care, social assistance	86	17.6	96	19.4	64	19.7	151	35.2
Arts, entertainment, accommodation, food services	38	7.8	14	2.8	3	.9	19	4.4
Other services, except public administration	18	3.7	19	2.7			25	5.7
Total:	534		496				430	

In some cases, the employment in Sagola Township has followed county, state and national trends, while in other areas the trends in the township have been contrary to those elsewhere.

As illustrated in Table 1-7, which shows employment trends for Sagola Township, this area has seen an increase in employment in the agricultural, forestry, fishing and mining. This increase is mostly due to logging and other forestry related jobs. The decrease in construction employment is due to the increase in the median age of Sagola Township. Which is not consistent with county, state and national trends.

The local increase in employment in trade mirrors the trend in other areas, as does the increase in finance, insurance and real estate. The flat employment in transportation, communications and utilities is different from the county's pattern of little growth over the past 50 years, and a drop in employment in this sector over the past 10 years.

Also contrary to statewide and national trends is the growth in manufacturing jobs. Manufacturing Employment is steady or increasing throughout much of the state and nation, while locally it is decreasing. Part of the decrease in Sagola Township is due to the aging of the residences in the Township itself. While the expansion of the Louisiana Pacific manufacturing plant, and from Billerud Mill located in Quinnesec have been a benefit to the County.

Service Sector employment and Public Administration are increasing countywide, statewide and nationally. In Sagola Township we have shared an equal gain in both employment areas over the past decade.

The major employer in Sagola Township is the Louisiana Pacific fiber board plant along M-95. Other jobs in the township are provided by the retail and service establishments of the area. The county's major employers include Billerud Mill in Quinnesec (400+ employees), Systems Control (800+ employees), Boss Plow (300+ employees) MJ Electric (1,200+ employees) and American Axle Manufacturing (Grede Foundries) Kingsford, Michigan (230+ employees) CCI Systems (1,200+ employees) VA Healthcare, Sanford Healthcare System.

Since 2005 the unemployment rate in Sagola Township has ranged from 3.0% in July 1998 to 13.4% in February 2010. The unemployment rate in Sagola Township for the first quarter of 2018 was 5.6%, compared to 5.3% in the State of Michigan and 5.6% for Dickinson County. The employment rate 2024 for Sagola Township was at 52.3% while compared to the County 55.4%. This is reflective of the community being mostly retired people.

Income information is available from the U.S. Census, for households, families, and on a per capita basis. It is useful to compare local income levels with those of broader geographic areas, and to study income trends over time.

In the past incomes in Sagola Township were generally lower than those of Dickinson County. Per capita income for Sagola Township, which is a measure of the total income for a geographic region divided by the population of that region, was less than 70 percent of the statewide per capita income in both 1979 and 1989. The township's median household income in 1979 and 1989 was also at about 70 percent of the statewide average. Median family income in 1979 was closer to the state average at 75.7 percent, but by 1989 had dropped relative to the statewide average to 69.9 percent of the state median family income. Most recent Census data 2024 shows the median household income for Sagola Township to be \$78,333.00 while the median household income for Dickinson County is \$65,156.00.

Incomes in Dickinson County are closer to statewide averages, and the county has overall improved its relative standing in the past decade.

Table 1-8
Family Income, 2024

<u>Income</u>	<u>Full time year round</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Less than \$10,000	0	0.0%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	11	3.67%
\$15,000 to 24,999	0	0.0%
\$25,000 to 34,999	28	9.36%
\$35,000 to \$49,000	60	20.06%
\$50,000 to \$64,999	72	24.08%
\$65,000 to \$74,999	29	9.70%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	58	19.40%
\$100,000 or more	41	13.71%
Total:	299	

Keep in mind that the above table is reflective of 299 households that are currently working full time year around. It does not reflect any retired people. While the Sagola Township total households are 430, it would mean that 131 of them are retired people.

4.4% of the individuals in Sagola Township are below poverty levels. Children under 18 (8.3 percent) were in poverty in Sagola Township while 18 to 64 years is (2.7%). The rate for elderly people (65 years old and over) in the township was 5.1 percent.

Statewide and locally, poverty rates rose from those shown in the 1980 Census. Michigan's overall poverty rate in 1980 was 10.4 percent, compared to 1990's 13.1. As was true for the state, higher numbers of children and elderly persons were in poverty, as were female householder families. One hundred percent of female householder families with children under 5 years old in Sagola Township were shown as below the poverty line in 1990, and 41.2 percent of all female householder families were in poverty. Statewide, 35.8 percent of female householder families were in poverty.

Issues and Needs

Local employment to draw younger residents will continue to be a problem in addition to lack of housing availability. As the township continues to grow older and increases in the number of retired people the township will need to shift towards services that will support that group.

CHAPTER 5 -COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

Sagola Township provides a variety of community facilities and services to its residents. In addition to these facilities and services, other governmental units and local organizations also help to meet the needs of area residents and tourists.

Public Buildings

The focus of many township activities is the Sagola Community Building. The original Community Building was built in the 1880s, the hall was formerly a school building but has been used as the township hall since 1971. A new Community Building was built in 2017, which is used for township board and committee meetings, meetings of civic organizations and community groups, weddings and other gatherings, and as a polling place.

In 2022 a 40' x 60' Pavilion was built near the Sagola community building to help provide more gathering areas.

Newberg Park Pavillion at the Sawyer Lake Park.

The Township also owns a fire truck garage near the township hall, a maintenance office and shop in Channing, and the Emergency Services building in Channing.

Cemetery with mausoleum and garage on Byers Road in Channing.

Private buildings/private community centers

Three other buildings in the township provide meeting space and other facilities for local residents but are not owned by the township. One is the Sagola Senior Citizens' Center, located in a converted grocery store in Sagola and owned by the Sagola Senior Citizens. This center includes kitchen facilities, is handicapped-accessible, and is adequate to meet the seniors' needs.

The privately-owned Sagola Township Sportsmen's Club, located off the Sawyer Lake Road on Edey Lake, offers another facility for local gatherings, such as weddings. The Sportsmen's Club was rebuilt in 1993 and was enlarged following a fire which destroyed the original building.

Camp Molinare is a non-profit organization owned camp located on Sawyer Lake that rents to the public for events and gatherings.

Emergency Services

The Emergency Services building is located on Turner Road in Channing. It was originally built in 1986 as a three-bay garage with a small office area and was expanded to a four bay structure that can house five trucks and a Rescue Equipment trailer along with a training room and office.

The Sagola Township Volunteer Fire Department has been in continuous operation since the early 1900's. The department maintains an active roster of twenty to twenty-five trained and certified firefighters and encourages prospective members to apply. Apparatus in 2025 consisted of a class A pumper, a three-thousand gallon water tank-tender, a vehicle extrication unit and Two grass/forest fire trucks. The vehicle extrication unit carries two complete sets of hydraulic tools similar to the "Jaws of Life" and other rescue equipment. A trailer carries a tracked ATV, towed rescue sled and ice rescue equipment.

STAR Ambulance also operates out of the Emergency Services building and is staffed by volunteer EMTs and MFRs. STAR covers Sagola Township and, like the Fire Department, has Mutual Aid agreements with all surrounding townships. STAR primarily transports patients to the hospital in Iron Mountain but will also transport to other hospitals if requested. STAR and the Fire Department train together on vehicle extrication and ice rescue and sometimes call on each other for assistance.

Police protection is provided by the Dickinson County Sheriff's Department and the Michigan State Police. Offices for both these departments are located in Iron Mountain, approximately 19 miles south of Sagola. The township also employs an enforcement officer and liquor control officer, who enforces township ordinances and liquor license regulations.

Sewage Disposal, Water Systems

Sagola Township operates two wastewater treatment facilities, one in Channing and the other in Sagola. The Channing facility is a lagoon system and serves about 200-225 households. The system went into operation in 1984, and is in compliance with applicable statutes and requirements. The facility should continue to meet area residents' needs well into the future if properly maintained. Sagola's wastewater treatment facility is a community septic system, which serves 35 households. The township owns sufficient land at the site to support new drain fields, should the present drain field fail, and with proper maintenance and upkeep, including continuation of annual sludge pumping, the system should continue to provide service indefinitely. The system is presently in compliance with all applicable statutes and regulations. Residents who are not served by either of these community systems use individual septic systems for treatment of wastewater.

In 2024-25 Channing sewer system received some updates including new lift stations with updated electric control system. The lagoon system also saw updates. Sagola septic system received new Tanks and new lift stations with new electric controls system.

Solid Waste, Recycling

Disposal of solid waste is provided through a contractor hired by the township. Yellow ST bags can be purchased conveniently at local retailers and then placed on the side of the road in front of residences for weekly pickup. The bag system started in 1991, following an unsuccessful attempt to provide service using drop-off boxes after the township dump was closed.

As a convenience to our township residents, recyclables are also picked up with the weekly garbage pickup, you just need to purchase a clear ST recycle bag.

Libraries

There are no library facilities in the township. The Dickinson County Library in Iron Mountain is the nearest library, along with an extension at the North Dickinson School.

Located Near the Channing post office there is an Information Center Marquee posting current events and will also have a Mini Library.

Located at the pavilion in Sagola there is also a mini library.

The township owns and operates a cemetery, which may be in need of expansion. CUPPAD (Central Upper Peninsula Planning and Development) recently mapped out graves in our cemetery and maps are available through the township clerk.

Health Care

Sagola residents are provided with health care locally through the Sagola Clinic. The clinic operates one day per week, and is staffed by a physician from Niagara, Wis. If local residents need to consult a specialist, or require care during the times the clinic is not open, clinics and/or hospitals are available in Crystal Falls, Iron Mountain, Marquette, Iron River, and Ishpeming.

Educational Facilities

Students from Sagola Township attend North Dickinson School in Felch Township. North Dickinson provides K-12 education to students from Sagola, Breen, Felch and West Branch Township, and as of 2025 had an enrollment of 260 students. The school was built in 1970, and school officials say that the facility has been well-maintained and is adequate to meet the needs of the district. The North Dickinson 'Nordics' benefit from a small school atmosphere while joining larger schools for technical education classes in Kingsford and participate in a variety of school sponsored sports across the region.

Located Adjacent to North Dickinson school is a Head start and Great start Readiness program is run by Dickinson-Iron Intermediate School District.

Bay de Noc Community College in Delta County offers programs in both vocational and technical fields. In 2007 Bay added a west campus located In Iron Mountain, having limited classes compared to their main campus, it still offers students a great opportunity closer to home.

Telephone and Internet service

High speed Internet is provided by Spectrum or Highline to most of Sagola Township. All roads are served with phone service from Spectrum and AT&T with much of the township having adequate cell phone service.

Recreational Facilities

A variety of recreational facilities are provided in Sagola Township. Sagola Township now owns and operates Gust Newberg Park on Sawyer Lake in the northern part of the township, which provides camping, picnicking, a swimming beach, playground equipment, fishing and boating. The park is nearly 25 acres in size and has 1,400 feet of lake frontage. Campers can hook up to water and electric, and public bathrooms and showers are also available. Nightly and seasonal camping rates are usually in-line or lower than comparable sites.

A few private resorts and campgrounds are located in the township, and offer a variety of services such as camping, swimming, boating, etc.

The Wisconsin-Michigan Power Company has developed sites near hydroelectric power plants in northern Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula. One of these sites is located on the Michigamme River in Sagola Township at Race Road and offers a boat landing and toilets.

Baseball is a popular sport in Sagola Township and is represented by the facilities in both Channing and Sagola. The Channing Athletic complex hosts one Little League field and a larger field for ball games with bleachers, concession stands, press box, batting cage, playground equipment, toilet, pavilion, and a former bus garage that is used for community events. There is also a basketball court and pickle ball courts. The township also maintains a ball field and playground in Sagola near the Community building.

A sledding hill will be available off Byers Road across from the Channing Cemetery for winter enjoyment.

Natural Gas

Natural gas services are provided by DTE energy in a limited portion of the township. Although many of Sagola streets and approximately 1 mile north on 95 from Sagola.

Postal service

Two post offices serve the township, one located in Sagola 49881 and the second located in Channing 49815.

Businesses that serve the public

Compared to other small townships, Sagola township has a lot of business to offer, some examples of this include Northern Interstate Bank, BP, Dollar General, The Ace of Clubs bar and Sparky's Speedy Repair in Sagola.

Channing offers Silver Lake Resort, Happy Camper Kitchen, Cuculi's Bar and The Depot Restaurant.

Randville offers Randville Bar.

CHAPTER 6 – TRANSPORTATION,

One of the most important elements in the physical structure of a community is its road system. The basic objective of a road system is to accommodate vehicular movement safely and efficiently. Michigan Public Act 51 of 1951 requires that all counties and incorporated cities and villages establish and maintain road systems under their jurisdiction, as distinct from state jurisdiction. Counties, cities and villages receive approximately 61 percent of the funding allocated through Act 51 for local roads with the remaining 39 percent earmarked for state highways under the jurisdiction of the Michigan Department of Transportation.

The 2025 Transportation Funding Package shall generate an additional funding source for the State Trunkline Highways, County Roads, and City and Village Roads. The new fund is named

The Neighborhood Roads Fund. Distribution of the money will be 52% for counties, 20% for the MDOT, and 28% for Cities and Villages.

The Dickinson County Road Commission (DCRC) is the agency responsible for road maintenance in Sagola Township. The DCRC classifies roads and streets as either state trunkline highways, county primary roads or county secondary roads. These classifications are as much a function of their funding as of their usage or relative importance to local travel. A description of each road type, as well as conditions and other information follows.

State Trunkline Highways: There are two state trunkline highways in Sagola Township -- M-95 and M-69. M-95 traverses the township from north to south for approximately 21 miles, passing through the localities of Floodwood, Channing, Sagola and Randville. M-69 intersects with M-95 north of Randville, runs concurrently with M-95 to Sagola, and then heads west out of Sagola towards Crystal Falls. Dickinson County Road Commission has a year-round State Trunkline maintenance contract with MDOT utilized primarily for snow removal operations. Exceptions to the county's maintenance responsibilities include traffic-control considerations such as some signage, painting of centerlines, etc. All maintenance costs are funded by the state. Construction projects are also funded by the state with contracts usually let by MDOT to private contractors.

County Primary Roads: County primary roads, as the name implies, are roads whose significance goes beyond the local area. Primary roads are maintained by the Dickinson County Road Commission (DCRC) utilizing money from the Michigan Transportation Fund.

There are approximately 25.6 miles of county primary roads in Sagola Township, including portions of Lake Ellen Road, Sawyer Lake Road and County Roads 607, 422 and 426.

County Secondary Roads: Included in county secondary roads are township roads, streets and alleys which have been assumed by the Dickinson County Road Commission (DCRC). County secondary roads are built and designed for access to land and therefore carry primarily local traffic when compared to either the state trunk lines or county primary roads. There are 54.6 miles of year-round county secondary roads in Sagola Township.

Private Roads: The County and Township are not responsible for any private roads or private driveways. All other roads are maintained by the Dickinson County Road Commission.

Bridges: There are two bridges (M-95 and Byers Road) within Sagola Township. The Michigan Department of Transportation inspects the bridges and determines if repairs need to be done.

Road Condition Evaluation: Roads under the jurisdiction of the Michigan Department of Transportation and County Roads are evaluated, using the (Paser) Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating System, based on pavement conditions, ride quality, friction and rutting. Surface conditions are determined by the amount of deterioration such as cracking, faulting, wheel tracking, patching, etc. Determining ride quality is subjective but is based on the degree of comfort experienced by drivers and passengers.

Road Repair: The Township Board determines road repairs as funds are available. Funding for road repair and construction is limited, and projects are completed when possible. If the Township wants to expedite the improvement of its roads a millage has been implemented.

**Table 1-9
Sagola Township Roads**

Sagola Twp Roads	Lgth	Surface	Condition	Snow Removal	
Bice Creek Lane	1.2 mi.	Bituminous	Good	Second	
Bush Lake Road	4 mi.	Bituminous	Good	Second	
Byers Road	2 mi.	Bituminous	Poor	First	
Carbis Road	3 mi.	1 Bit & 2 Gravel	Fair	Second	
Chelhar Lane	.59 mi.	Bituminous	Good	Second	
County Rd 422 (Leeman Rd)	4 mi.	Bituminous	Poor	First	PRIMARY RD
County Rd 426 (Turner)	5 mi.	2 Bit & 3 Gravel	Good	First	PRIMARY RD
County Rd 607	4 mi.	Bituminous	Fair	First	PRIMARY RD
East Shore Lane	.24 mi.	Bituminous	Good	Second	
Fontane Road	.09 mi.	Bituminous	Good	Second	
Fire Tower Road	2.74 mi.	Gravel	Fair	Second	
Forest Lane	.52 mi.	Gravel	Good	Second	
Fox Lake Road	.92 mi.	Gravel	Poor	Second	
Herzog Road	2.01 mi.	Bituminous	Good	Second	
Kimberly Road	.7 mi.	Bituminous	Good	Second	
Kramer Road	2 mi.	Bituminous	Good	First	
Lake Ellen Rd	2 mi.	Bituminous	Good	First	PRIMARY RD
Two Mile Road	6.08 mi	Gravel	Fair	Second	
Newberg Road	4.35 mi.	Bituminous	Good	Second	
North Co. Line	1 mi.	Gravel	Poor	Second	
North Lane	.76 mi.	Bituminous	Good	Second	
Old M 69	3 mi.	Bituminous	Fair	Second	
Peavy Falls Rd	3 mi.	Bituminous	Fair	Second	
Race Landing Road	2.23 mi.	Gravel	Fair	Second	
Sawyer Lake Rd	4.5 mi.	Bituminous	Good	First	PRIMARY RD
Smith Road	2 mi.	Gravel	Poor	Second	
Sturgeon Road	2 mi.	Gravel	Good	Second	
Sunrise Lane	1 mi.	Gravel	Fair	Second	
Sunset Lane	1 mi.	Gravel	Good	Second	
Tobin Lane	.26 mi.	Bituminous	Good	Second	
VanDenbrink	.21 mi.	Gravel	Good	Second	
VanDusen Road	.65 mi.	Gravel	Good	Second	
Wells Grade Road	3 mi.	1 Bit & 2 Gravel	Fair	Second	
Woodlawn Road	.22 mi.	Bituminous	Good	Second	

Snow Removal: The Dickinson County Road Commission differentiates between the roads it maintains for year-round use and seasonal, or "summer only" roads. There are approximately 4.1 miles of seasonal roads within Sagola Township. The basic difference between the two categories is that "summer only" roads are not plowed for the purpose of removing snow while the "year-round" roadways are plowed. The year-round maintenance of roadways is further broken down by primary and secondary snow removal routes.

In addition to M-69 and M-95, all primary and some secondary roads are classified as primary snow removal routes. The secondary roads included as primary snow removal routes are Kramer Road and Byers Road.

The intersection of Highways M-69 and M-95 in Sagola is of concern locally for safety reasons. A speed study was conducted at the intersection in the fall of 2000, and the Michigan Department of Transportation indicated that a reduced speed zone was not warranted.

Alternate forms of Transportation

Snowmobiling & UTV's are a way of life in the Upper Peninsula. Every county has its' trails, each providing a unique view of the UP and the abundant scenery and wildlife it offers. Snowmobile trails extend from Sagola, Randville, Felch, Norway, Republic, Iron Mountain, Escanaba, and beyond.

Most counties in the Upper Peninsula are lenient when it comes to ATV/ORV use. Check with the county in which you intend to ride, and you may find that they allow ATV use on gravel roads and right of ways. These are the Upper Peninsula ATV/ORV trail maps as supplied by the Michigan DNR.

Sources: Tri-County Snowmobile Club website and livetheup.com

Railroads

The Escanaba and Lake Superior Railroad Company is the only railroad which currently operates in Sagola Township, having taken over the Milwaukee Road line from Ontonagon through Channing to Iron Mountain in 1980. The line extends from Channing to Green Bay and Escanaba and carries primarily wood-related products. On average there are about four trains (in-bound and out-bound) through Channing each day. The line services the LP Plant, several local wood yards, a bulk trainload site at Floodwood and stores rail cars on the tracks not used for transportation.

Issues and Needs

There is an ongoing need for road maintenance and reconstruction in the township.

Several roads have been identified as priorities for future repair and maintenance efforts. These priorities were developed because of present and projected future needs, and the township will urge the County Road Commission to consider these priorities when scheduling road projects in the township. Priority roads identified through the planning process are listed as follows based upon the survey results.

1. Leeman Road
2. Byers Road
3. Forest Lane
4. Wells Grade

In Sagola a reduced speed limit would improve traffic safety.

CHAPTER 7 -LAND USE

The broad categories of land use described in this section are based on information from the Dickinson County Current Use Inventory, completed in June 1986. The inventory describes land use or covers according to seven broad categories, with numerous subdivisions within those categories.

Forest

Most of Sagola Township's 104,359 acres are forested, according to the Current Use Inventory. Forested areas account for just over 87,000 acres, or 83.4 percent of the township.

Forest land is defined as at least 10 percent of land stocked by forest trees of any size, or formerly having such tree cover, and not currently developed for non-forest uses. These lands are further broken down into several different types of forest cover.

Predominant forest cover types in Sagola Township are northern hardwood; aspen, white birch and associated species; and lowland conifer.

Non-forest

Non-forested lands make up 4.2 percent, or 4,378 acres of the township. These lands are open lands or rangelands, characterized by grass and shrubs, but not including those lands showing obvious evidence of seeding, fertilizing or other agricultural practices.

Wetlands

Eight percent of the township, or 8,304 acres, is classified as wetlands in the Current Use Inventory. Wetlands are defined as those areas between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is at, near or above the land surface for a significant part of most years, and include marshes, mudflats, wooded swamps and wet meadows.

Several different wetland categories are mapped in the inventory. Wetland categories include wooded (dominated by trees over 20 feet in height, seasonally flooded); shrub/scrub (dominated by woody vegetation less than six feet in height); aquatic beds (areas with 30 percent or more vegetative cover of submerged, floating-leaved or floating plants, and less than two meters (6.7 feet) deep); emergent (dominated by erect, rooted herbaceous plants, which are present for most of the growing season); and flats (level or nearly level deposits of sand, mud or organic sediments).

Agricultural

Broadly defined as land which is used for the production of food and fiber, these lands comprise 2,240 acres, or 2.3 percent of Sagola Township. Agricultural areas tend to be concentrated along roadways and, in some cases, rivers in Sagola Township, with the greatest concentration around Sagola and Channing.

Water

One and one-half percent, or 1,627 acres, of Sagola Township is classified as water, in the form of streams, waterways, lakes and reservoirs.

Urban and Built-Up Areas

Land of intensive use with much of the land covered by structures is classified as urban or built up. As would be expected in a rural area such as Sagola Township, this category comprises a small amount (631 acres, or 0.6 percent) of the township.

Residential and commercial development in Sagola Township is primarily located along major roads, such as M-95; at the communities of Sagola, Channing and Randville; and around certain lakes, such as Sawyer and Silver Lakes in the northern part of the township.

In addition to those areas which are of sufficient residential density to be classified as "built up" (3 to 4 residences adjacent to one another), the township is dotted with numerous other homes.

Residential and commercial uses together comprise much of the area inventoried as urban or built up. Other uses included in this category are industrial; transportation, communications and utilities; open pit mining areas; and land devoted to outdoor recreation. One area which has been developed since the inventory was completed, and which does not appear on the maps, is the Louisiana Pacific plant south of Sagola.

Barren

The smallest category of inventoried land use or cover in Sagola Township is barren lands, or beaches, riverbanks, sand dunes and exposed rock. The 108 acres inventoried as barren are all classified as exposed rock.

Special Land Use Permits and Township Land Improvements

The most recent special land use permits have been issued for industrial use have been for the Phase 1 and 2 Solar Panel Projects. Also, the permit for WE Energy Cell Tower.

Local small businesses have also been awarded permits to build and add onto their existing locations.

Many improvements have been made to the Township that include a new pavilion, added power and paving to the Township Newberg Park, improvements to the baseball field announcing booth. In addition to the paving of several township streets.

CHAPTER 8 - Zoning

Zoning is a type of regulation for urban and rural land development. The practice began in the early 1900s to combat problems such as congestion and pollution. Zoning in Sagola Township was adopted in January 1992 with several amendments throughout the years.

The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (MZEA) requires that a master plan be created. In order for a master plan to serve as the basis for zoning it should promote the purposes in the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act and Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA). The zoning plan identifies the zoning districts and their purposes, as well as the basic standards proposed for each district. Current zoning districts utilized in the Township Zoning Ordinance and any potential modifications to the districts will also be discussed in this chapter.

The premise is that such uses are incompatible and thus must be restricted to separate geographic areas. This type of zoning also usually includes dimensional requirements such as lot size, setbacks, and floor area ratio (total floor area of structures in proportion to lot size).

Sagola Township's existing zoning ordinance was recently amended in September 2024, in accordance and compliance with Public Act of 2006, the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act.

Descriptions of each current zoning district follow, and locations are shown in the Maps portion of this Master Plan. Each district also has dimensional requirements and restrictions for lots and buildings which are best reviewed within the zoning ordinance itself. In essence, the 2024 zoning ordinance is relatively straightforward.

Current Zoning Districts

Sagola Township is largely rural with a small range of land uses, and the ordinance reflects these characteristics. The following five zoning districts are currently in effect in Sagola Township:

***Residential(R):** It is the intent and purpose of this district to provide for a variety of housing types in portions of the Township which immediately adjoin areas which are well serviced by hard surfaced roads, public utility services, and presently have or will have within the foreseeable future public sanitary sewers, and which are also situated within relatively easy access to schools, work, shopping and recreational facilities. Low density single-family residences are permitted by right while other housing types and more densely developed single-family residences may be permitted only where public sewer and water facilities are currently in place and in localities where more dense development will not adversely impact adjoining properties.

***Residential One(R-1)** It is the intent and purpose of this district to provide for and preserve areas within the Township which have developed and/or where it is desired that they develop such that existing and future dwellings meet the standards provided in the definition of a single-family dwelling. It is also the intent and purpose of this district to provide for a variety of housing types in a portion of the Township which immediately adjoins areas which are well serviced by hard-surfaced roads and public utility services, and presently have or will have within the future public sanitary sewers, and which are also situated with relatively easy access to schools, work, shopping and recreational facilities. Low density single-family residences are permitted by right while other housing types and more densely developed single-family residences may be permitted only where public facilities are currently in place and under stipulations or special use permit in areas where more dense development will not adversely impact adjoining properties.

***Industrial(I):** It is the intent and purpose of this district to accommodate by right a variety of light industrial and commercial uses, characterized by relatively low traffic generation and the absence of objectionable external effects, in areas of the Township affording direct access to surfaced primary roads and, where applicable, railroads. Such areas are intended to have existing utilities, including power, public water, sanitary sewer and adequate storm water drainage. Such industrial areas should be free from incompatible uses and designed so as not to harm adjoining uses. This district will also accommodate, under stipulation or special use permit, those uses which are generally considered to have objectionable external effects; however, it is intended that provisions be implemented in each instance to minimize any harmful effects the use(s) might otherwise have on adjoining properties.

***Exclusive Resource/Agriculture Production(RP):** It is the intent of this district to ensure that lands within the Township which are well suited for the production of timber, minerals, food or fiber are retained for such production, unimpeded by the establishment of incompatible uses which would hinder timber or mineral extraction or farm operations and irretrievably deplete these resources. The RP District

acknowledges that forestry, mining and agriculture are specialized forms of industry characterized by the production, harvesting or extraction of saleable products as a result of the combination of raw materials, manpower, and energy.

***Business(B):** It is the intent of this district to provide for a variety of compatible commercial and business establishments and professional offices, located on surfaced primary and local roads, and situated near the population being served so as to minimize the distance traveled day to day for goods and services. The district is also intended to provide for highway oriented commercial development which is intended to serve a greater segment of the population than those people who reside in the immediate area. Whether the intensity of the commercial activity is high or relatively benign, it shall be developed so as to not harm adjacent residential areas. Public utilities and public sanitary sewer and water may be required before larger, more dense commercial development can proceed and are desirable in the future for those areas where less intensive commercial development is proposed.

Minimum/maximum dimensional requirements

		R	R-1	RP	B	I
Min Lot Area	20,000	20,000	40,000	20,000	40,000	
Without Sewer	Sq.Ft	Sq.Ft	Sq.Ft	Sq.Ft	Sq.Ft	
Min Lot Area	12,000	12,000	40,000	12,000	40,000	
With Sewer	Sq.Ft	Sq.Ft	Sq.Ft	Sq.Ft	Sq.Ft	
Min Lot Width	50 Ft	100 Ft	150 Ft	100 Ft	150 Ft	
Min Front Yard	20 Ft	20 Ft	40 Ft	30 Ft	40 Ft	
Min Side Yard	10 Ft	10 Ft	25 Ft	30 Ft	30 Ft	
Min Rear Yard	20 Ft	20 Ft	30 Ft	30 Ft	30 Ft	
Max Building Ht.	30 Ft	30 Ft	30 Ft	30 Ft	(A)	
Max Lot Coverage	35%	35%	35%	35%	30%	

(A) Height at any point on a structure shall not exceed the horizontal distance to any lot line.

*** A non-residential structure not exceeding 14' in height may be located 5' from SIDE property line.**

**** A non-residential structure not exceeding 14' in height may be located 5' from the REAR property line.**

The minimum lot size and lot width regulations do not apply to any non-conforming parcel of land shown as a lot in a recorded plat or described in a deed or land contract executed and delivered prior to the effective date of this Ordinance.

On any lot which borders on a lake, river, stream or other body of water, a required yard of 100' as measured from the normal high-water mark on water fronting property is required. Water set back is measured by horizontal plane, not following the contour of the land.

Below table shows building permit activity for Sagola Township 2018-2024.

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>NEW HOME</u>	<u>NEW GARAGE</u>	<u>STORAGE BUILDING, PORCH, OR ADDITION</u>	<u>COMMERCIAL</u>	
2018	3	7	6	3	
2019	3	5	8	1	
2020	4	4	10	0	
2021	9	4	18	1	
2022	4	7	9	3	
2023	2	6	8	1	
2024	2	9	14	2	

Land Ownership

Sagola Township contains a significant proportion of public land. The State of Michigan is the largest single landowner in the township, with over 35,000 acres in state ownership. Much of this land is forest land in the Copper Country and Sturgeon River state forests.

In addition to this state land, another large portion of forest land, particularly in the northern part of the township, is in Commercial Forest Reserve (CFR). This land is privately owned, primarily by paper companies such as Verso Corporation, and is important to the township in terms of policy planning; from a taxation standpoint and a recreational standpoint. CFR lands are taxed differently from other private holdings, with a flat per acre rate established by law. These lands are also open to public hunting and fishing, which increases the amount of land available in the township for these recreational activities. There are approximately 19,000 acres of CFR land in Sagola Township.

Another large landowner in the area is GMC Threshold Michigan, which owns approximately 4,000 acres. This land is primarily located in the southern part of the township, near Randville.

Land ownership has a significant effect on the availability of land for certain uses. For example, the large amount of public land offers outdoor recreation opportunities for hunters, anglers, and other outdoor enthusiasts. This land also contributes to the rural atmosphere of the township, which is one of the factors that often attracts certain people. On the other hand, while much of this land is potentially suited for other uses on the basis of soil types, etc., as discussed in the next section, state ownership or its status as CFR land limits its availability for agriculture.

Issues and Needs

The large amount of public land in the township has the effect of constraining the location and type of development in the township but also provides a significant resource base and recreational opportunities.

The zoning ordinance is continually being enforced and updated, and an inventory of nonconforming uses is needed.

Land use and development in unique and highly valued areas such as lakeshores should be closely monitored in order to prevent damage to natural resources.

CHAPTER 9 -PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

A variety of physical environmental factors influence current and future land use within a community. For example, soil suitability for septic drain fields can constrain residential and commercial development, while productive soils can support agricultural activities. Slope and topography may also affect the type or timing of uses such as logging.

The following section describes the natural features of Sagola Township as they relate to existing land uses and outlines the limitations and opportunities they present for future development.

Soils

The USDA Web Soil Survey identifies areas where soil conditions may limit certain types of development or support others. The maps and discussion in this section are based on the Dickinson County Soil Survey prepared by the Soil Conservation Service. Soil surveys predict how soil will perform under specific land uses, outline inherent limitations and hazards, and identify practices that may help mitigate those limitations.

Copies of the survey maps are available to the public at the USDA office on Hooper Street in Kingsford. Any map references in this section are based on those materials.

Agriculture: The Land Capability maps identify areas in Sagola Township where soil types present moderate (Class II) or severe (Class III) limitations for field crops such as potatoes, grains, and alfalfa hay. These limitations may restrict crop choices or require conservation practices. Sagola Township contains no Class I soil, which has minimal limitations for crop production. Unshaded areas on the survey maps represent Land Capability Classes IV through VIII, indicating very severe limitations or conditions unsuitable for cultivation.

The maps show that significant portions of the township may be suitable for agricultural use. However, this potential must be evaluated alongside other considerations—such as climate, location, and existing land use—when making future land use decisions.

Logging: The presence of the Louisiana Pacific fiberboard plant in Sagola Township, along with the nearby Billerud Americas Corporation facilities in Quinnesec and Escanaba, underscores the significance of the wood products industry in Dickinson County. In addition to the many individuals employed at these mills, numerous smaller firms and independent contractors are

involved in logging and hauling operations that supply wood to these facilities. Sagola Township's extensive forested land provides a significant potential supply of logs for local firms. However, soil characteristics—especially when combined with steep slopes—can limit logging activities. Survey maps identify soil types with moderate or severe limitations during preferred operating seasons, typically winter. These constraints can affect the construction of skid trails and logging roads, as well as the selection of equipment for harvesting, loading, and transporting logs. The area classified as limited would be considerably larger if soils with restrictions during the most challenging seasons, generally spring and fall, were also included.

Depending on the source of the limitations, certain practices may allow harvesting in these areas. Specialized equipment or careful planning and placement of roads and skid trails can sometimes reduce impacts. The feasibility of these measures must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Prime Forest Lands

There are two reduced tax programs available for forest lands. They are: **Qualified Forest Program (QFP)** and **Commercial Forest Program (CFA)**.

For further information contact Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development at www.michigan.gov/mdard or any other timber professional.

Climate

An area's climate influences land use and public policy in several ways. Even when soil conditions are suitable for agriculture, factors such as temperature and growing-season length may significantly limit crop production. Communities exposed to climate extremes, including heavy snowfall or severe cold, must also address issues such as snow removal and increased road maintenance.

Dickinson County's climate is predominantly continental, with less influence from the Great Lakes than many other Upper Peninsula counties due to its inland location. The county seldom experiences prolonged periods of extreme heat or cold, with average monthly temperatures ranging from 19.8°F in January to 77°F in July. The average growing season is 113 days, although freezing temperatures have been recorded every month except July. Annual precipitation in Iron Mountain averages 30.36 inches, with August typically being the wettest month.

Table 1-10 displays normal precipitation and snowfall figures for Iron Mountain.

Sagola Township's location in the northwest part of the county is within a region that receives higher snowfall. Although no official snowfall records exist for the township, snowfall generally increases moving north toward Lake Superior and west toward more mountainous terrain.

Residents historically adapted to the four-season climate and made effective use of local conditions. Farmers selected crops suited to the short growing season, and many families produced their own vegetables and raised livestock such as cattle, hogs, and chickens. Lumberjacks also established businesses that supplied wood products to mills within Sagola Township and the surrounding area.

The tourist trade is the present and future of Sagola Township. The Township and surrounding areas offer something for everyone in the United States sometime during the calendar year.

Table 1-10
Average Precipitation and Snowfall and Temperatures
 (Measured at the Iron Mountain Water Works)

	AVERAGE PRECIPITATION 1951-1980	AVERAGE SNOWFALL 1951-1980	AVERAGE PRECIPITATION 1981-2010	AVERAGE SNOWFALL 1981-2010
JANUARY	1.13	12.8	1.22	14
FEBRUARY	0.96	11.1	0.98	9
MARCH	1.72	10.5	1.65	11
APRIL	2.62	4.2	2.36	5
MAY	3.35	0.3	3.03	1
JUNE	3.85	0	3.46	0
JULY	3.65	0	3.46	0
AUGUST	4.01	0	3.27	0
SEPTEMBER	3.54	0.1	3.62	0
OCTOBER	2.28	0.2	3.15	0
NOVEMBER	1.78	7	1.93	6
DECEMBER	1.47	12.9	1.54	14
TOTAL:	30.36	59.1	29.67	60

Source: U.S. Climate Data

Average Monthly Temperature for Sagola Township (Updated 2024)

January	19.8 deg		July	77 deg
February	22.5 deg		August	77 deg
March	34.2 deg		September	66.6 deg
April	45.9 deg		October	50.9 deg
May	62.6 deg		November	36.5 deg
June	71.6 deg		December	24.8 deg

Source: [Yearly & Monthly weather - Sagola, MI](#)

Issues and Needs

The area's climate limits certain activities, such as the production of some agricultural crops, while supporting others, including recreation. Additionally, the perception of Michigan's Upper Peninsula as cold, snowy, and remote may hinder efforts to attract new development to the region.

CHAPTER 10 - SAGOLA TOWNSHIP GOALS AND POLICIES

The following goals and policy/action have been developed by the Sagola Township Planning Commission and adopted by the Sagola Township Board in response to the needs and issues identified throughout the planning process. In addition, the responses provided in the survey were used to help identify some of the goals. Goals are defined as the generalized end towards which efforts will be directed. Goals are often idealistic and difficult or impossible to measure. Policy/action represents positions or courses of action which provide the means to obtain goals. They are more factual and measurable than goals and are often measured in terms of the impact they have on existing conditions.

The goals and policies in this plan reflect the expectation and desire that Sagola Township will remain a rural, vibrant active community, and reflect concern for protecting the resources of the area. Sagola Township encourages small business and small industry expansion. It is intended that these goals and policy/actions be used by local decision makers in the future to guide their choices when faced with development pressures, environmental issues or land use decisions.

It is also recognized that these goals and policies/actions reflect the needs of the township, and as local needs change, these goals and policy/actions may need to be amended. Frequent re-evaluation of these goals and policy/actions will help to ensure that they continue to address the needs and desires of residents.

SAGOLA TOWNSHIP COMMUNITY APPEARANCE

Goal: Continuation of the cleanup efforts of Sagola Township by encouraging community involvement and support.

Policy/Action: Continue to enforce the current ordinances that are established.

Policy/Action: Increase awareness of the townships' efforts to perform cleanup tasks and ask for community support to assist in that effort..

ROAD MAINTENANCE

Goal: Maintain a network of roads which provide safe, efficient and uncongested movement of people and goods throughout the township.

Policy/Action: Set priorities for road improvements in the township, based on present and expected future use, condition, and public safety.

Policy/Action: Direct township funding for road improvements toward those roads which have been determined to be of highest priority to the township.

Policy/Action: Encourage continued maintenance and improvement of roads which are the responsibility of Dickinson County or the state.

Policy/Action: Identify areas where traffic counts, intersections, commercial development, etc. may present hazards, and work with other agencies to resolve such hazards.

BUSINESS GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Goal: Ensure that the growth which does occur in the township takes place in areas which can support development, and that this development occurs in an orderly fashion.

Policy/Action: Encourage development in locations which are adequately served by public services.

Policy/Action: Encourage orderly and appropriate growth consistent with the Sagola Township Zoning Ordinance.

Policy/Action: For specific developments promote approaches which consider the natural features of the property, maximize open space, maintain environmental and visual quality, minimize incompatible uses and minimize demands on public services.

Policy/Action: Consider the cumulative effect of proposed new development. For example, additional new developments which may be attracted to the site in the future, as "spin-off" development, or similar developments which may occur at other sites.

Policy/Action: Offer Tax Incentives to new businesses that will help attract interest in the Township.

Policy/Action: Develop a committee whose sole purpose is to create interest in business development.

LAND AVAILABILITY FOR POPULATION GROWTH

Goal: Identify and promote residential land availability to promote population growth.

Policy/Action: List and advertise property on the Township Website.

Policy/Action: Encourage and promote the assets of the Township and small-town community environment to raise a family.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES, SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

Goal: Provide public facilities and services for township residents and visitors. Encourage a natural gas line to Channing.

Goal: Offer Community Events. Bingo, Poker, Smear, Texas Hold'em

Goal: Promote tourism in Sagola Township by using the Sagola Township Website.

Policy/Action: Continue to support and improve on the assets that the Township has.

Policy/Action: Expand the Township Website to advertise events and recreational opportunities within the Township. Including a current list of businesses that highlights offerings.

Policy/Action: Continue to provide fire protection, ambulance, recycling and solid waste disposal services.

Policy/Action: Encourage other service providers, such as other units of government and private firms and organizations, to continue to provide and enhance medical services, recreational services and facilities, police protection, etc. in the township.

Policy/Action: Continue to provide recreational facilities and services.

LAKE AREA PROTECTION

Goal: Protect the water quality of lakes in the township, and preserve, to the extent possible, the rural residential character of lakeshores which have been or are being developed. Preserve and enhance Newberg Park and protect shoreline values on lakes which are presently undeveloped.
Expand playground equipment at Newberg Park.

Discourage development in areas that are unsuitable, such as wetlands and low-lying areas, enforce setbacks and discourage development of shoreline areas.

Discourage further high-density residential development in areas that are currently undeveloped or developed with low-density uses.

Prevent damage to the lake and shoreline environment, such as contamination from private septic systems, or erosion and loss of vegetation due to off-road or all-terrain vehicles

Policy: Continue to coordinate with the Michigan Department of Natural

- Goal: Protect the water quality of lakes in the township, and preserve, to the extent possible, the rural residential character of lakeshores which have been or are being developed. Preserve and enhance Newberg Park and protect shoreline values on lakes which are presently undeveloped.
Expand playground equipment at Newberg Park.
- Discourage development in areas that are unsuitable, such as wetlands and low-lying areas, enforce setbacks and discourage development of shoreline areas.
- Discourage further high-density residential development in areas that are currently undeveloped or developed with low-density uses.
- Prevent damage to the lake and shoreline environment, such as contamination from private septic systems, or erosion and loss of vegetation due to off-road or all-terrain vehicles
- Resources regarding monitoring the water quality of Sawyer Lake.
-
- Goal: Protect the water quality of lakes in the township, and preserve, to the extent possible, the rural residential character of lakeshores which have been or are being developed. Preserve and enhance Newberg Park and protect shoreline values on lakes which are presently undeveloped.
Expand playground equipment at Newberg Park.
- Discourage development in areas that are unsuitable, such as wetlands and low-lying areas, enforce setbacks and discourage development of shoreline areas.
- Discourage further high-density residential development in areas that are currently undeveloped or developed with low-density uses.
- Prevent damage to the lake and shoreline environment, such as contamination from private septic systems, or erosion and loss of vegetation due to off-road or all-terrain vehicles
-
- Policy: Continue to coordinate with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources regarding monitoring the water quality of Sawyer Lake.

CHAPTER 11 - FUTURE LAND USE MAPS

The land use/cover maps consist of five pages, each representing a legal township of 36 square miles, except in the case of Map 5, representing half of a legal township.

Maps courtesy of: Mapping Solutions

Telephone: 816-528-4336

Website: www.mappingsolutionsGIS.com

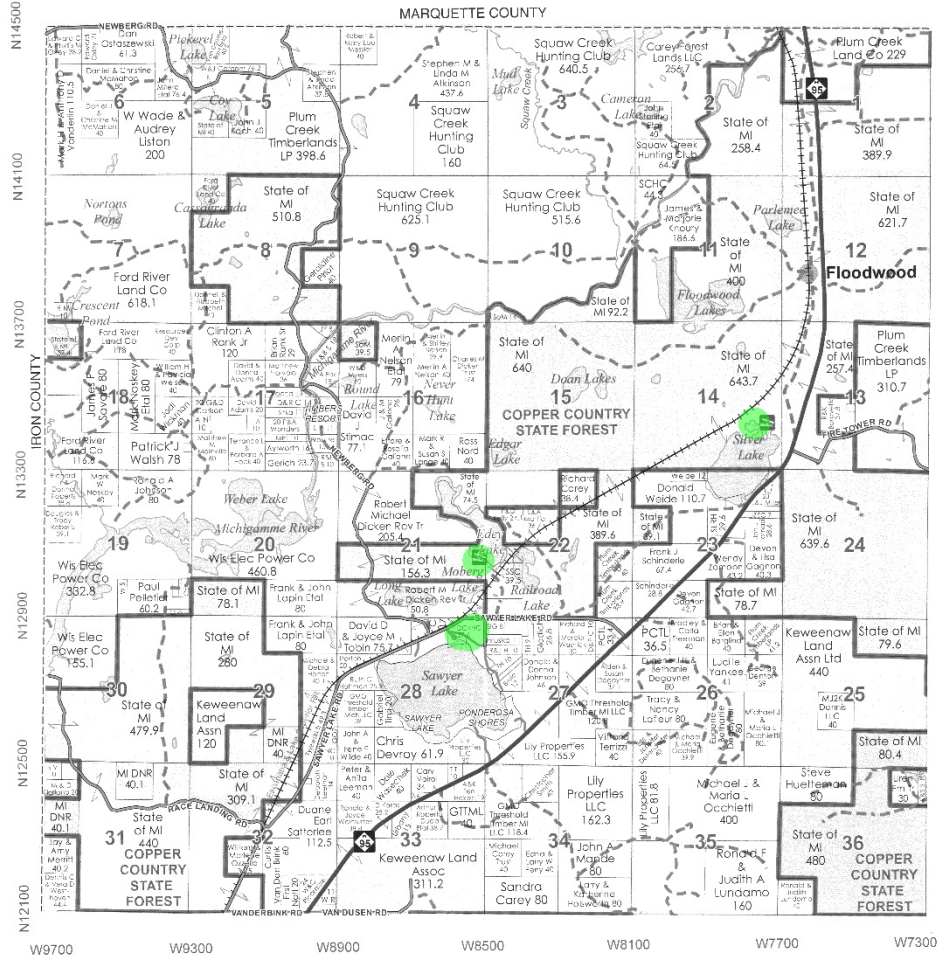
FUTURE LAND USE / MAP 1



Sagola (NW)

Township 44N - Range 30W

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RECREATION

B - BUSINESS

I - INDUSTRIAL

R - RESIDENTIAL

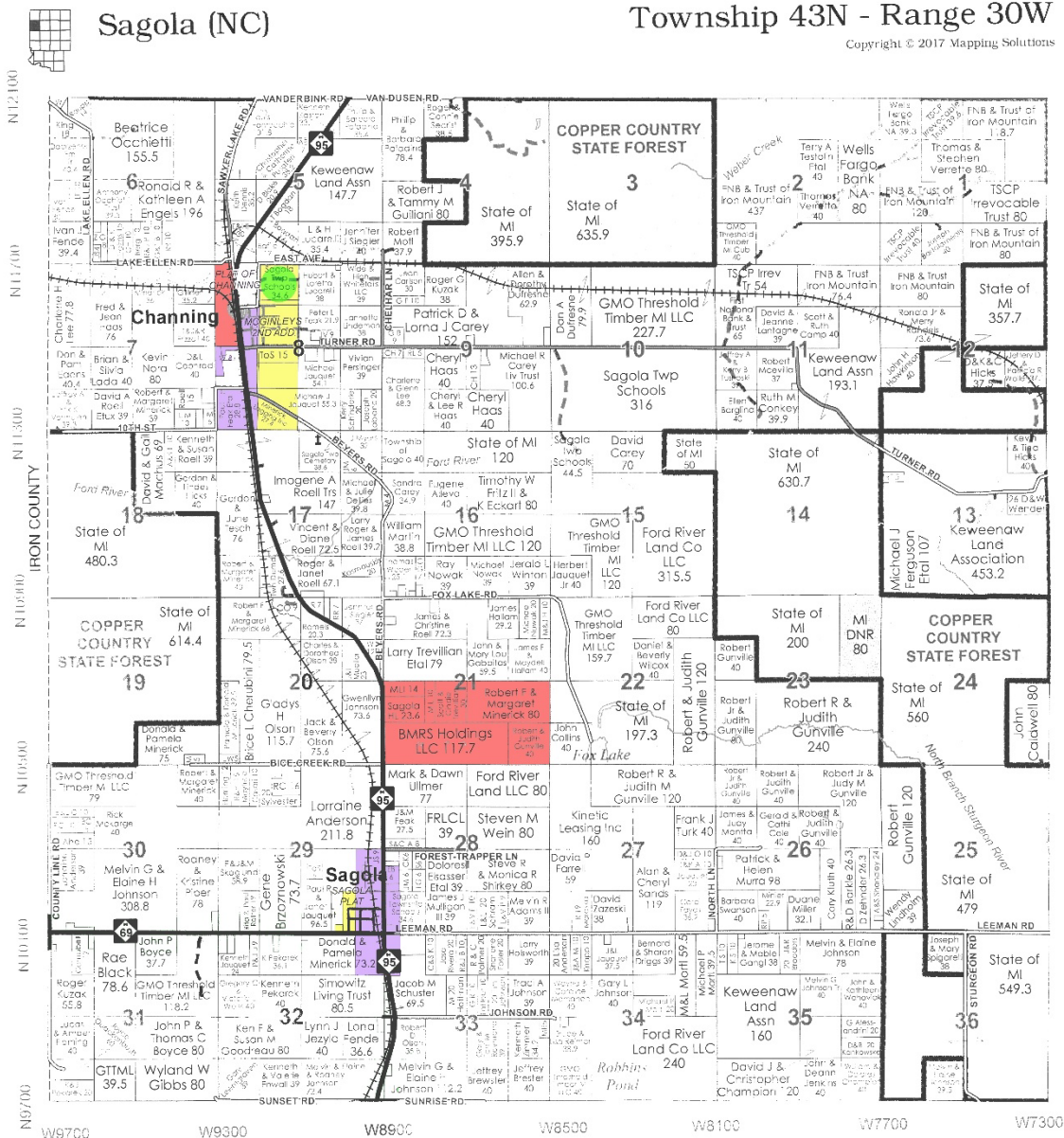
**RP - RESOURCE /
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION**

FUTURE LAND USE / MAP 3

Sagola (NC)

Township 43N - Range 30W

Copyright © 2017 Mapping Solutions



RECREATION

B - BUSINESS

R - RESIDENTIAL

I - INDUSTRIAL

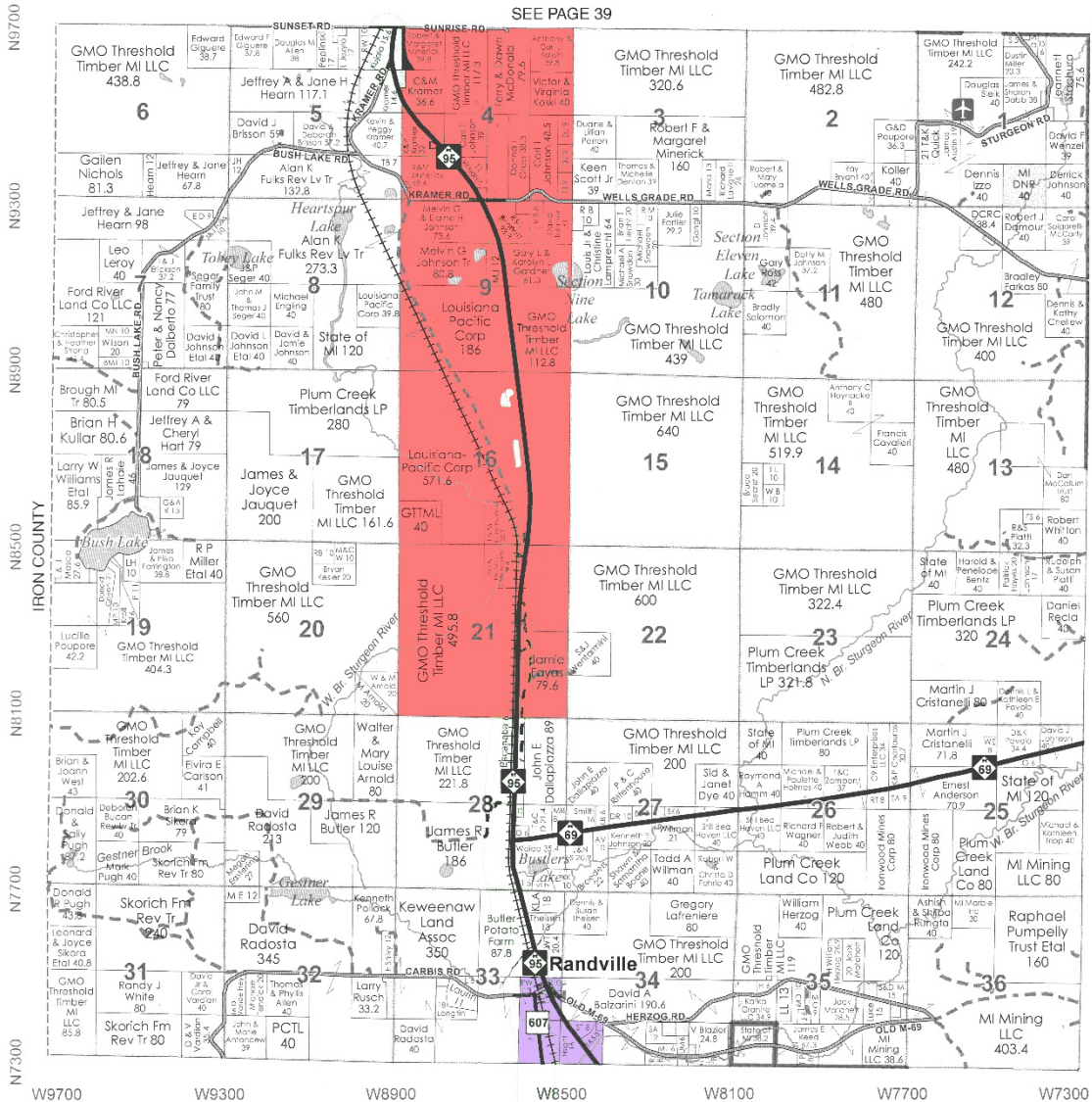
**RP - RESOURCE /
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION**

FUTURE LAND USE / MAP 4

Sagola (SC)

Township 42N - Range 30W

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RECREATION

B - BUSINESS

R - RESIDENTIAL

I - INDUSTRIAL

**RP - RESOURCE /
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION**

FUTURE LAND USE / MAP 5

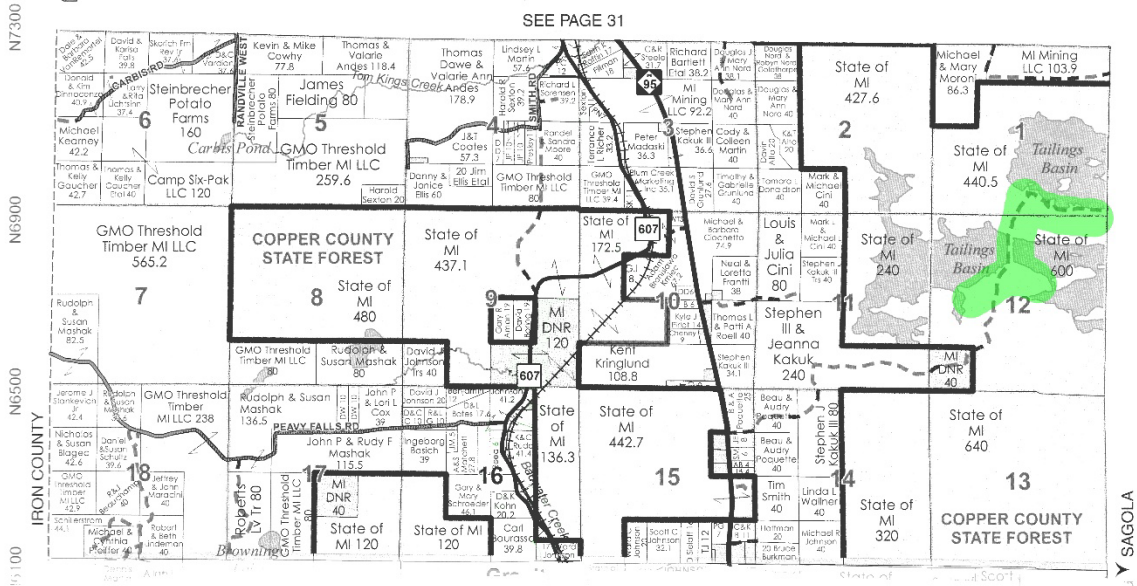


Breitung (N) & Sagola (S)

Township 41N - Range 30W

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SEE PAGE 31



RECREATION

B - BUSINESS

R - RESIDENTIAL

I - INDUSTRIAL

**RP - RESOURCE /
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION**

CHAPTER 12 - SAGOLA TOWNSHIP CITIZEN SURVEY WITH RESULTS

The Sagola Township Planning Commission sent a survey with the 2025 Summer tax bills. Also, the survey was posted online www.sagolatwp.com and printed copies located in Channing and Sagola Post Offices, Happy Camper Kitchen in Channing and various local businesses were added along with drop boxes locations at the Township Hall in Sagola and Channing locations were the O & M Building and Happy Camper Kitchen. Survey as presented with results:

Sagola Township | Citizen Survey

Your Voice Matters! Sagola Township has begun the process of updating its Master Plan. Citizen input is an integral part of the Sagola Township Master Plan. Please complete the following questionnaire. When complete, please drop off your completed survey in the drop box at the Sagola Township Hall. Your responses are anonymous and will be reported in group form only.

What is a Master Plan?

According to the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended), a Master Plan addresses land use and infrastructure issues and may project 20-years into the future. It includes maps, plats, charts, a land-use plan, and other descriptive material. The Master Plan will illustrate the planning commission's recommendations for the physical development of the planning jurisdiction. For a local unit of government that has adopted a zoning ordinance, the master plan will also include a zoning plan for various zoning districts controlling height, area, bulk, location, and use of buildings. This is paired with an explanation of how the land use categories on the future land use map relate to districts on the zoning map.

Please check the box that comes closest to your opinion for each of the following questions:

1. Overall how would you describe the quality of life in Sagola Township?

☐ Excellent	☐ Good	☐ Fair	☐ Poor	☐ Don't know
3	17	7	0	0

2. How do you rate Sagola Township as a place to raise children?

☐ Excellent	☐ Good	☐ Fair	☐ Poor	☐ Don't know
3	16	5	1	2

3. How do you rate Sagola Township as a place to live?

☐ Excellent	☐ Good	☐ Fair	☐ Poor	☐ Don't know
7	14	5	1	0

4. How do you rate Sagola Township as a place to retire?

☐ Excellent	☐ Good	☐ Fair	☐ Poor	☐ Don't know
9	9	7	1	0

5. How do you rate your internet access?

☐ Excellent	☐ Good	☐ Fair	☐ Poor	☐ Don't know
4	12	5	6	0

Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to the Sagola Township as a whole:

6. Sense of community

☐ Excellent	☐ Good	☐ Fair	☐ Poor	☐ Don't know
3	11	9	4	0

7. Opportunities for leisure-time activities

3 6 10 7 0

8. Recreation opportunities

3 9 9 5 0
☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor ☐ Don't know

9. Job opportunities

☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor ☐ Don't know

0 7 4 16 0

10. Access to affordable housing

1 7 7 7 3
☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor ☐ Don't know

11. Overall appearance of the Township

☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor ☐ Don't know

0 9 10 7 0

12. How important is it that the Township population continues to grow and maintain its

☐ A great deal ☐ A lot ☐ A moderate amount ☐ A little ☐ Not at all

6 9 11 1

Other:

13. Would you be interested/support events such as Bingo, Poker, Smear, Texas

☐ Yes ☐ No

16 11

14. Would you be interested/support Off Road/Bike or similar Poker Run events?

☐ Yes ☐ No

11 14 1

15. Do you support tax incentives for small business?

☐ Yes ☐ No

21 5

A brief synopsis of the above survey questions. Keep in mind that not all the boxes were checked on all the above questions. Albeit a small sample of the population (27 total surveys) the overall image of Sagola Township is a positive one.

Some areas of improvement would be creating activities within the community as reflected in question number 13. Also creating awareness to the recreational activities within the township would create a positive effect (Question number 8).

In addition, there is a concern about the population of Sagola Township decreasing and how do we maintain or increase its residency. These concerns are matched with the Job Opportunities question 9 reflecting a poor rating. The interesting positive here is that most of the people surveyed would be willing to offer a tax incentive to attract small business

(Question 15).

One observation is regarding question 10 affordable housing. It was an even split in good, fair, and poor ratings. There may be an awareness issue or perhaps an understanding that there is a lack of property available to buy and build on. This may require additional review.

Question 11 has some positive responses. I think the efforts on clean-up so far are having a positive impact.

16.What do you LOVE about Sagola Township?

- * The people and sense of community
- * The environment (woods, lakes and outdoors)
- * Quiet and peaceful

17.What CHANGE would you like to see within Sagola Township?

5. Continue with clean up and improve appearance, tear down and remove old buildings
6. Economic growth, new businesses/jobs
7. More adult activities/recreation
8. Road Repair

18.What do you think will be the most important issue facing Sagola Township over the next 5, 10, 20, or 30 years?

1. Population growth, ability to attract young families
2. Employment/jobs
3. Clean up and road maintenance

19.What would your ideal vision for Sagola Township be in the year 2050? Briefly describe three of the most desirable characteristics this future Sagola Township would possess.

1. Jobs/new businesses/restaurants
2. Housing/adult housing, community clean up, no grow houses
3. Community events, recreation

20.Please provide your perspective on the quality of roads in Sagola Township. Which road(s) do you think need the most attention?

1. Leeman Road
2. Byers Road
3. Forest Lane
4. Lake Ellen
5. Wells Grade

21.If you are interested in Natural Gas service to your residence please list address:

1. N9342 Sturgeon Rd.
2. Channing
3. N11152 M-95 Channing
4. Channing
5. M-95 Channing
6. 107 Bell Ave Channing
7. N11125 Byers Rd Channing

8. N11375 10th Ave Channing

22. You can view the existing 2018 Sagola Township Master Plan online here:

<https://sagolatwp.com /PDF/ST-Master-Plan.pdf>

23. Is there anything else you would like to add that was not addressed by the questions? If you would

16. like to expand upon any of your responses in the previous questions, please do so here as well.

1. Invasive species removal
2. Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the survey and the clean up efforts in the community
3. More community party's/dances
4. Welcome to Sagola and Welcome to Channing signs on Highway
5. Advertise property and homes that are for sale in the township on the Website. Advertise events and recreational facilities that are available
6. Disc Golf Course if land permits. 6 to 7 acres.
7. Ryan needs to be supported by the township board and locals to move forward. More community involvement

If interested in volunteering and sharing your talents check out [Sagolatwp.com](https://sagolatwp.com) and get involved to expand our community offerings for residents and visitors.

1. One response yes but no other comment to what their talent or offering
2. Assist in helping elderly residents with clean up where there are physical limitations
3. One observation stating that no one wants to volunteer and they all want something for nothing.
4. Lastly one 😊

Thank You! -The Sagola Township Planning Commission